

Small Farmer's Resources for Safety¹

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In a large agricultural operation, there are many roles: owners, managers, workers, health and safety experts, and more. On the small farm, all these roles may be taken by a few people -- maybe one or two -- who have a lot to think about and even more to do. They know that working safely is smart, both for their farm's future and for their own, but sometimes they feel that there are higher priorities for their time and money than safety training, manuals, and equipment.

Nevertheless, your health and safety should be your top priority, because no matter how fertile the soil, how excellent the weather, or how efficient the machines, if you can't work because of injury or disease, it all stops. It is not easier than ever to get accurate, practical safety information and to prevent unintentional injury.

This fact sheet describes some important resources which farmers and ranchers can access over the World Wide Web to get up-to-date information on every aspect of agricultural safety and health.

What is NASD?

The National Agricultural Safety Database, or NASD (pronounced "nazz-dee"), is an important resource that can help keep you safe and healthy.

NASD is a collection of information about health, safety, and injury prevention in agriculture with more than 2,000 agricultural safety and health publications. NASD includes Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA) and Environmental Protection Act (EPA) Standards, Extension publications, abstracts and ordering information for ag safety-related videos, and references to research publications from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). NASD also includes materials in Spanish.

Find NASD on the World Wide Web at this address:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/>

Read safety materials on-line or print them to read at your convenience and to share with family and friends. Everything in NASD is contributed and reviewed by safety specialists. NASD is supported by both the NIOSH and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture).

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Identify Hazards and Learn Safe Practices

You know your farm and its operations better than anyone else. Yet, even common agricultural operations have their hazards. Use NASD to become better informed about these hazards, and to inform others that work with you.

Make it a personal or family project to put together your own safety manual. Divide your safety manual according to operations, machines, or commodities, and then find appropriate publications in the NASD collection.

NASD isn't just a resource for publications; it can also lead you to dozens of organizations dedicated to your health and safety, including:

- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
- United States Department of Agriculture
- NIOSH Regional Centers for Agricultural Safety and Health
- Numerous State Extension Agricultural Safety Programs.

NAGCAT

Over 30,000 children are injured every year on America's farms. Most of these injuries are the direct result of children doing farm work. The solution for this problem is for children who work on farms to:

- 1) do work appropriate for their age; and
- 2) work safely.

The North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT) were developed to help parents implement these solutions. These colorful materials are divided according to commodity and tell you what to expect from children at different ages. NAGCAT shows the hazards of various tasks to children and how they can do those tasks safely. Find NAGCAT through NASD, or at:

<http://www.nagcat.org>

Learn more about NAGCAT guidelines through the Florida Extension publication, "Protecting Children on the Farm: The North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT)," on the World Wide Web at:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE168>

FLAGSAFE

No, it has nothing to do with flags! It's the **FL**orida **AG**ricultural **SAFE**ty Network.

Flagsafe is the Web site for the Florida Extension Agricultural Safety Program. On this site, you'll find many useful publications, and links to even more resources. Find safety-related materials for:

Buildings -- Chemicals -- Children -- Crops -- Electrical -- Emergency Resources -- Employees -- Health -- Livestock -- Management -- OSHA -- Tractors, Equipment & Machinery -- And more...

Flagsafe also has links to other excellent state Extension safety Web sites.

A Special Mission

Join Farm Safety Specialists everywhere in a special effort to end the needless injury and death of children on farms.

Obviously, small farmers with children face special challenges, and no parent would intentionally harm his/her child. But on a farm, hazards are waiting like set traps, and a parent must keep child and hazard apart. Children still die when they are allowed to ride on tractor fenders. Children are persistent, but how many deaths and injuries would be prevented if parents just said no, and stuck to it? Also, just because a parent took risks as a child, doesn't mean his/her child should. Children should learn from parents' mistakes, not repeat them.

An organization dedicated to ending child injury and death on farms was started in 1987. Farm Safety 4 Just Kids was started by Marilyn Adams after her young son was killed in a grain wagon. Today, FS4JK has over 150 chapters in the United States and Canada in which parents work together to teach each other and their children about safety. Learn more at:

<http://www.fs4jk.org/>

NASD, NAGCAT, FS4JK, and FLAGSAFE have many wonderful materials suitable to read to your children, or that contain activities they can do on their own or in a group or family setting. Teach your children from the start that safety is the top priority. There is always a safer way to work; children should know that the extra time it can take to do a job safely, such as the extra seconds it takes to walk around a tractor rather than step over a PTO, is time well spent. No one wrestles with a machine and wins.

One more point: Your children will do what you do. If safety is important to the important people in a child's life, that child will think it's important, too.

The number of child injuries and deaths on farms can be reduced, if we all work together. For more information about making your farm safer for children, see our publication "'Childproofing' Your Yard and Farmstead". You can find it at the NASD Web site, or at the University of Florida Extension publication Web site, at:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE166>.

The #1 Cause of Farm Fatalities

Make a special note of this: The #1 agent in unintentional death on the farm is the tractor.

Tractors: They are the modern workhorses on the farm. Modern farming would be impossible without them. Farmers care for them, tinker with them, and work with them day-in, day-out. A tractor can become a trusted ally. But a tractor is a machine, and like all machines it doesn't care who you are or what it cuts!

The importance of the tractor on the farm ought to be an indication of how safety-aware you should be when driving one. Even experienced drivers are killed every year when they ignore basic tractor safety. Such deaths are so unnecessary.

Learn about tractor safety with our Safer Tractor Operations series of publications. Start with "Safer Tractor Operations for Privately Owned and Operated Farms and Ranches." Access this publication and others in the series over the World Wide Web at:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE196>

Keep this in mind: no matter how long you've been driving tractors: it's not a question of knowing what's safe, it's a question of doing it.

It's Rarely an "Accident"

Injuries and deaths on farms are rarely the result of accidents. Does that mean that people are intentionally hurting and killing themselves? No. But most injuries and deaths on farms are completely preventable.

It's a habit of speech to call something an accident. But the word "accident" suggests that whatever happened was caused by forces beyond our control. On the farm, this is rarely true. A ladder which has been patched one too many times -- a seat belt that wasn't fastened -- allowing a child to ride on the fender of a tractor -- when these situations lead to death, it's no "accident." Hurting someone - maybe yourself - intentionally is different than knowing you could have prevented an injury or death, but the result is the same.

Thousands of farmers are injured or killed every year in preventable incidents, and agriculture remains one of the most dangerous occupations in America. The good news is that agriculture could be one of the safest professions, because the vast majority of injuries and deaths in agriculture are preventable.

The next time you read about someone being killed or injured on the farm, ask yourself, "Was it really an accident?"

A Reminder

Not every agricultural injury or death can be prevented, but getting good information and turning it into safer practices can go a long way. You work hard to make your agricultural operation pay. Work safely, so that when the time comes you can sit back and enjoy it.

And remember:

Be Aware!

Be Aware!
Be Alert!
Be Alive!

Safety Resources for Small Farmers

- NASD..... www.cdc.gov/nasd
- NAGCAT... www.nagcat.org
- FS4JK..... www.fs4jk.org
- Flagsafe... www.flagsafe.ufl.edu

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