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FALL 2024 EDITION #55

THE NETWORK: Providing agricultural occupational health and safety information and programs to Saskatchewan farm families since 1988.



As the harvest season kicks into high gear, it is important to focus not just on getting the crop off but also on your own well-being. Managing fatigue and stress is key during these busy times. Long hours and heavy workloads can take a toll, so remember to take regular breaks, stay hydrated, and support one another. With the increased demands of harvest incidents are more likely to occur. This edition of the Network News provides a basic first aid equipment checklist and information.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: 104 Clinic Place Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 2Z4

The feature article in this edition of the Network News, "The Recovering Farmer: A Journey through the Labyrinth of Anxiety & Depression," sheds light on the emotional challenges farmers can face and offers guidance on seeking support and maintaining mental health.

We are also highlighting the importance of farm safety this harvest season (and always!) including grain safety awareness, and topics/ideas on farm safety meetings during harvest. Together, let's make this harvest season productive and safe!

The Network News

NN	IN THIS ISSUE
2/3	Managing Fatigue & Stress during Harvest
4/5	Emergency Preparedness: First Aid
6	Kids Activity Page
7	Harvest Hazards on the Farm
8/9	The Recovering Farmer: An Interview with Gerry Friesen
10/11	Grain Safety Awareness During Harvest and Farm
	Safety Meetings During Harvest
12/13	Farm Safety Meetings During Harvest
14	Emergency Preparedness: Essentials
15	Back to Ag Program
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MANAGING FATIGUE & STRESS

Harvest season is one of the busiest and most crucial times of year for farmers and their families. Long hours, early mornings, and late nights can take a toll on your physical and mental well-being. Managing fatigue during this busy time of year will help not only ensure a successful harvest but also support your overall health and safety.

Here are some practical tips to help you manage fatigue and maintain your energy levels during harvest this year.

Prioritize Quality Sleep:

- a. Create a restful environment it may sound obvious, but making sure your sleeping area is cool, dark and guiet will help you catch some guality zzzzs. Consider using earplugs or a white noise machine.
- **b.** Stick to a routine while this may pose a challenge when you are trying to make the most of every day to get the harvest in, try to go to bed and wake up at the same times every day to help regulate you body's internal clock.
- c. Avoid stimulants before bed limit caffeine and screen time in the hour before sleep.

Maintain Good Nutrition:

- a. Eat balanced meals incorporate a mix of proteins, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates to sustain your energy levels throughout the day.
- **b.** Stay hydrated drink plenty of water throughout the day and consider adding electrolytes to your water. Dehydration can lead to fatigue.
- c. Snack smart choose nutritious snacks like nuts, fruits, and whole-grain products to keep your energy up between meals.

Manage Stress Effectively:

- **a.** Practice relaxation techniques incorporate methods such as deep breathing, box breathing, or stretching into your daily routine to reduce stress.
- b. Take breaks schedule short, regular breaks to rest and recharge throughout the day. Even brief pauses can improve productivity and mood.

Stay Active:

- **a.** Exercise regularly while it may seem counterintuitive when you are working long hours, taking some time to go for a walk, ride your bike, or participate in an activity you enjoy will enhance your resilience.
- **b.** Incorporate movement into your day: Take advantage of opportunities to move throughout the day whether its walking or biking rather than driving or doing some light stretching for a few minutes throughout the day.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. HELP STARTS WITH

2-1-1 Connects and supports Saskatchewan residents to resources within your community 365 days a year, 24/7.

2-1-1 is free, confidential, and available to call, text, live chat.

The **sk.211.ca** website contains a searchable repository of over 6,000 listings of social, community, non-clinical health, and government services across the province.



DURING HARVEST

Work Smart, Not Just Hard:

- to perform the tasks required.
- and prevent burnout.

Foster Resilience:

- a. Adopt a positive mindset focus on the progress you are making rather than the challenges. Think about how much of the harvest you have brought in already rather than how much is left to go.
- **b.** Build a support network lean on family, friends and neighbours for support. Sharing experiences and advice can help you manage stress more effectively.

Pay Attention to your Body:

- **a.** Listen to fatigue signals be mindful of signs like persistent tiredness, irritability, or difficulty concentrating. These signs may indicate you need more rest or a break.
- **b.** Seek medical advice if necessary if you are experiencing severe fatigue or other health concerns, consult a healthcare professional for guidance.

will go a long way to ensuring the success of your farm.

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health, please consider seeking support. A list of resources and services can be found by contacting 211, which you can dial, text, or visit the **211 website**, or visit www.saskagmatters.ca.

SaskAgMatters Mental Health Network Inc.

- FREE mental health services for SK ag producers, their family members, and agricultural workers
- 6 hours of free therapy available per year
- Registered mental health professionals with agricultural background/knowledge

SaskAgMatters was founded in response to research findings from producers through the Saskatchewan Farmer and Rancher Mental Health (FARMh) Initiativ

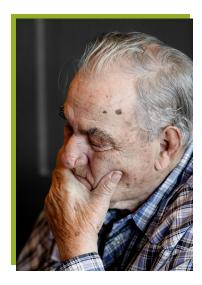
Contact us: saskagmatters@gmail.com | 1-306-371-7644





a. Delegate tasks – share responsibilities with others on the farm who are capable and have the knowledge

b. Plan and prioritize – organize tasks and set realistic goals for each day. Efficient planning can reduce stress



Bottom line: Harvest is a demanding time, but managing fatigue and maintaining your health and resiliency

Remember: Taking care of yourself is not just beneficial for you but for your whole farm! Happy Harvesting!

Supporting the people who feed us.





saskagmatters.ca

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

ncidents on the farm can be guite severe and often help may be a long distance away. Having a well-stocked first aid kit readily available is essential for providing immediate care in case of an injury. A large first aid kit should be kept in the main building or house on the farm and smaller kits should be available in farm machinery and vehicles.

CHECKLIST FOR BASIC LARGE FIRST AID KIT

- First aid manual in an emergency situation people may forget what they have learned or know about first aid.
- Sterile first aid dressings in sealed envelopes 5 cm x 5 cm for small wounds and 7 cm x 10 cm for larger wounds
- Two trauma dressings for covering large areas
- Band-aids or similar adhesive compresses
- Roller bandages and 2.5 cm, 5 cm, and 15 cm cling bandages
- Rolls of adhesive tape in assorted widths (used to hold dressings in place)
- Triangle bandages to use as slings or as coverings over large dressings
- Antiseptic wash
- Tongue depressors
- Bandage scissors and heavy-duty scissors to cut clothing
- Tweezers
- Splints long enough for a broken arm or broken leg
- Sterile saline solution
- Safety pins
- Chemical ice packs to reduce swelling
- Pocket mask for resuscitation
- Small package of sugar for individuals with diabetes
- Disposable gloves and eye goggles
- Emergency blanket
- Flashlight/headlamp and extra batteries

Source: University of Nebraska – UNMC College of Public Health



EVERY FARM SHOULD HAVE A FIRST AID KIT!

TORE FIRST AID KITS IN CONTAINERS THAT KEEP OUT DUST AND WATER.

FIRST AID KIT SUPPLIES

WorkSafe Saskatchewan has several resources available to help determine the type and contents of a first aid kit based on different work environments. Key components of assessing the type of first aid kit include:

- **1.** Identify The Highest Risk Tasks On The Farm: including the severity of injury that could result from the task, the frequency of an incident occurring from the task, and the probability of an incident occurring from the task.
- **2.** Travel Time To Medical Care: how far away is the nearest medical facility.
- 3. How Many People Are On The Farm Or Work On The Farm: the number of people who may need first aid is important to consider when determining what type of first aid kit would be best for your farm.

To view the full assessment with details and a list of first aid kits please visit **worksafesask.ca** and look for First aid kit risk assessment (CSAZ1220-17).

FIRST AID ON THE FARM: BLOOD LOSS

The **ABC**s of Bleeding

A – ALERT! Call 911

B – BLEEDING! Find the source

- Open or remove clothing to clearly see the wound
- Look for and identify "life-threatening bleeding". Remember if someone is wearing dark coloured clothing it will be difficult to see blood.

C – COMPRESS!

Apply pressure to the wound

- Cover the wound with a clean cloth and apply pressure by pushing on the wound with both hands OR
- Use a tourniquet OR
- Pack the wound with gauze or a clean cloth and then apply pressure

Visit: **stopthebleed.ca** for more information.









Hi Kids! We want you to stay safe on the farm this harvest season!

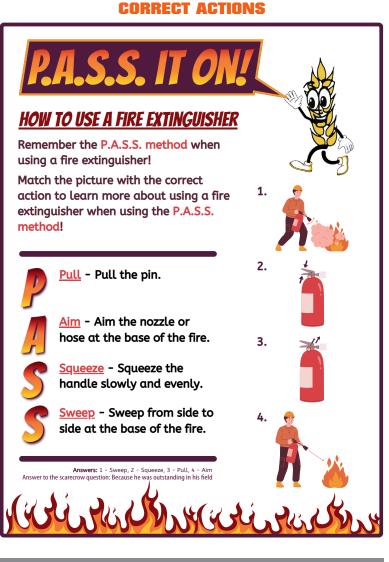
This is **Todd**, the official safety advisor of the Discovery Days program. For more information on the program go to aghealth. usask.ca and click on the activities tab.

FIRE SAFETY: Know How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

IF THERE IS A FIRE:

- **1.** Call 911 who will then dispatch your local fire department.
- **2.** Identify a safe way to escape before you approach the fire.
- **3.** Pull the pin on your fire extinguisher this will allow you to discharge the fire extinguisher.
- **4.** Aim the extinguisher nozzle at the base of the fire. If you aim at the flame the extinguishing agents will fly right through the flames. Aim to hit the base of the fire.
- **5.** Squeeze the top handle this will release the extinguishing agents.
- **6.** Sweep the nozzle of the extinguisher from side to side until the fire is out. Start with the extinguisher a safe distance away then move forward. Once the fire is out keep an eye on the area in case the fire flares up again.
- **7.** Leave the area if the fire progresses.
- **8.** Leave the area if the fire extinguisher is empty and the fire is not out.





NOW MATCH THE PICTURES BELOW WITH THE

HARVEST HAZARDS AROUND THE FARM

DANGERS OF GRAIN ENTRAPMENT

- Once grain starts to flow out of the cart it pulls you down like guicksand.
- Once you are submerged in grain up to your waist you cannot escape without help.
- It takes about 25 seconds for an adult to be fully submerged once grain starts to flow.
- Once engulfed in grain you will suffocate.

DANGERS OF FARM MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT

- Keep a safe distance away from moving equipment including tractors, combines, and other farm implements. Tractors and other machines have large moving parts that can cause injuries if you get to close.
- Farm machinery is big and if the operator can't see you there is a chance you could be run over or otherwise injured by moving machinery.

The Hazards of Grain Entrapment and Hazard Identification demonstrations are part of the Network's Discovery Days presentations if you would like to book a Discovery Day for your school or community please call: **306-966-6644** or email shs954@mail.usask.ca

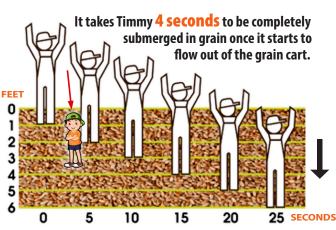


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This is Timmy. He has decided to play in the grain cart but did not tell anyone. All of sudden Timmy hears a grain truck and a tractor and realized that his family is going to empty the grain cart. He started to yell to let them know he is in the cart. Do you think they can hear him with all those machines running?



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THE RECOVERING FARMER:

The Ag Health and Safety Network sat down for a chat with author Gerry Friesen, to talk about his new book and share his story with Network News readers.

"For me, positive change started when I began connecting with people, and opening up about my story," explains author and 'recovering farmer," Gerry Friesen

In his new book, The Recovering Farmer: A Journey through the Labyrinth of Anxiety and Depression, Gerry Friesen takes readers through the winding path from mental illness to a place where health, healing, and recovery are his everyday life.

It's filled with humour and wit, and with powerful insight into what it means to be a farmer, and to have a mental illness. Chock full of farm anecdotes and hard-won truths, the book reads like a visit with an old friend over coffee.



Friesen has spent his life in and around the agriculture industry. He grew up on a grain and poultry farm near Wawanesa, MB and later became an active pork producer, president of Manitoba Pork Marketing, and worked as a debt remediation specialist.

By 2004, Gerry knew that something was off with his mental health."It was difficult to acknowledge the sickness because I thought it was a weakness. The stigma got in the way of being proactive [about my health]. I was avoiding naming the beast."

As Gerry began the arduous journey to name and understand his illness, and to seek help to find the tools to fight it, he came to his first major realization about mental illness; you are not alone. Mental illness indirectly, or directly, affects all of us. Agriculture is full of family, friends, and colleagues who also live with various kinds of mental illness. And when no one talks about it, each of us can feel really alone. But the truth is, it's a part of many lives.

By far the best path is to be open and honest, to 'name the beast,' as Gerry explains. Once you've accepted that there is something that needs to be addressed, you'll find Gerry's second a-ha realization: It's more than OK to reach out for help.

"People that suffer from mental illnesses often try to keep it a secret. We put on a mask hoping no one will know. We feel shame. And because of that we often do not seek the help we need." But, he adds, "it's not just ok to seek help. It's absolutely the right path – for you, for your family, and for your farm business."

Gerry is passionate about facing and reducing the stigma of mental illness head-on, to help other farmers to overcome the stigma and seek help and support. That passion led him on a journey of recovery: recovering his own health and sharing his journey with others through regular blog posts, interviews, and speaking at ag shows. Each chapter of his new book, drawn from those blog posts and speeches and insights, ends with a takeaway, distilling his life lessons for readers.

A Journey through the Labyrinth of Anxiety and Depression

"When I put my thoughts out there, it helps my own mental health. When I talk, when I write stuff down, when I share it. How incredibly helpful that was. When I verbalized what was going on in my head, suddenly I start understanding."

There are hard truths about mental illness, and Gerry doesn't shy away from addressing those in the book, too. His own battles with addiction (in his case, alcohol) are openly shared. And his chapter on suicide offers an astonishing and encouraging view that defies cultural norms. "Being stuck on suicide being a sin, an unpardonable sin, does nothing to help. It just creates feelings of guilt and shame, making it more difficult to reach out for help." Instead, Gerry shares a view where the journey with mental illness is a valiant fight, like you might describe someone's fight against cancer.

Gerry shares a story about a family who described their loved ones as brave, and strong, and tried so hard but ultimately lost the fight and died of suicide. This story was a game changer for Gerry. "I felt encouraged to understand that I along with many others were fighting courageous fights."

Gerry's book goes a long way towards helping people to see and understand their preconceived biases, their beliefs about these tough issues.

"Turn judgement into curiosity. Curiosity will lead to understanding. Seek understanding in spite of your own thoughts or beliefs," Gerry suggests.

The book, and Gerry's willingness to share his journey, opens space for everyone to talk about mental illness. By sharing his story in public, Gerry has heard from many farmers, grateful that mental illness as a long-secret aspect of farm reality is becoming visible.

While visibility is needed, Gerry emphasizes that taking the first two steps (recognizing illness, and asking for help) will lead to the third realization: hope.

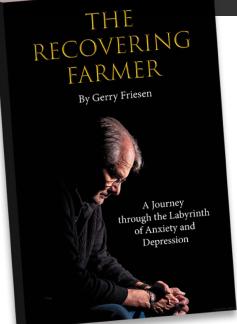
"I want people to know that there is hope, that there is relief," he said. Gerry shares numerous tips and tricks that have helped him 'tame the beast' of his illness, and wants people to know that as you learn more and as you share more, you get more ideas, tools, and resources.

In the end, the book reflects a journey of positivity, with coaching, stories, takeaways and ultimately, hope and determination. "Because without the farmer, there is no farm," Gerry says. So, doing what's needed to keep farmers healthy, physically and mentally, is work that needs to be done.

The book is available for order via Gerry's website at **gerryfriesen.ca**, with links to online purchasing or simply send him an email.



REMEMBER >>





GRAIN SAFETY AWARENESS DURING HARVEST



Although BeGrainSafe Week (August 12 – 18, 2024) has concluded, the importance of its message remains crucial throughout the 2024 harvest season.

The best way to stay safe around grain is to keep out of it!

WHY IS **GRAIN** SO DANGEROUS?

Grain entrapment can occur in seconds and is often fatal. Here's how guickly entrapment happens:

- In **just 4 seconds** an adult can sink waist-deep in flowing grain and be unable to free themselves without help.
- Complete submersion in grain can occur in as little as **20 seconds**.

So why is grain so dangerous? Grain in motion acts in the same way as guicksand and guickly pulls the victim downward. Escape without assistance is impossible.

- Grain exerts forces of friction and pressure on an engulfed person that prevents self-escape.
- A person buried to the waist in grain required a force equivalent of their own body weight plus 600 pounds to be extricated.



STRONGER TOGETHER IN AGRICULTURAL HEALTH & SAFETY



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WHY ARE THE RISKS INCREASING?

Recent years have seen a rise in grain entrapment and engulfment incidents, due to:

- **GREATER HARVEST DEMANDS**
- LARGER STORAGE FACILITIES
- FASTER-MOVING GRAIN HANDLING EQUIPMENT

Grain entrapment can happen even in just a few feet of grain.

DANGEROUS SCENARIOS:

Anyone who enters a storage structure containing grain, or who climbs onto an outdoor grain storage pile, is at risk of being entrapped or engulfed in grain.

SEVERAL SITUATIONS CAN LEAD TO GRAIN **ENTRAPMENT:**

• Flowing Grain – Most entrapments occur when grain-unloading equipment is running inside a bin or storage structure. However, incidents can also happen in outdoor grain piles, grain wagons, rail cars, and semitrailers with bottom unloaders.

• Bridged Grain – Spoiled grain can form a crust on the surface, which seems solid but is actually unstable. This crust can hide dangerous empty air below that might collapse, burying anyone standing on it.

Vertical Grain Wall Avalanche –

Grain can adhere to the vertical walls of a bin, forming a dangerous mass. Attempting to dislodge a high vertical wall of grain can cause it to collapse like an avalanche, potentially burying or injuring someone.

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casa-acsa.ca



FARM SAFETY MEETINGS DURING HARVEST:

Harvest comes with long hours, tight schedules, high-intensity work, and heightened stress. These conditions can lead to incidents if safety isn't prioritized. Regular meetings help to reinforce safety concepts, address potential hazards, and ensure everyone knows their responsibilities.

Here are some tips and topics to effectively and efficiently address safety on your farm this harvest season.

Key Safety Topics to Consider

1. Equipment Safety:

- Pre-Operations Checks: ensure all machinery is inspected before use. Check for leaks, worn parts, and proper functioning of safety features.
- Visibility & Safe Operation: clean lights, mirrors, and safety reflectors regularly to maintain clear visibility. Emphasize safe operation practices, such as driving slowly in areas where children might be present and being cautious around overhead power lines.



2. Communications & Emergency Procedures

- Communication: establish clear communication channels for reporting issues or emergencies. Make sure everyone knows how to reach each other and access emergency services.
- **Reminder:** Cellphones are a great way to communicate, but there are limitations. Service can be spotty in rural areas and they must be carried on you at all times – a cellphone doesn't do you any good sitting in the tractor cab if you fall while climbing off the tractor.
- Incident Response: review the steps to take in case of an incident. Ensure everyone knows how to find and access first aid kids and where emergency contact numbers are located.



3. Grain Handling Safety:

- **Preventing Entrapment:** discuss the dangers of grain entrapment and avoiding entry into grain bins or storage areas during unloading. Use tools and equipment to handle grain without needing to enter bins.
- **Proper Training:** ensure everyone handling grain is trained on safe procedures and aware of the risks involved.

KEEPING YOU & YOUR TEAM SAFE

4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

• Wear it Right: reminder to use appropriate PPE, such as gloves, safety glasses, masks, and hearing protection. Ensure PPE is in good condition and used properly.

5. Fatigue Management:

 Rest Breaks: encourage regular breaks to prevent fatigue. Long hours can impair judgement and slow reaction times, increasing the risk of accidents.

Adapted from AgSafe Alberta Toolbox Talk

Take a Break by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association







Page 13



Think about what you are going to do and what could go wrong. Once you have identified what could go wrong, take steps to prevent it from happening. A few moments spent doing this can spare a life or prevent a lifetime of regret.

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ON THE FARM: ESSENTIALS

While farms are unique from other workplaces in many ways, they face the same types of emergencies and disasters as other workplaces. Whether these are natural or human-made, having a well-developed and practiced Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is essential. Having an EAP can help minimize the impact or emergencies and ensure a swift and effective response.



TYPES OF EMERGENCIES:

NATURAL EVENTS:

- Tornadoes
- Wildfires
- Floods
- Severe storms (winter snowstorms, summer thunderstorms)

HUMAN-MADE EVENTS:

- Wildfires
- Chemical spills
- Explosions
- Grain Entrapments
- Incidents involving rotating or moving **equipment** (PTOs, augers, etc)
- Vehicle or machinery incidents (rollovers or runovers)

Creating an Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

An EAP can help organize and assign responsibilities to people on the farm to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

1. Understand Local Risks:

- Familiarize yourself with natural events common in Saskatchewan such as thunderstorms and tornadoes.
- Know how you will receive disaster warnings and ensure you have access to emergency broadcasts for your area.

2. Communication

- Effective communication is critical. Ensure everyone on the farm knows how to contact each other and has ready access to emergency information.
- Develop a list of emergency contacts including local fire and police departments, ambulance services, and utility companies like SaskPower.

3. Farm Map:

- Create a detailed map of your farm, including all buildings, structures, access routes (roads, lanes, driveways), fences, gates, and hazardous substance locations.
- Mark the locations of livestock, shut-offs for electricity, water, and other utilities.

4. Emergency Procedures:

- Identify and document emergency escape routes and procedures.
- Designate shelter-in-place locations and meeting points.
- Develop plans that account for everyone on the farm during an emergency.

BACK TO AG PROGRAM

The **Back to Ag Program** is a grant that supports farmers who have been seriously injured so they can get back to farming. The grant is provided through the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA). The purpose of the grant is to help farmers to purchase adaptive technology that would enable them to get back out on the farm.

CASA is currently accepting applications for the Back to Ag Program. Applicants are:

- Farmers who have experience a life-altering incident resulting in disability
- Demonstrate that the purchase of specialized equipment or adaptation of existing equipment will help them get back to work on the farm safely.

For more information or to apply go to casa-acsa.ca

AG INJURY AND FATALIT		
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	42% OF FATAL FARM THE TOP MECH DISMOUNTED FALL FROM TRA	
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	74% OF FATAL FARM YEARS AND OV	



Y STATISTICS (1990 – 2019)

WORK RELATED INJURIES WERE MACHINERY

ED IN FARM MACHINE FACILITIES WERE FARM

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RELATED FATALITIES OCCURRED DURING THE SON FROM APRIL TO OCTOBER WITH PEAKS IG AND HARVEST MONTHS.

INJURIES OCCURRED IN THOSE AGED 60 ER.

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Subscribe to the Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health's bimonthly Boots on the Ground Newsletter! This newsletter showcases research and outreach initiatives aimed at improving health outcomes for rural and agricultural communities.



Thank You to the Following Organizations for

Supporting the Network News:

Scan the QR Code to subscribe to BOTG!

DO YOU HAVE A FARM HEALTH OR SAFETY STORY TO SHARE WITH OTHER FARM FAMILIES? HAVE YOU DEVELOPED A FARM SAFETY INNOVATION?

If so we would love to hear about it! Contact us with your story.



IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF STRESS, THE FARM STRESS LINE IS AVAILABLE 24/7 AT

1-800-667-4442

Saskatchewan

Need more information? There are a variety of resources available online at: agsafety.usask.ca

From the Editors: Send your ideas, comments and suggestions to the **Network News**



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