

# Network News

**THE NETWORK** | providing agricultural occupational health and safety information and programs to Saskatchewan farm families since 1988

The Network is offering Farm Safety Plan workshops in multiple locations around the province to make it as easy as possible for Saskatchewan farm families to attend. If your community would like to host a workshop this fall or winter, please contact the Network to set up a date.



## FARM SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS Do You Have a Farm Safety Plan?

Due to innovative Saskatchewan producers and current technology, the nature of agriculture in our province has evolved. The result is a diverse range of fascinating branches of farming. This requires a flexible method of documenting your Farm Safety Plan to accommodate this diversity and to suit your operation.

The idea of a Farm Safety Plan is not new. The Network has designed a Farm Safety Plan tool to be as simple and time efficient as possible to complement both the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture's (CCHSA) research and the Farm Credit Corporation's (FCC) survey

which indicated that *85% of farmers believe farm safety is important, yet only 15% have a formal Farm Safety Plan.* With partial funding support from the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association's (CASA) *Growing Forward* initiative, the Farm Safety Plan has been developed to use the Network's library of resources to its full potential.

The diversity of Saskatchewan farming makes farming exciting and each operation unique, but it also poses various blends of safety hazards on individual farms. The Network's Farm Safety Plan workshop is designed to accommodate all types of

farming and will allow you to adapt your plan to the current and changing needs within your unique farming operation. *Each participant will leave the workshop with a personalized Farm Safety Plan.* This is a first step towards showing a good measure of due diligence in your farming operation. The Network's goal is to put a Farm Safety Plan into the hands of all Saskatchewan farm families to make the farm a safer place to live and work.

***Safety never goes out of style or becomes obsolete.***

### **NIN** IN THIS ISSUE

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:  
Box 120 RUH, 103 Hospital Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W8

|                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| WORLD SPIROMETRY DAY..... 2  | TOWING SAFETY..... 6        |
| FARM WOMEN ..... 3           | GRAIN BIN SAFETY ..... 7    |
| STRESS ON THE FARM ..... 4   | SCHOLARSHIP ..... 8         |
| HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES ..... 5 | CONTACT INFORMATION ..... 8 |

# NETWORK ACTIVITIES



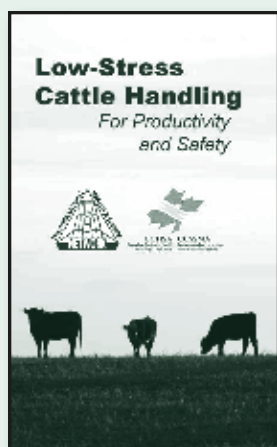
**NEW!**

Are you a senior farmer?

Do you work with a senior farmer?

The Network has a new factsheet with tips to help you consider age related health and safety issues. Please call (306) 966-6644 to have a copy sent directly to you. It will also be posted on our website.

[www.aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca](http://www.aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca)



The Low Stress Cattle Handling DVD is available from the Network. An instructor's package is also still available. If you are interested in a copy, please call (306)966-6644

## RESPIRATORY HEALTH

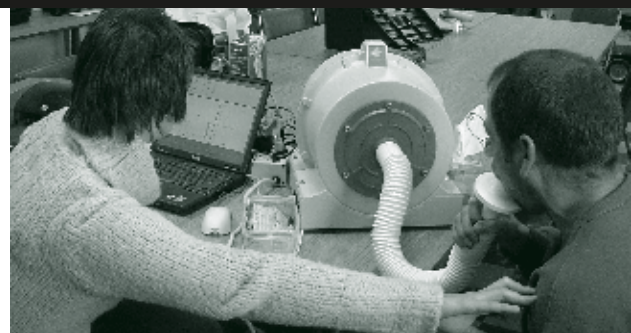
As part of the 2010: The Year of the Lung, the Lung Association of Saskatchewan and the Agricultural Health and Safety Network are excited to announce the first World Spirometry Day on October 14th, 2010. The focus of the day is to bring awareness about the opportunity to promote the diagnosis of lung conditions, encourage people to get their lungs tested, and to raise awareness about lung health.

### WHAT IS SPIROMETRY?

Spirometry is a type of pulmonary (lung) function test that measures the amount of air taken in (volume) and exhaled as a function of time. During a spirometry test, patients place their mouth over the mouthpiece of the spirometer, take a deep breath in, and blow out as forcefully as possible. Spirometry gives health professionals important numbers that may indicate problems with lung function and lung health.

### WHAT IS SPIROMETRY?

The Respiratory Health Clinics for Farmers are an educational and respiratory screening service provided free of charge to rural residents in the Network RMs. Professionally trained staff work with farmers and their families in their local community to increase awareness of health and



safety risks associated with respiratory hazards on the farm, develop methods to reduce their exposure and show how they and their family physician can monitor the effects such hazards have on their respiratory health.

Clinics include: demonstration of respiratory personal protective equipment, blood pressure and lung function screening (spirometry), counseling and referral based on participants' respiratory health questionnaires and screening results. The Registered Nurse that delivers the program uses the clinics as an opportunity to address various health concerns with farmers in a confidential environment in their local community.

Everyone who works in agriculture should have a baseline pulmonary (lung) function test. Tests done later may show changes in your lungs that could indicate that damage is happening to them. Be aware that some agricultural hazards effect the lungs for a long time before there are signs of disease.

If you have morning phlegm, chronic phlegm, wheeze, and shortness of breath, tell your doctor. Be prepared to answer the following questions:

- When did the symptoms start?
- What were you doing when they started?
- Do your symptoms ever improve or are they present all the time?

*The Network will be offering Respiratory Health Clinics for Farmers and their families that will include spirometry testing throughout Saskatchewan from October 2010 to April 2011. If you are interested in attending a clinic please call your RM office or the Network office at (306) 966-6643 or (306) 966-6644.*

# FARM WOMEN



## CARE GIVING

Farm women are frequently the busiest people on the farm performing various multiple roles. When they take off-farm employment, help on the farm, take care of family and household, they often find themselves short on time to rejuvenate.

Women need to take care of themselves without feeling guilty because they will not be able to effectively help others when they become run-down or ill. Anyone who has traveled by plane knows that we are expected to put on our own oxygen mask before we help others. The same principle can be applied to other areas of our lives.

### *Stop neglecting yourself by*

- Eating nutritiously
- Exercising
- Making time for relaxation
- Keeping medical appointments
- Getting enough sleep
- Sometimes just saying NO

You shouldn't need permission to take care of yourself. Care giving and community demands take a toll on health and well being, making down time even more important

### **WOMEN AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

Although women may perform different types of farm work they are also at risk for injury.

There are many farm women who are very involved in the farming operation on the family farm. There are also many women who are "pinch-hitters" or only fill in when someone is taking a break or fixing equipment. Women also need farm safety training. They are at risk for injury.

### *Consider the following:*

- What fits the men in the farming operation doesn't necessarily fit you.
- Sometimes you are only on the job for a few minutes or hours to fill in, but this is enough to expose you to hazards.
- Sometimes we try to make due with someone else's PPE. We need our own.
- Ill-fitting PPE can jeopardize your health and safety by causing unnecessary risk.
- If it is uncomfortable we don't want to wear it. So make sure that you have comfortable fitting PPE.

For more information on PPE, the Agricultural Health and Safety Network can supply you with a fact sheet on Personal Protective Equipment for the Respiratory System and a resource on hearing protection.

Call **(306) 966-6644** or find these and many other useful resources at: [www.aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca](http://www.aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca)



# STRESS ON THE FARM

In 1948 the World Health Organization (WHO) was created. The term **Health** was defined as being “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

## WHAT IS THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS?

**Saskatchewan farm families are living with one of the most stressful occupations.** They deserve credit for working hard to meet challenges such as weather, pests, disease, high-input costs, volatile markets and low financial returns that are often beyond their control.

Many farmers may be looking at a lot of red ink this year with hundreds of thousands of acres that they were unable to seed this spring and a late wet harvest. A prolonged period of financial difficulty can result in a prolonged period of emotional stress triggering physical problems that include pain and lack of sleep. Emotional issues may involve depressed feelings, anger, anxiety, memory loss, lack of concentration, and indecision. Self-esteem may decline when individuals start blaming themselves for the farm's problems.

There are numerous signs that emotional challenges have gotten the best of someone and they are in a declining state of physical and mental health that can quickly deteriorate into states of depression and potential suicide. Friends, neighbors, and other family members need to be aware of the dynamics involved and familiar with professional services that can be called for help, particularly if the situation is deteriorating toward a life threatening crisis.

### **Indicators of potential suicide include:**

- Anxiety
- Withdrawal
- Feelings of helplessness
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Making a suicidal plan
- Other cries for help

These signs along with indicators of depression should be the launching pad for action by friends, neighbors or other



family members. Knowing what services are available in a community to help with depression and potential suicide,

and be prepared to recommend an appropriate service is a positive first step. Visit with the individual or family member and share your observation that something may be troubling them and recommend a person or agency that might help with the issue.

Someone to talk to is a phone call away. The Farm Stress Line can help by:

- Clarifying the problem or concern and work with you towards a solution
- Accessing a wide range of programs and services available to farm and ranch families, and rural residents
- Connecting you with the appropriate organizations, professional or program that best suits your needs
- Listening and supporting in a safe, neutral and non-judgmental environment

Toll free: 1-(800)-667-4442 8am-9pm Monday-Saturday (excluding statutory holidays)

It is important to remember that there are people at the Farm Stress Line who understand the difficulties farm and ranch families face because they have lived the experience, they respect confidentiality and there is no call display. Often by talking with a trusted person you can gain a perspective that may lead to practical solutions. You may come up with alternatives that you have not considered.

## HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES:

### Enjoy local produce



Farmers who endure high levels of stress may find that it has negatively affected their health and has reduced their quality of life. High stress can compromise personal safety and affects family and community relationships. It is important for anyone in the farm community to be on the lookout for signs of difficulty. **Difficult Times: Stress on the Farm** is a resource available at [aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca](http://aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca)

#### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO EAT SEASONALLY?

Eating produce at its peak is how nature intended it. Even though some produce are available year-round, like strawberries in the winter, fruits and vegetables are at their best during their real growing season. They are higher in nutrients, tastier and more affordable. Eating in season often means purchasing foods grown locally or eating from own gardens which is better for our farmers and the environment because food hasn't been transported over long distances and stored for long periods of time.

When autumn's chill hits the air it is time to dig the stockpot out of the back of the cupboard

to make simple soups laden with vegetables. The classics like chicken noodle soup like grandma made, minestrone and creamy pumpkin are always great to provide a wide variety of nutrients and energy. Fall time is the peak time for enjoying delicious earthy vegetables such as parsnips, beets, carrots, potatoes, and fennel.

Try to purchase local produce this fall from Saskatchewan farmers if possible, unless Canadians want all of our food to come from corporate farms, the ideology that food should be so cheap has to change. If we want our farm families to survive we have to support these farms. In addition, eating local produce is the healthiest option!



#### WHAT IS HEALTHY EATING?

Healthy eating is essential to your health and well-being. Try and eat "fresh" fruits and vegetables as much as possible and avoid industrially processed foods.

Healthy eating means choosing a variety of foods from Eating Well with *Canada's Food Guide* everyday! *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* describes what **amount** of food people need and what **type** of food is part of a healthy eating pattern. The eating pattern in Canada's Food Guide includes foods from each of the four food groups – Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives, and Meat and Alternatives – plus a certain amount of added oils and fats.

Prepare meals that include foods from each of the four food groups. Aim to include at least 3 of the 4 food groups at breakfast and

meal times and 2 of the food groups at snack time.

To obtain your own copy of the *Canada Food Guide* and create a personalized guide visit Health Canada's website at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

#### By following the eating pattern outlined in Canada's Food Guide you will:

- Get enough vitamins, minerals and other nutrients to maintain great health.
- Reduce risk of obesity, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.
- Achieve overall health and vitality. Feel great!

This information was adapted from Health Canada's *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: A Resource for Educators and Communicators (2007)*.



The Sleepless in Saskatchewan DVD is still available to be purchased.

Ordering is available at our website: [aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca](http://aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca) or by calling (306) 966-6644



# HAVE A SAFE AND HEALTHY Harvest from the Staff

## AT THE AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND SAFETY NETWORK

### HITCH 'EM LOW- PULL 'EM SLOW: SAFE USE OF TOW ROPES, CABLES AND CHAINS

Stuck! A very common word this year with all the rain that Saskatchewan farmers received. Many fields are still wet and it will be a challenge during harvest to maneuver the swather, combine, and grain trucks in the field.

While backing the tractor into position for pulling, do you ever wonder, "Is that weld repair on the hook good? What about the chain repair we made with a bolt? What's gonna break first, the chain or the hook?" It is important to think about these questions when selecting a tow rope, chain, or cable for pulling.

If you have to pull out equipment this fall there are a few tips to consider to ensure the safety of all those involved:

- Matching the right size of towing device to the vehicle doing the pulling is extremely difficult due to: various surfaces, soil conditions and types.
- Always use the strongest and best tow rope, cable, or chain available.
- Use the strongest hooks that you have. Fasten them securely and be sure that the bumper or drawbar is secure.
- **Always hitch to the drawbar of the tractor doing the pulling.** Note: Hitching to anything other than the drawbar dramatically increases the chance of tipping the tractor.



*Tractors account for almost half of farm fatalities*

Whether you are directing helpers or helping out a stuck neighbor here are some things that you can do to make the towing safer:

- *Clear the area of people*, both helpers and watchers
- *Always hitch to the drawbar*
- Make sure everything---bumper, drawbar, hooks, chain, cable or nylon rope is *strong enough to handle the load*.
- Make sure *all attachments are secure*
- *Apply the power smoothly without jerking*---Do not attempt to use the elasticity of nylon rope to increase your pulling power.

#### Choose the correct material for the job:

| 1-INCH DIAMETER    | CONDITION           | BREAKING STRENGTH | ACTION WITH BREAK  |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--|
| Nylon rope         | New rope            | 25,000 pounds     | Recoils straight back to point of attachment.              |
| Steel cable        | Excellent condition | 10,000 pounds     | Whips around furiously as it recoils.                      |
| ½ inch chain links | Excellent condition | 2,400 pounds      | Rebounds unpredictably winding around anything in its way. |
| Hook               | Excellent condition | 4,000 pounds      | Like a bullet  |

All towing materials are dangerous when recoiling from a stretched condition and most can go through tractor cabs and pickup windows. Which ever combination of these materials you select for a towing device, the weakest part always breaks first. When there is a break the rest of the material becomes a deadly projectile. Parts such as ball hitches, clevises, chains and even complete bumpers have broken loose, becoming dangerous missiles.

# GRAIN BIN SAFETY: THE KILLER HARVEST



By Theresa Whalen  
CFA Farm Safety Consultant

The golden grain rushing through an auger to or from a grain bin should represent the rewards of a hard-earned harvest that brought satisfaction and prosperity. Unfortunately, all too often that golden harvest kills farmers.

Grain bins are commonly used to store grains such as corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, and sorghum. Every year several Canadian farmers suffocate in those same bins. Those deaths are preventable.

People can become caught or trapped in grain in three different ways: the collapse of bridged grain, the collapse of a vertical wall of grain, and engulfment in grain. Moving or flowing grain is involved in all three. People who work with grain – loading it, unloading it, and moving it from bin to bin – need to know about the hazards of flowing grain and how to prevent a grain entrapment situation.

“Flowing grain” is the term used to describe the down and inward movement of grain from a storage bin. A funnel is formed and the grain flows toward the bottom centre of the cone, causing quicksand-like suction. Flowing grain can exert a tremendous pull on a body caught in the flow. You will be helpless within three to four seconds. In 20 seconds or less, you can be completely buried.

Once the grain is waist level or higher, a person cannot be pulled from flowing grain with out risk of injury to their spinal

column. The grain will have a very strong grip on the body. Research has shown that up to 400 pounds of pull is required to extract a body from waist-deep grain. That is more than enough force to permanently damage the spinal column.

Most grain bin fatalities involve someone trying to break up a clog caused by crusted grain that is wedged above the unloading well in a bin, shutting off flow of grain to the unloading auger. Farmers are caught when they climb into the bin with a pole to free the clog. Too many times they climb in along, without a safety harness and with the auger running. It may seem more convenient that way – but it can be deadly. Once the clog breaks, the tremendous suction power of flowing grain pulls in the victim before he has time to react.

The best way to prevent grain bin disasters:

1. Ensure the grain put into the bins is in good condition, and stays that way so that clogs don't occur in the first place.
2. If you must enter a bin, never enter when grain is being removed.
3. Only enter when the power is off and locked-out on the unloading conveyer and auger.
4. Always use a safety harness and safety line.
5. Have at least two people near by prepared and capable of helping in an emergency.

This may take a few extra minutes of planning, preparation and aggravation – but what is that compared with the rest of your life? You are worth the effort.

For more grain bin safety advice, check out <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/ageng/safety/ae1102w.htm>

More information on this and other farm safety topics is available at [www.casa-acsa.ca](http://www.casa-acsa.ca) or [www.cfa-fca.ca](http://www.cfa-fca.ca)

## GRAIN SAFETY AND CHILDREN



Some children see flowing grain as an exciting potential sandbox. It is a tempting hazard where they can become trapped in seconds and suffocate as a result. As a prevention move, consider the following rules:

- Children should never be allowed to ride in grain wagons or enter grain storage areas
- While grain is being handled, always know where children are
- Access doors to grain storage should be locked at all times

## RURAL BUSSING

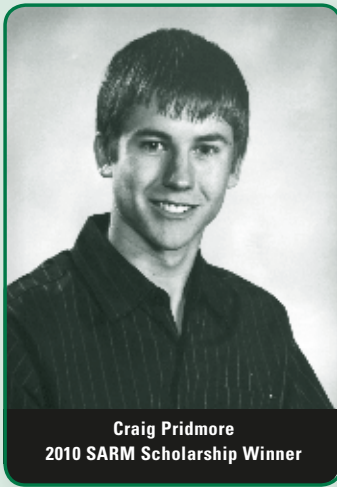


Our children are our most important resource on the farm. Twice a day school buses in Saskatchewan are responsible for the safe transportation of rural children. School buses are driven by trained drivers. The most dangerous time for children and other passenger vehicles is during loading and unloading. A child could be run over while getting off the bus. No matter which direction you are coming from, stop whenever approaching a stopped bus with activated alternately flashing red lights.

## SCHOLARSHIP

“Do not operate machinery when you are tired! Regular breaks to rest and regain focus can be the difference between a safe day and a disastrous one.”

*Craig Pridmore*  
2010 SARM Scholarship Winner



Craig Pridmore  
2010 SARM Scholarship Winner

RM of Reno No. 51 Student Awarded SARM Scholarship

Craig Pridmore from the RM of Reno No. 51 is this year's winner of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities 90th Anniversary \$1000 Student Scholarship in Agricultural Safety and Rural Health. Craig is an active member in the family's farming operation. He is planning to enter the College of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan in the fall of 2010.

Have you completed the last two years of high school in Saskatchewan?

### Are you . . .

- Enrolled in Grade 12 for the 2010-2011 school year?
- Planning on studying at a post secondary school in the fall of 2011?

### Do you . . .

- Have a farming background?
- Have parents or guardians who pay taxes to a RM?
- Live in a rural area?

### Yes! Great!

- Download an application form from <http://www.cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca/ahsn/scholarships.php> or get one from your RM office.
- Write a 1,000 word essay on The Importance of Safety and Health on Our Farm or Safety and Health Hazards on Our Farm.
- Send your application and essay to: Sueli de Freitas, Public Relations Coordinator, Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture, Box 120, Royal University Hospital, 103 Hospital Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W8

**Deadline: Post marked no later than  
Friday, February 4, 2011**

### Farm Stress Line:

**1-800-667-4442 Monday to Saturday 8 A.M. to 9 P.M.**

The farm stress line is a confidential peer counseling service responding to the needs of farm families. When you call you will talk to people who understand farming—men and women who have experienced the pressures of farming today. They are there to help you explore options and connect you with programs and services so you are better able to address problems and make choices.

### Moved? Retired? Not Farming?

To remove your name from our mailing list call (306) 966-6644 or contact the editor.

### Need more information?

There are a variety of resources available on line at: [aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca](http://aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca)

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