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**AG SAFETY S.T.A.T. - SAFE TACTICS FOR AG TODAY**

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**THOUGHTS from the EDITOR - Tractor Training Courses Required by Current Department of Labor Regulations**

**Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader**

The Department of Labor has withdrawn its proposal to add stronger restrictions for youth under 16 years old working for hire on farms. Their press release is included in this edition of our newsletter. So what does this mean for Ohio teens looking for summer employment?

Even though there may not be additional work restrictions, there are still regulations that need to be followed for teens 14- and 15- years old who work outside their parents' farm. The Tractor and Machinery Certification programs - offered through vocational agricultural classes and OSU Extension offices - meet the training requirements for the current regulations. This is a 24-hour training class that ends with a written exam and tractor skill test. Ohio certifies between 150 and 300 students each year through such training programs. This year we anticipate additional trainings will be needed to cover the demand created through the discussions of this proposed change.

A train-the-trainer program will be offered July 25, 2012 for volunteers interested in teaching the programs. Also, an on-line farm safety course will be launched to assist with the self-study portion of the training programs. Currently, the Ohio training program uses the resources offered in the 4-H Family Guide titled, National Safe Tractor and Machinery Certification Program.

For more information about the July training on July 25 for volunteers, or students interested in training, please contact our State Agricultural Safety Office at 614-292-6008 or through email at [osuagsafety@gmail.com](mailto:osuagsafety@gmail.com).

**A SECOND on SAFETY - Thinking fast while mowing the lawn**

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission an average of 40,000 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms for walk-behind power mower injuries, from 2008 through 2010. While mowing the lawn this season, keep in mind how fast the mower blades spin. A rotary mower blade whirls at 2,000 and 4,000 revolutions per minute. The tip of the blade travels at 100 to 200 miles per hour. That's fast enough to cause serious damage to tender blades of grass and toes that are not protected by sturdy leather shoes - even leather tennis shoes!

**YOUTH SAFETY- Lawn Mowing Safety Tips**

**Kathy Mann - Program Coordinator**

What does school being out for the summer and the grass growing have in common? The answer. A perfect summer job for youth, Mowing Grass! Before throwing on shorts, tank tops and headphones, be

sure to review these quick safety tips!

**Getting ready to mow:**

- Wear close-fitting clothing, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants with sturdy shoes and hard soles and traction.
- Always tuck in shirttails and avoid wearing jewelry and scarves.
- Take precautions to protect yourself from the sun.
- Wear earplugs to protect your ears from noise.
- Wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from flying debris.
- Heavy gloves can be worn when operating a walk-behind mower.
- Read the operator's manual and learn to operate the equipment properly.
- Clear the lawn of all debris and rocks prior to mowing.
- Keep hands and feet away from moving engine parts at all times.

**Operating the mower:**

- Mow only when the grass is dry to prevent mower clogging.
- Mow only in a forward direction when using a walk-behind mower.
- Mow across the slope of a hill when using a walk-behind on a gentle hill or incline.
- Be sure the discharge chute and guards are in place at all times.
- Do not mow if bystanders are present in the mowing area.
- Never add fuel to a hot engine, allow it to cool first. Never refuel indoors.
- Shut down the engine if the mower becomes clogged.
- When operating a riding mower;
  - Never carry passengers. One seat, One rider.
  - Mow up and down the slope when mowing on a hill or incline.
  - Avoid sudden stops and starts when mowing on hills.
  - Slow down for all sharp turns and avoid steep hills and drop-offs to avoid overturns.
  - Shut down the engine and wait for all moving parts to stop before getting out of the seat.
  - Remove the key from the ignition when the lawn mower is not being used.

**Labor Department statement on withdrawal of proposed rule dealing with children who work in agricultural vocations**

**WASHINGTON** -- The U.S. Department of Labor today issued the following statement regarding the withdrawal of a proposed rule dealing with children who work in agricultural vocations:

"The Obama administration is firmly committed to promoting family farmers and respecting the rural way of life, especially the role that parents and other family members play in passing those traditions down through the generations. The Obama administration is also deeply committed to listening and responding to what Americans across the country have to say about proposed rules and regulations.

"As a result, the Department of Labor is announcing today the withdrawal of the proposed rule dealing with children under the age of 16 who work in agricultural vocations.

"The decision to withdraw this rule - including provisions to define the 'parental exemption' - was made in response to thousands of comments expressing concerns about the effect of the proposed rules on small family-owned farms. To be clear, this regulation will not be pursued for the duration of the Obama administration.

"Instead, the Departments of Labor and Agriculture will work with rural stakeholders - such as the

American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers Union, the Future Farmers of America, and 4-H - to develop an educational program to reduce accidents to young workers and promote safer agricultural working practices.

## **MAY- NATIONAL ARTHRITIS AWARENESS MONTH**

### **Kent McGuire - Ohio AgrAbility Program Coordinator**

Arthritis affects approximately one-third of all adult farm operators and is considered one of the leading causes of disability by customers of the USDA AgrAbility Project. Arthritis is especially detrimental to farmers and their families because of the nature of their work. Mounting and dismounting equipment, climbing grain bins, baling hay, feeding livestock, and using heavy tools and machinery all require strength and mobility, which are lessened by the affects of arthritis. Arthritis can reduce strength and mobility for performing even the most routine chores around the farm or home.

Farmers or farm workers with arthritis can continue to live a productive life in agriculture if they are willing to commit to controlling their arthritis through proper diet and exercise, modifying their work, and respecting the physical limitations of their bodies. Since there is no known cure for arthritis, education and awareness of management techniques are considered the best practices for treating the disease. The Ohio AgrAbility Program is working with Arthritis Foundation Chapters throughout Ohio to provide education and support programs to our rural agricultural residents. For more information about arthritis, or to download our "Managing Arthritis When Farming" Fact Sheet, the following links can be very helpful.

[Managing Arthritis When Farming, AEX-982.1-11](#) (pdf)

[www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

[www.arthritis-ag.org](http://www.arthritis-ag.org)

[www.agrability.osu.edu](http://www.agrability.osu.edu)

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

## **INJURY PREVENTION- Reducing the Risk of Back Pain During Planting Season**

### **Kent McGuire - Ohio AgrAbility Program Coordinator**

Back pain is common in farming because by nature it is a physical occupation. Farmers are required to do heavy lifting, climb and dismount equipment, work in awkward positions, and are exposed to repeated twisting of the back and neck while driving tractors in the spring. Back injuries are the second biggest reason why Americans miss work. Once a back injury has occurred, special considerations need to be given to the spine, muscles and tendons in that area, because there is a higher risk of another injury happening to the back. Some simple precautions and modifications that can reduce this risk include:

- Wear boots with high quality insoles and support for the ankles can reduce back pain.
- Manage stress and stretch to reduce tense muscles. Stretch regularly throughout the day.
- Eating right gives the muscles the nutrients they need to work properly.
- Always be aware of the way you are moving your body and maintain a good posture.
- Use your legs when lifting, and avoid twisting when carrying heavy objects.
- When carrying things make more trips carrying a smaller load.
- When sitting in the tractor, keep thighs parallel to the ground.
- Consider installing additional rear view mirrors in equipment to reduce the need to turn.
- - Replace older equipment seat cushions with new ones that have adjustable lumbar support, arm rests and adjustable height and leg support. Utilize swivel seating to reduce twisting movements.

- Push rather than pull on objects.
- Avoid working in awkward positions or reaching above your shoulders for long periods of time.
- Take care of an injured muscle. Don't let it go. Treat a strained muscle with ice and anti-inflammatory to reduce swelling and promote healing.
- General achiness is treated with massage, and heat to relieve some of the muscle tension.

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

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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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