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THE SAMPSON  
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NATIONAL

FARMS

SAFETY



& HEALTH

WEEK SEPTEMBER 19-25, 2021

## HARVEST SAFETY TIPS FOR FARMWORKERS

- **Maintain a 10-foot clearance** around all utility equipment in all directions.

- **Use a spotter and deployed flags** to maintain safe distances from power lines and other equipment when doing field work.

- **Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle.** Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipe and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

- **If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact us immediately by phone and remain inside the vehicle** until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.

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# TIPS FOR SAFER FARMING



Tractor accidents, grain entrapment and injuries from ornery livestock are just some of the dangers agricultural workers face every day. In fact, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health says agriculture is one of the most hazardous industries in the United States.

In 2016, the agricultural industry had a rate of 21.4 deaths per 100,000 workers, and each day agricultural workers experienced 100 non-fatal, lost-work-time injuries.

Agricultural dangers are not limited to North America. In Ireland, farm accidents have increased by 13 percent in the last five years and by 31 percent in the last decade, according to a national survey of farm accidents conducted by the Teagasc National Farm Survey. Furthermore, 97 percent of all farm accident victims required medical treatment.

**FARMS ARE DANGEROUS PLACES**, and while carelessness can and does contribute to many incidents, accidents also take place during routine, seemingly safe activities. These farm safety guidelines can help lower the risk of injuries.

• **KNOW FARM EQUIPMENT.** Read and follow all instructions in the equipment operation manuals. In addition, attend local farm safety workshops to learn more about specific equipment and products.

• **CONDUCT ROUTINE SAFETY CHECKS.** Look around buildings and grounds for obvious hazards, such as fire hazards and hazardous materials, including farm chemicals that are not stored correctly.

• **PRACTICE CLEANLINESS.** Maintain clean and neat work areas with tools stored properly and out of the way after use.

• **BE MINDFUL OF YOUR CLOTHING AND HAIR.** Many accidents involve a power take-off system, or PTO, which is a common component of large rotary mowers, tractors and forage choppers. Clothing can easily get caught in an engaged but unguarded PTO stub. It's easy for laces or coveralls to become wrapped around a spinning stub shaft. The PTO driveline and other protrusion points also can be dangerous if people do not pay attention.

• **USE ROLLOVER PROTECTION STRUCTURES.** ROPS can be used on tractors and other equipment to prevent injuries. In addition, wear seat belts and employ other safety equipment as advised.

• **AVOID EXTRA PASSENGERS.** It can be tempting to take the kids for a spin, but do not allow additional passengers to ride on agricultural equipment.

• **EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN HANDLING CHEMICALS.** Take extra precautions when handling any chemicals, including pesticides.

• **WEAR PROTECTIVE GEAR.** Wear appropriate gear and equipment as outlined by NIOSH or the Mine Safety and Health Administration. Make sure the skin, feet, ears, eyes, and hands are protected at all times.

• **EMPLOY LOCK OUT/TAG OUT CONTROL.** This is a process where one can work on equipment only after every energy source has been controlled, such as hydraulic, pneumatic, mechanical, and electrical, according to Rural Mutual Insurance Company. Turning off equipment and using certain controls or locks on devices can prevent equipment from restarting before it is safe to do so.

Farm safety should be a priority for owners, their families and employees so that agricultural injuries can be reduced.



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# COMMON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES

The concept of sustainability varies by industry. Within the agricultural industry, sustainability is a multifaceted concept that has become increasingly popular in recent decades.

According to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, sustainable agriculture seeks to increase profitable farm income, promote environmental stewardship, enhance quality of life for farm families and communities, and increase production for human food and fiber needs. In an attempt to reach those goals, farmers who embrace sustainable agriculture may look to various practices.

• **COVER CROPS:** The Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonprofit organization that aims to employ independent science to address the planet's most pressing problems, notes that cover crops are planted during the offseason when soils have traditionally been left bare. Cover crops can help prevent soil erosion and replenish the nutrients in the soil. Cover crops also can limit weed growth, reducing the need for herbicides that can prove harmful to the environment.

• **REDUCE OR ELIMINATE TILLAGE:** According to the UCS, traditional plowing, or tillage, can cause a significant amount of soil loss, even as it prepares fields for planting and reduces the likelihood of weed problems. Eliminating or reducing tillage involves inserting seeds directly into undisturbed soil, which can reduce erosion and improve the health of the soil.

• **INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT:** Integrated pest management techniques aim to minimize the use of chemical pesticides that can prove harmful to the environment and local wildlife. According to the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program, IPM strategies like

habitat manipulation and the planting of disease-resistant plants are designed to promote long-term prevention of pests and the damage such pests can cause.

• **AGROFORESTRY:** The Association for Temperate Agroforestry defines agroforestry as an intensive land management system that incorporates trees and/or shrubs to optimize the benefits they provide when deliberately combined with crops and/or livestock. The shade and shelter provided by trees and shrubs can protect plants, animals and water resources.

• **CROP/LIVESTOCK INTEGRATION:** The UCS notes that there is growing evidence to suggest that the careful integration of crop and animal production can help farmers make their farms more efficient and profitable.

Sustainable agriculture is a complex concept that can benefit farmers, their local communities and the environment in myriad ways.



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## THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE

When asked to think of industries that utilize technology in unique ways, few people may immediately think of agriculture. But technology has left a significant footprint in every industry, and the agricultural sector is no exception.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture notes that modern farms operate a lot differently than the farms of yesteryear. Dramatic changes have taken place within the agricultural industry over the last few decades, helping farming operations become more efficient and profitable as well as safer and more eco-friendly.

Robots, temperature and moisture sensors, aerial images, and GPS technologies are now routinely employed within the agricultural industry. The NIFA notes that the value of such technologies cannot be understated. Thanks to the technologies at their disposals, farmers no longer have to uniformly apply water, fertilizer and pesticides to their farms. Technology now allows them to use only the minimum amounts required as they zero in on individual plants and target specific areas of their farms. The NIFA notes that the utilization of these technologies produces some very real benefits, including:

- *Higher crop productivity*
- *Reduced impact on natural ecosystems*
- *Less runoff of chemicals into rivers and groundwater*
- *Increased worker safety*

Safer, more efficient and more eco-friendly operations can only make the agricultural industry more successful in the decades to come. That's especially notable as the world continues to confront climate change and how it might affect the food supply.

Though few may recognize the role of technology in modern farming, there's no denying the impact that various technologies have already had on the agricultural industry. And that impact figures to become even more profound in the decades to come.



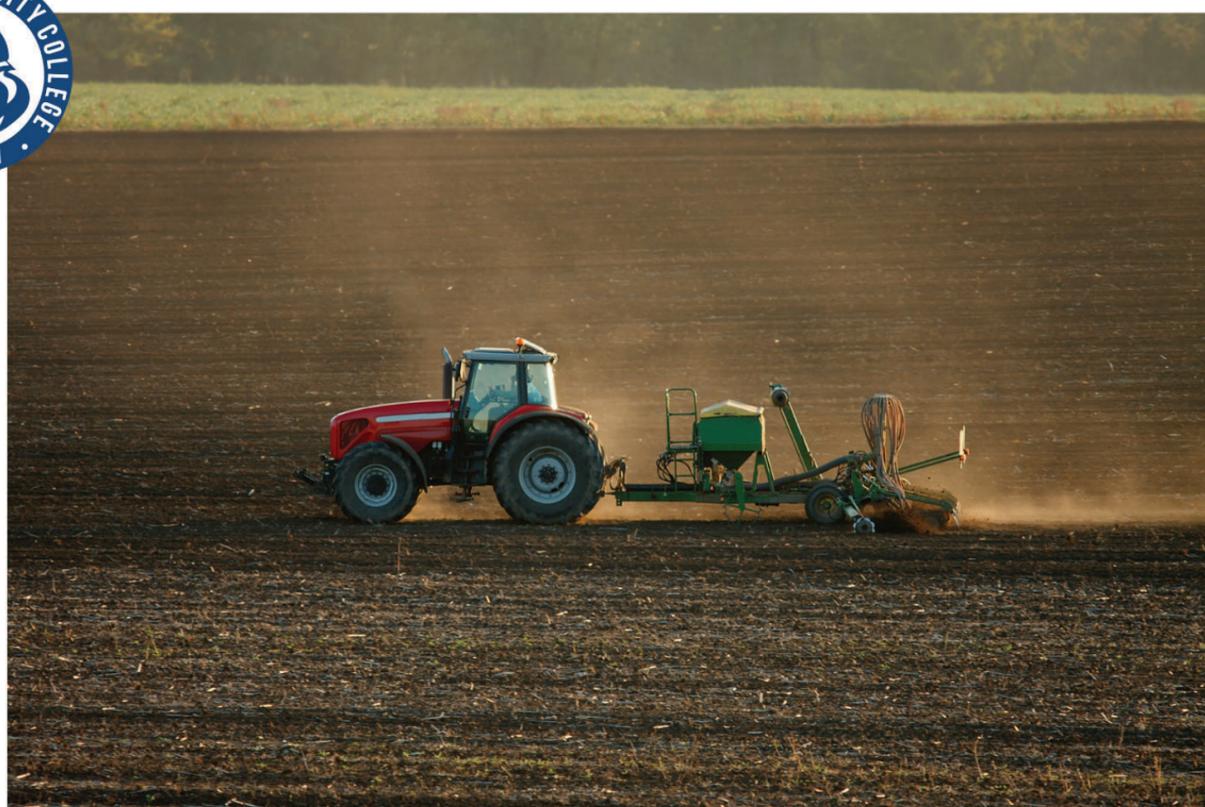
### Stay Safe This Season

- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines at all times, in all directions. Lower extensions when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call South River EMC.
- Don't use equipment with frayed cables.
- Before digging, dial 811 first.
- Check field conditions before starting work.



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