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## **AG SAFETY S.T.A.T. – SAFE TACTICS FOR AG TODAY**

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THOUGHTS from the EDITOR –  
SAFETY STAT of the MONTH –  
MANAGING STRESS for a HEALTHY HEART  
Emergency Management Tip of the Month – FLU SEASON

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### **THOUGHTS from the EDITOR**

**Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader**

### **SAFETY STAT of the MONTH:**

#### **MANAGING STRESS for a HEALTHY HEART**

**Kent McGuire – Ohio AgrAbility Program Coordinator**

Farming can be a consistently stressful occupation. Farmers experience stresses associated with most occupations such as high demand, time pressures and increased workload, however farmers have added uncontrollable pressures associated with agriculture, such as unpredictable weather, machinery breakdowns, variable crop prices, or even economic survival. Farming consistently has one of the highest rates of death due to stress-related conditions like hypertension and heart disease. An important piece to heart disease prevention is managing stress. Stress makes the heart beat faster and the body ready for action, however prolonged high levels of stress can cause high blood pressure, irregular heart rhythms, damage to arteries, and higher cholesterol levels. Some suggestions for managing stress include:

- Begin to take note of things that cause you to feel stressed.
- Accept the fact that you may not be able to change certain situations.
- Take time out each day to relax.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle through exercising, eating healthy, and getting enough sleep
- Prioritize what needs to be done each day.
- Take control of your schedule and set realistic goals and expectations.
- Put an emphasis what was accomplished, and not what failed to be accomplished.
- Avoid negative self-talk and avoid "what ifs." Avoid focusing on what you do not know or can control.
- Get answers to questions that may be worrying you (such as your health).
- Control stress during long work activities by taking a 5-minute relaxation break or take a short walk to relax outside your work environment,
- Work with your doctor to find the best way to manage your stress and maintain a healthy heart

For more information about the Ohio AgrAbility Program visit [agrability.osu.edu](http://agrability.osu.edu) or contact Kent McGuire, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at [mcguire.225@osu.edu](mailto:mcguire.225@osu.edu) or 614-292-0588.

#### **Emergency Management Tip of the Month – FLU SEASON**

**Aletha I. Reshan, Emergency Management Planning and Education Program Coordinator**

It's that time of year again – flu season! Staying healthy helps protect against the flu.

**Tips for staying healthy include the following:**

\* **Get a flu vaccine.** Many retail pharmacies to include Kroger, Giant Eagle, Target, and Walmart offer a Flu Clinic and provide vaccines.

\* **Wash hands frequently:** Germs are unavoidable. They are everywhere and on everything we touch. Therefore, frequent hand washing is a first line of defense against preventing the spread of germs.

- \* With the invention of alcohol-based sanitizers, hand washing is easy and convenient. When using alcohol-based sanitizers, place a small amount of sanitizer in the palm of your hand and rub hands together so that the product is applied to all surfaces of your fingers and hands. Allow to air dry. Watch small children to ensure they do not ingest the sanitizer.
- \* To wash using soap and warm water, wet hands and apply soap. Rub hands together for approximately 20 seconds, which is about the time it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice. Finish by rinsing hands under warm water and drying on clean towel or air dry.
- \* At a minimum, hands should be washed as follows:
  - \* Before preparing food.
  - \* After using the bathroom.
  - \* After changing a diaper or tending to someone who has gone to the bathroom.
  - \* After sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose or tending to someone having these needs.
  - \* After handling an animal or animal waste, this includes visiting a farm, petting zoo, pet store, or your own animals.
  - \* After handling garbage.
  - \* Before and after tending to a wound on yourself or someone else.
- \* **Eat a balanced diet consisting of lots of vegetables, fruits, and whole grain products.**
- \* **Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.**
- \* **Limiting salt, sugar, saturated fat, and alcohol.**
- \* **Exercise regularly to help your body increase its immunity.**
- \* **Get plenty of sleep to help your body rest and rejuvenate.**
- \* **Keep hands away from mucus areas such as mouth, eyes, and nose as these are prime breeding grounds for spreading germs.**
- \* **Stay away from others who are sick as much as possible.**
- \* **Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough, sneeze, or blow your nose.** If a tissue is not available, cough and sneeze into your elbow.

Much as we try, we may still become ill with the flu. In the event this does occur, the following tips are offered:

- \* **Stay home.** Do not go to work or attend other activities as this will spread your germs to others. Keep others you tend to home from activities as well.
- \* **Cover coughs and sneezes.**
- \* **Wash hands frequently.**
- \* **Drink clear liquids such as water, broth, and sports beverages to prevent dehydration.** Give electrolyte beverages to babies.
- \* **Get plenty of rest.**
- \* **Treat fever and aches with over-the-counter remedies containing acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or naproxen.** Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers who have the flu as it is associated with a rare, yet serious illness known as Reye’s Syndrome.
- \* **High-risk individuals should consult a medical provider regarding treatment for flu symptoms.**

For more information about seasonal flu, please visit [www.flu.ohio.gov](http://www.flu.ohio.gov) or call your local health department or physician. Wishing you a flu-free season!

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*Ag Safety S.T.A.T. - Safe Tactics for Ag Today* is an e-mail newsletter prepared by Dee Jepsen, Extension Agricultural Safety Specialist and team members from the State Safety Office, in the Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering at OSU. The primary goal of this monthly newsletter is to help you stay connected to everyday safety news and activities that may be used in your own newsletters or programs. If you have safety-related questions or program ideas that you would like to share, please contact Dr. Jepsen at [jepsen.4@osu.edu](mailto:jepsen.4@osu.edu)

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