



# NATIONAL Farm Safety & Health Week

September 15-21, 2019

## Practicing farm safety and carrying on the heritage of farming



Melissa Wallace was working on the farm with her husband, David, when a normal day ended in an accident that changed Melissa's perspective on farming forever. It

was that day that she personally experienced the dangers of farming.

Melissa and her husband were scooping and cleaning up corn by

the PTO shaft on their farm. Melissa was on one side and David was on the other side of the shaft. Although her hair was pulled back in a ponytail, when Melissa leaned up, her hair laid across the PTO shaft.

"There was a safety guard, but it had slid down just enough that my hair could lay right in that exposed piece, and when it did, it ripped my hair off my head. After that, I spent 17 days in the hospital," Melissa said.

Her recovery continued after she was released from the hospital and included a skin graft from her thigh to her skull. Although that was five years ago, that tragic accident and the lessons it brought has not been forgotten. Today, Melissa is thankful that God spared her from a worse outcome and that she is still here.

Through her accident, Melissa has learned first-hand the dangers of farming, and she wants others to take heed as well.

"I want to teach and remind young and old farmers to please practice farm safety. Just please practice farm safety," pleaded Melissa.

Farm Safety is something that Melissa is very passionate about. She knows, all too well, how life can change in a second. Sometimes a simple action is the difference

between life and death.

Despite the accident, Melissa still loves the farm life. She raises hogs on their 700-acre pasture-based farming operation with her husband and son, Darren. They also grow wheat straw, corn & soybeans.

"My husband grew up farming. I grew up farming, and when we got married, we just took on the heritage of farming," Melissa said.

To help invest in their farm heritage, the Wallace's are patrons of Cape Fear Farm Credit. For them, partnering with Cape Fear Farm Credit has been a way to help get through challenges. If they need financial help, Cape Fear is there. That allows the Wallace family to be able to be farmers and complete their goals.

"We have this thought that everybody's got to eat" chuckled Melissa, "so there's always going to be a need for a farmer."

Farming is a dangerous job, and it comes with many challenges. However, folks like Melissa and her husband are committed to feeding their communities and the world despite the dangers and challenges. They are focused on building a rich heritage and, of course, doing so as safely as possible.



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# Learning to practice farm safety vital to agriculture

## From OSHA

Contrary to the popular image of fresh air and peaceful surroundings, a farm is not a hazard-free work setting. Every year, thousands of farm workers are injured and hundreds more die in farming accidents. According to the National Safety Council, agriculture is the most hazardous industry in the nation.

### Health and Safety Hazards on Farms

Farm workers—including farm families and migrant workers—are exposed to hazards such as the following:

- Chemicals/Pesticides
- Cold
- Dust
- Electricity
- Grain bins
- Hand tools
- Highway traffic
- Lifting
- Livestock handling
- Machinery/Equipment
- Manure pits
- Mud
- Noise
- Ponds
- Silos
- Slips/Trips/Falls
- Sun/Heat
- Toxic gases
- Tractors
- Wells

### High Risk Factors on Farms

The following factors may increase risk of injury or illness for farm workers:

- Age – Injury rates are highest among children age 15 and under and adults over 65.
- Equipment and Machinery – Most farm accidents and fatalities involve machinery. Proper machine guarding and doing equipment maintenance according to manufacturers' recommendations can help prevent accidents.
- Protective Equipment – Using protective equipment, such as seat belts on tractors, and personal protective equipment (such as safety gloves, coveralls, boots, hats, aprons, goggles, face shields) could significantly reduce farming injuries.
- Medical Care – Hospitals and emergency medical care are typically not readily accessible in rural areas near farms.

### How You Can Improve Farm Safety

You can start by increasing your awareness of farming

hazards and making a conscious effort to prepare for emergency situations including fires, vehicle accidents, electrical shocks from equipment and wires, and chemical exposures.

Be especially alert to hazards that may affect children and the elderly. Minimize hazards by carefully selecting the products you buy to ensure that you provide good tools and equipment. Always use seat belts when operating tractors, and establish and maintain good housekeeping practices. Here are some other steps you can take to reduce illnesses and injuries on the farm:

- Read and follow instructions in equipment operator's manuals and on product labels.
- Inspect equipment routinely for problems that may cause accidents.
- Discuss safety hazards and emergency procedures with your workers.
- Install approved rollover protective structures, protective enclosures, or protective frames on tractors.
- Make sure that guards on farm equipment are replaced after maintenance.
- Review and follow instructions in material safety data sheets (MSDSs) and on labels that come with chemical products and communicate information on these hazards to your workers.
- Take precautions to prevent entrapment and suffocation caused by unstable surfaces of grain storage bins, silos, or hoppers. Never "walk the grain."
- Be aware that methane gas, carbon dioxide, ammonia, and hydrogen sulfide can form in unventilated grain silos and manure pits and can suffocate or poison workers or explode.
- Take advantage of safety equipment, such as bypass starter covers, power take-off master shields, and slow-moving vehicle emblems.

### The Benefits of Improved Safety and Health Practices

Better safety and health practices reduce worker fatalities, injuries, and illnesses as well as associated costs such as workers' compensation insurance premiums, lost production, and medical expenses. A safer and more healthful workplace improves morale and productivity.

### Additional Information on Safety and Health

For more information about farm safety, visit OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/agriculturaloperations](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/agriculturaloperations), the National Safety Council at [www.nsc.org/farmsafe/facts.htm](http://www.nsc.org/farmsafe/facts.htm), the Environmental Protection Agency at

[www.epa.gov/pesticides/safety/workers/workers.htm](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/safety/workers/workers.htm), and the Centers for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov/nasd/menu/topic/topic.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/menu/topic/topic.html). In addition, OSHA has a variety of materials and tools available elsewhere on its website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

### OSHA Publications

OSHA has an extensive publications program. For a listing of free or sales items, visit OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov/pls/publications/pubindex.list](http://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/pubindex.list) or contact the OSHA Publications Office, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, N-3101, Washington, DC 20210. Telephone (202) 693-1888 or fax to 202-693-2498.

### Contacting OSHA

To report an emergency, file a complaint or seek OSHA advice, assistance or products, call 800-321-OSHA or contact your nearest OSHA regional or area office.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For questions or to get information or advice, to report an emergency, fatality, inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye, to file a confidential complaint, or to request OSHA's free on-site consultation service, contact your nearest OSHA office, visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov), or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), TTY 1-877-889-5627.

For more information on ATV safety and other issues affecting farmworkers, visit OSHA's Safety and Health Topics Agricultural Operations website at [www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/agriculturaloperations](http://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/agriculturaloperations).



Photo by Cindy Ivey / Special to The Independent  
Pesticides can be a hazard if not stored and handled correctly.

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## Practice Electrical Safety On The Farm

Crisp, fall weather means harvest time. Don't let overlooked electrical hazards turn this harvest dangerous. Farm workers are killed each year by electrocution when large farm machinery makes contact with overhead power lines. Following tips will help keep everyone on the farm safe:

- Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles.
- Make sure there are ample clearances of power lines when moving large machinery such as combines, pickers, and front end loaders.
- Consider existing power lines when planning construction.
- Be extra careful when working around trees and brush that often obstruct power lines.
- Make sure all farm workers are trained on how to properly operate machinery near overhead power lines.



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# Moving ag equipment safely on highways

By Trooper R.E. Mellott  
State Highway Patrol

The days are getting shorter, and school buses are back on the road. That normally means that harvest time is nearing peak season. I am Trooper R.E. Mellott with the N.C. State Highway Patrol. As a fellow agriculture enthusiast, I understand that this can be a very busy and stressful season. I would like to take just a few minutes to remind you of N.C. State Law as you move equipment.

Law does allow for equipment up to 25 feet to be moved under most circumstances, so long as we follow the rules of the road.

Those rules include:

- The equipment may only be operated during daylight hours. (remember sunrise to sunset)
- The equipment must display a red flag on front and rear ends or a flashing warning light visible for 300 ft. in both directions.
- If the equipment is moved under its own power, and the move is more than 10 miles or visibility at any point during the move is less than 600 ft., two flagmen in vehicles are required. One flagman shall be 300 ft. in front of the equipment and the other 300 ft. behind the equipment.

• Every piece of equipment shall operate to the right of the center line unless the combined width of the traveling lane and the accessible shoulder is less than the width of the equipment.

• If equipment is causing a delay in traffic, the equipment shall move off the paved portion of the highway at the nearest practical location until the vehicles following the equipment have passed.

• The equipment shall be operated in the designed transport position that minimizes equipment width. No removal of equipment or appurtenances is required under this subdivision.

(The above is information meant to be a reference tool. For a complete list please see N.C. General Statute 20-116(j))

The N.C. Highway Patrol wishes you a safe and, successful harvest season. We are working, as always, with your local N.C. Agriculture Extension Office to provide periodic informational events. Please contact us or your local N.C. Agriculture Extension Office with any questions. As always, we work for you! (Robert.Mellott@ncdps.gov)

Submitted by Max Knowles, Extension Agent specializing in livestock with the Sampson County Cooperative Extension Center.

## Child safety on the farm

Thousands of children are injured and hundreds are killed every year by hazards found on the farm. Some of these children are working on the farm while others wander into trouble on their own or are invited into hazardous areas.

Implement injury prevention strategies today to protect agriculture's greatest resource, our children.

- Do not allow children to roam freely on the farm. Design a fenced "safe play area." This area should be near the house and away from work activities.
- Inspect your farm on a regular basis for hazards that can injure children wandering on your farm. Correct obvious hazards immediately.
- Children who are physically able to be involved in farm work should be assigned age-appropriate tasks and continually trained to perform them. They should also be constantly supervised.

- Equip all barns, farm shops, chemical storage areas, livestock pens, etc. with latches that can be locked or secured so that children cannot enter.
- Always turn equipment off, lower hydraulics and remove the key before leaving equipment unattended.
- Do not expose children to hazards. Never carry them on tractors and equipment or invite them into the farm shop, livestock barns, grain bins, etc. Inspection
- Is there a designated "safe play area?"
- Are equipment guards in place? • Are hazardous work areas locked?
- Are farm ponds and pits fenced?

Information supplied by the National Safety Council's Agricultural Division, the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) -www.necasag.org 888-844-6322.

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# All-terrain vehicle hazards during farm work

## From OSHA

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are used in agricultural operations to help farmworkers gather livestock, pull trailers and haul small loads, or carry pesticide applicators. ATVs have caused many farm fatalities and injuries. This fact sheet provides practical safety measures that employers and supervisors can take to protect vehicle operators from harmful incidents. Employers are responsible for providing a safe workplace for farmworkers.

### ATVs Can Be Dangerous

ATV injuries and fatalities on farms and ranches are widespread and increasing. NIOSH identified 2,090 ATV injuries and 321 ATV fatalities between 2003 and 2011, with three out of five of the occupational deaths occurring in agriculture.

The majority of these ATV incidents result from:

- Loss of control of the vehicle
- ATV rollovers
- Operators being thrown from the vehicle
- ATVs colliding with a tree or other obstacles
- Operators not wearing a helmet or other protective equipment
- Inexperienced operators

Employers need to provide ATVs that have the following features: Motorcycle-type handle bars for steering control; large, low-pressure tires; single worker design; and a seat that can be straddled by the worker.

**ATV Safety Checks** Employers should train operators to perform pre- and post-ride safety checks to ensure that the ATV is operating properly. Pre- and post-ride checks should include inspecting:

- Tires and wheels
- Controls and cables
- Lights and electrical systems
- Oil and fuel
- Chain and/or driveshaft

### Training

Employers should train operators on how to operate an ATV safely. The best way to learn to operate an ATV safely is through training and practice.

Employers should:

- Provide training on the ATV owner's manual to each operator.

- Never allow untrained workers to drive an ATV.
- Never allow workers to operate an ATV when tired or impaired.
- Ensure that guards are in place to prevent accidental contact with hot or moving ATV parts.

Employers should train operators to:

- Place the gear in neutral or park, with the parking brake locked before starting the vehicle.
- Never operate an ATV at excessive speeds.
- Maintain a speed that is proper for the terrain, visibility conditions, and the operator's experience level.
- Stay alert near marked and unmarked terrain hazards, such as holes, stumps, ruts, culverts, wires, fences, and large rocks.
- Operate ATVs in accord with the owner's manual and not attempt wheelies, jumps or hazardous stunts.
- Be aware when approaching hills, turns, and other obstacles.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Employers should provide operators with PPE awareness training prior to allowing an operator to handle an ATV. Even though the moving parts of an ATV are covered, entanglement with moving parts or accidental contact with objects can cause severe injuries.

Employers should:

- Provide head and face protection and protective clothing.
- Ensure that ATV operators always wear proper protective gear or equipment. PPE can reduce the severity of ATV-related incidents.

Employers should train operators to:

- Secure loose bootlaces that can become entangled in a spinning ATV axle.
- Never wear loose clothing that could get caught in passing brush, pulling the operator off the seat.
- Wear helmets/head protection; bicycle helmets do not provide sufficient face and head protection and absorb little energy.
- Wear protective clothing, including gloves, non-skid shoes, goggles, or face shields, long pants and long sleeves.

### Load and Weight Considerations

Employers should provide operators with information about the ATV's load and weight limitations. The total weight of the ATV should not go above the manufacturer's limits—this includes the weights of the ATV, the load and the operator. Multiple riders on a single-rider ATV and the improper installation of equipment can have an impact on an ATV's maneuverability.

Employers should train operators to:

- Check tires to ensure that they are fully inflated.
- Never allow multiple riders (unless the ATV is specifically designed for more than one rider).
- Provide attachments and equipment that are appropriate and approved by the manufacturer.
- Keep the ATV well-balanced so that it does not pull to one side.
- Secure tools firmly to the ATV's cargo rack.
- Understand the ATV's trailer loading and pulling procedures.

### Crossing Roads and Highways

Serious injuries or fatalities can occur when ATV operators are riding on or crossing roads. Employers who require operators to cross roads and highways should provide training on how to do so safely. Employers should check their state or local laws before allowing ATVs to operate on roads or highways.

Employers should train operators to:

- Stop on the shoulder before crossing. The leader should dismount and watch for traffic as he waves the group across the road.
- Yield the right of way to oncoming traffic and always look both ways.
- Cross roads at a 90 degree angle where there are fewer obstructions and the visibility is good.
- Ride cautiously on roadways; ATVs handle differently on pavement.

### Working Alone

Farms are worksites that can be spread out over several acres, where workers could be working alone for long periods of time. Working alone includes all tasks where operators do not have direct contact with the employer or co-workers. This could include

herding or tending to animals, maintaining fences or buildings, or tasks in fields. Employers should have check-in procedures in place for these operators.

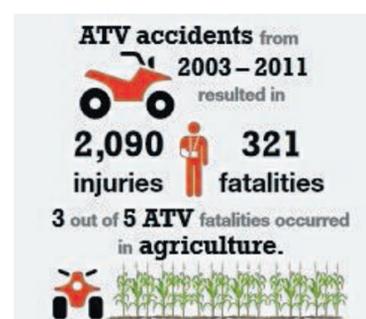
Employers should know the operators:

- Destination.
- Estimated time of departure and return.
- Contact information.
- Mode of communication (cell phone, hand-held radio, etc.)
- Alternate plans in the event of bad weather, traffic problems, etc.

### Workers' Rights

Workers have the right to:

- Working conditions that do not pose a risk of serious harm.
- Receive information and training (in a language and vocabulary the worker understands) about workplace hazards, methods to prevent them in their workplace.
- Review records of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- File a complaint asking OSHA to inspect their workplace if they believe there is a serious hazard or that their employer is not following OSHA's rules. OSHA will keep all identities confidential.
- Exercise their rights under the law without retaliation, including reporting an injury or raising health and safety concerns with their employer or OSHA. If a worker has been retaliated against for using their rights, they must file a complaint with OSHA as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days.



For questions or to get information or advice, and to report an emergency, contact your nearest OSHA office, visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov), or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA. For more information on ATV safety and other issues affecting farmworkers, visit OSHA's Safety and Health Topics Agricultural Operations website at [www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/agriculturaloperations](http://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/agriculturaloperations).

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**Whenever You Are on the Farm Practice Safety Everywhere**

Help lower the number of accidents by making your farm a safe place to work and live. After all, having a successful farm is important, but not as important as the safety of you, your family and your employees.

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# Grain storage structures and handling equipment safely

Storage and handling of large volumes of grain or feed on farms is common in many areas. Automated equipment has made handling of grain easy and fast. But, grain storage structures and handling equipment create hazardous work areas.

Farm workers should make sure they take the proper steps to put safety first to prevent injuries, illnesses and even death.

- Label grain bins to warn of entrapment hazards.
- Lock entrances to grain handling areas to keep bystanders and children out.
- Install ladders inside bins.
- Do not enter grain bins that are being loaded or unloaded. Flowing grain can trap and suffocate you in seconds.
- If it is necessary to enter a bin, shut off and lockout power before entering. Use a safety harness and safety line. Have several people available outside the bin to lift entrant out in case of an emergency.
- Wear NIOSH-approved dust-filtering respirators when working in and around grain handling areas. High amounts of dust and molds could be present and are extremely dangerous.
- Wear approved hearing protection when working around noisy equipment, aeration fans, dryers, etc.
- Be very cautious of grain that may have gone out of condition. Crusted grain may have cavities beneath the surface that can collapse, leading to entrapment and suffocation.

- Keep bystanders and children away from grain bins and grain handling equipment.
- Inspection
- Are ladders in good condition?
  - Is lockout available for power?
  - Is electrical equipment safe?
  - Are overhead power lines nearby?
  - Are approved respirators available?
  - Are guards and shields in place?

Information supplied by the Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) –www.necasag.org or 888-844-6322.



# Safe use of hand tools

Tools have always been indispensable helpmates, and a good set of hand tools is essential for any farm shop, machinery or facility repair. Unfortunately, tools also contribute to countless injuries when used incompetently.

Follow these tips to help prevent accidents involving hand tools:

- Use the correct tool for the job.
- Keep tools in good condition. Handles should be tight and free from defect.
- Cutting tools should be kept sharp. Wedges and punches should be free from "mushroom heads".
- Use and maintain power tools according to their instructions.
- Make sure power tools are properly grounded or are double insulated. Never cut the three-prong plug off or use a two prong adapter.
- Switch off and unplug power tools before changing blades or servicing and repairing.
- Wear clothing with no strings or loose ends to catch on things.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as glasses, goggles, dust masks, face shields, hearing protection, etc.
- Keep bystanders at a safe distance.
- Keep all guards and shields in place.
- Learn to use a "push stick" with table saws. Unplug and put tools away after use.
- Consider locking out power tools to prevent others from using them without permission, especially young children.

Inspection

- Are tools in safe condition?
- Are instruction manuals available?
- Are power tools properly grounded? and properly stored?
- Are tools put away?
- Are guards and shields in place?

Information supplied by the National Safety Council's Agriculture Division, the National Education Center for Agriculture Safety.

# Crop protection — chemical safety

Crop protection chemicals are necessary to ensure the production of food from our nation's farms and ranches. They prevent unwanted weeds, insects, rodents, fungus and diseases. These chemicals must also be handled with care to reduce potential worker exposure.

- Always read packaging labels. All crop protection chemicals include information on the proper use of the chemical; its proper handling, safe storage and first aid information.
- Obtain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the crop protection chemicals that you use. MSDS contain additional health hazard data, spill or leak procedures and handling information. Be sure to keep a set separate from the storage area.
- Have on hand and wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) required by the label. These can include: chemical-resistant gloves, coveralls, boots, hat and apron, approved respirator with cartridges for

pesticides, and chemical protection goggles and face shield.

- Keep crop protection chemicals in storage areas that can be locked to keep bystanders and children out. Be sure to label the storage area as containing pesticides.
- Launder chemical-soiled clothing separately from other laundry and triple rinse. Inspection
- Are all chemicals properly labeled?
- Are all chemicals in locked storage area?
- Is correct PPE available and used?
- Are MSDS maintained on all chemicals?
- Is application equipment operating properly?
- Is the mixing/loading area on concrete?

Information supplied by the National Safety Council's Agriculture Division, the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) –www.necasag.org or 888-844-6322.

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**Always Use Caution When Working Near Power Lines**

As rewarding as it may be, farming is an extremely difficult job - and it ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. Accidents can happen in a split-second, which is why Four County EMC reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines. At Four County Electric Membership Corporation, safety is top priority for all - our employees and our members.



Don't let this harvest turn dangerous when electrical hazards are overlooked. Each year, farmers are electrocuted when large farm machinery comes into contact with overhead power lines.

Often, the situation occurs because newer, bigger piece of equipment no longer clears a line the way smaller one did. The following tips will help keep everyone on the farm safe:

- **Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles.**
- **Make sure there are ample clearances of power lines when moving large machinery such as combines, grain augers, pickers, bailers and front end loaders. Do this every year as equipment sizes or soil conditions may change.**
- **When planning new construction, consider existing power lines.**
- **Be extra careful when working around tree and brush that often obstruct power lines.**
- **Train all farm workers on how to properly operate machinery near overhead power lines.**

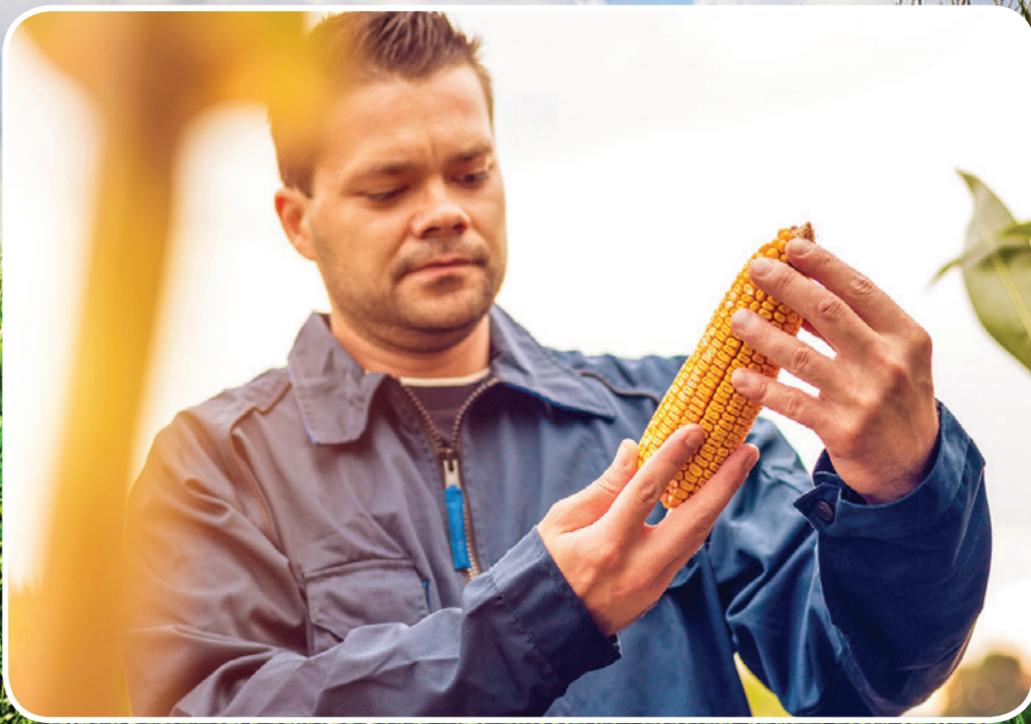
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