

## Farm Risk Management: Personal and Employee Safety

How will you farm if you are hurt? What if a family member or employee are injured? With 25 fatalities per 100,000 people, agriculture is the most hazardous occupation in the U.S., exceeding even mining or construction work. Any accident can result in a severe injury to you, a family member, or an employee.

### Hiring

- Hiring is the first safety step if you employ others. Check references and consider a drug testing program if you have more than a few employees.

### Training

- You set the tone for safety expectations on the first day of work. Effective orientation training upon hire is the best way to establish good habits.
- Some tasks like forklift or boom truck operation, working at heights, chemical safety, confined spaces, or equipment operation may require more specific training. Assess hazards and provide additional training if necessary.

### Falls

- Evaluate all fall exposures, especially in situations involving ladder use or working at elevations more than 6 feet above a walking surface.
- Anyone working in an aerial platform must wear a fall arrest harness.
- Use and maintain all ladders properly.

### Chemicals

- Compile an inventory of all flammable, caustic, or hazardous chemicals.
- Obtain and keep Material Safety Data Sheets in an accessible location.
- Use proper containers and label them correctly.
- Store and dispose of chemicals properly.

### Machine safeguarding

- Keep guards in place over PTO shafts, augers, belts, and other moving parts.
- Don't operate equipment with missing guards.
- De-energize and lockout all equipment before performing any repairs or maintenance.

### Personal protective equipment

- Wear personal protective equipment when required, even if the task is a brief one.

### Confined spaces

- Grain can trap and engulf a person within 25 seconds. Silos, tanks, or pits are confined spaces that can be a mechanical or environmental hazard.
- Establish an entry procedure and never enter a confined space without following proper precautions. These include testing the atmosphere, ventilating the space, locking out equipment, issuing a permit, and following rescue procedures.