



The Agricultural Health and Safety Network

STRONGER TOGETHER
IN AGRICULTURAL HEALTH & SAFETY



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Canadian Centre for Rural
and Agricultural Health
CCHSA-CCSSMA.USASK.CA

WINTER 2025/2026 EDITION #57

DOES YOUR FARM HAVE A SAFETY PLAN?



NetworkNews

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

The winter is here. It's time to reflect and work on a farm safety plan

As the days grow shorter and the temperatures drop, winter naturally becomes a time to slow down, reflect on the past season, and plan for the one ahead. It's an ideal time to take stock of safety on your farm. Whether it's tuning up equipment, reviewing safety practices, or working toward a farm safety plan, even small changes can make a big difference. Not sure where to begin? This edition of the Network News includes an overview of the Saskatchewan Farm Safety Plan to help you get started.

Winter also brings a fresh start with the New Year. If you're thinking about healthier habits – whether you are a resolution maker or not – you will find several health-focused features in this issue of the Network News. Learn about risk screening from the Heart & Stroke Foundation, join the Saskatchewan Quits Smoking Challenge, and how to reduce loneliness with Red Cross Friendly Calls.

Alongside these resources, this edition includes Winter Farm Safety Tips, an important reflection on farm safety, updates from the Farm Shoulder Study, and practical information on asbestos awareness.

We hope this edition of the Network News offers you tools, insights, and encouragement to help you stay healthy and safe this winter!

The Network News

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



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WINTER 2025/2026

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE: STAY SAFE, STAY STRONG

Article by: Vivian Onaemo, 5th year Public Health and Preventive Medicine resident, University of Saskatchewan

Women are the backbone of Canadian farming - planting, caring for livestock, managing operations, and supporting their families. But farm work brings unique health risks for women, especially when it comes to reproductive health, physical strain, and exposure to chemicals. With proper safety practices, well-fitting PPE, and support for women’s well-being, farms and families can thrive.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & SAFETY

Farm work can affect fertility and pregnancy. Key risks and precautions include:

RISKS:

- **Chemicals:** Pesticides, fertilizers, and livestock hormones may affect fertility or pregnancy.
- **Livestock:** Infection risks; injury from bites, kicks, or being pinned.
- **Lifting:** Heavy loads strain joints and muscles.
- **Heat/long hours:** Dehydration and fatigue can increase pregnancy stress.

Did you know?

In Canada, 1/3 of farm operators are **women** and that number is growing.

TIPS:

- Limit chemical handling and livestock medication tasks during pregnancy.
- If needed, wear proper PPE: long sleeves/pants, puncture-resistant gloves, eyewear, respirator (for chemicals), and chemical-resistant footwear.
- Wash skin immediately after any exposure.
- Stay hydrated, especially in hot weather.
- Ask for help with heavy lifting or strenuous tasks.
- Keep up with prenatal check-ups.

PROPER PPE MATTERS

Poor-fitting PPE can increase risk rather than reduce it.



Common Problems

- **Loose gloves** – May slip off and increase chemical contact
- **Oversized boots** – Raise the risk of slips, trips, and falls
- **Baggy coveralls** – Can catch on equipment or machinery

Better Solutions

- Choose **women’s-fit PPE** or smaller sizes
- If unavailable, **youth sizes** can offer a safer fit
- Wash PPE after use and store it safely
- Tie back long hair to prevent entanglement

BECAUSE WOMEN MAKE UP NEARLY HALF THE HARVEST!

Farm life is rewarding, but it can also be stressful. Women often juggle many roles: FARMER, MOTHER, CAREGIVER.

COMMON SIGNS OF STRESS:

- Feeling tired all the time
- Worrying too much
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling alone or sad

WAYS TO COPE:

- Share farm and household tasks with family members
- Connect with other rural women:
 - Participate in community events & organizations
 - Join women’s agricultural groups, development and mentorship programs
 - Attend women’s agricultural and leadership conferences
- Take short breaks during the day - rest matters
- Reach out to local health professionals if stress feels too heavy
- For help in connecting to mental health services or if you are experiencing violence or abuse, call 2-1-1. If in crisis, call 9-1-1.



SASKATCHEWAN WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE:

WE NEED YOUR VOICE!

Help shape future ag health and safety programs for women by sharing your interests. Complete the **Health and Safety Interest Survey** today!

Scan this QR code to take the survey now!



Protecting a mother’s health protects the whole family.

Quick Fact: On sheep and goat farms in Canada, 41.1% of operators are women.



Just another day in the life of a farm woman!

STRETCHING THROUGH THE SEASON: FINDING COMFORT AND STRENGTH THIS WINTER

Brought to you by CoFit - Fitness for Rural Women

Tight Shoulders? Cold Weather Got You Slouching?

Find comfort and strength this winter with a few simple chair stretches made for prairie women.

It's that time of year again - short days, long nights, and the kind of cold that settles deep in your bones. Life on the Prairies doesn't slow down just because the weather turns harsh. Chores still need doing, kids still need driving and work still calls. But in the middle of all that, your body and mind can start to feel stiff, tired, and disconnected - and that's exactly when a few simple stretches can make all the difference.

"Winter can take a real toll," says **CoFit fitness coach Roxy Kravanya**. "You're inside more, you're less active, and the darkness wears on you. Taking even five minutes to move your body - to stretch, breathe, and reconnect - can shift your whole mood and energy for the day."

Winter can make you feel stuck - physically and mentally - but small, consistent movement breaks that cycle. Stretching boosts circulation, keeps joints happy, and releases tension you might not even realize you're carrying. And maybe most importantly, it's a reminder that your body deserves care even when life feels heavy.

CoFit is an online fitness community designed especially for busy rural women - the ones keeping farms, families, and communities running through every season. Their programs focus on strength, mobility, and mindset, all built to fit into real prairie life.

Here are a few stretches you can do right from the kitchen chair or barn bench:



CULTIVATING COMFORT WHEREVER YOUR DAY TAKES YOU
From the field to the barn to the chair - do these stretches anywhere



NECK RESET
Gently tilt your ear toward your shoulder. Breathe deeply and hold for 20 seconds. Repeat on the other side.



SPINE FLOW
Round your spine, tuck chin, breathe out. Sit tall, inhale, arch your back & lift chest. Repeat, synchronizing with your breath



HIP RELEASE
Sit tall, cross ankle over opposite knee. Gently hinge forward to feel the stretch in your hip. Breathe deeply and hold for 20 seconds. Repeat on the other side.



HAMSTRING FOLD
Sit tall, extend one leg forward with heel on floor. Hinge at hips, reaching towards toes. Breathe deeply and hold for 20 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

Ready for more? Find your next move at  fit.ca



Find your next move at
www.cofit.ca

Follow us on Instagram:
[@ruralwomenfitness](https://www.instagram.com/ruralwomenfitness)

Follow us on Facebook:
CoFit-Fitness for Rural Women

WANNA SAVE AT CoFIT?

Scan the QR code below and use the code "STRETCH" to save \$107 and get 10 prerecorded mobility classes for only \$17!



Because no matter how dark or cold the day gets - you deserve to feel strong, connected, and comfortable in your body.

SASKATCHEWAN QUILTS



Are you ready to quit or cut back smoking?

The "Saskatchewan Quit Smoking Challenge" is back for another year, supporting Saskatchewan residents on their journey to quitting or cutting back smoking! Hosted by Lung Sask and sponsored by Nicorette, this challenge runs from November 17 2025 - February 28 2026 and will feature resources, prizes, access to a free Nicotine Replacement Therapy trial pack, stories from local ambassadors, and a supportive community to give you the tools you need to quit.

Register today at
SaskQuits.ca

Registration is ongoing and open until the challenge ends.

Join us in the
SASKATCHEWAN QUILTS Facebook Support Group!

The Saskatchewan Quits Challenge, sponsored by Nicorette, is powered by Lung Saskatchewan and supported by Heart & Stroke, Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan, and the Smokers' Helpline.

Saskatchewan QUIT SMOKING Challenge

Join the challenge anytime between
November 17, 2025 to February 28, 2026!

Is it your time to quit or cut back on smoking?
We're here to help!

- Weekly & Grand Prizes
- Expert resources and tips
- Community Support
- Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy Trial Pack

Sign up for **FREE** SaskQuits.ca



HEART & STROKE RISK SCREEN

Heart & Stroke Risk Screen is a new, evidence-based tool from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada to help people understand their heart and brain health risks, including those unique to women's life stages such as pregnancy and menopause. The tool is easy and quick to complete and provides a personal risk profile, a customized action plan with recommendations, and additional resources.



Take the Heart & Stroke Risk Screen today to take charge of your heart and brain health.



Know your risks.
Beat your risks.



SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION OF RURAL MUNICIPALITIES 90TH ANNIVERSARY STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

2 STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS
\$1500 IN AGRICULTURAL SAFETY & RURAL HEALTH

APPLICATION DEADLINE
JANUARY 16 2026

TOPICS:

- The Importance of Health and Safety on Our Farm
- Health and Safety Hazards on Our Farm

ARE YOU ...

- Enrolled in Grade 12 for the 2025-2026 school year?
- Planning on studying at a post secondary school in the fall of 2026? You can be studying out of province if the course is not offered in Saskatchewan

DO YOU ...

- Have a farming background and live in a rural area?
- Have parents/guardians who own/rent land and pay taxes to a Rural Municipality?

HAVE YOU ...

- Completed the last two years of high school in Saskatchewan?

IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO ALL OF ABOVE QUESTIONS:

1. Complete an application form.
2. Write an essay on either topic
3. E-mail your application & essay by
January 16, 2026 before midnight (CST)

SUBMIT APPLICATION FORM AND ESSAY TO:
sueli.bizetto@usask.ca

SCAN FOR:

- Scholarship history
- General conditions governing awards
- Application form
- More information



THE 2024-2025 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:



Regan Keisig
Balcarres, RM of Tullymet No. 216



Zayden Anderson
Marquis, RM of Marquis No. 191



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Hey Kids!
The days are shorter, and
the weather is cold and
unpredictable!

HANDLING ANIMALS SAFELY IN THE WINTER

In Saskatchewan, many youth injuries happen while working with animals. Winter conditions can change how animals behave, even those that are usually calm.

WHAT CAN AFFECT ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE WINTER

- **Hunger:** animals burn more energy staying warm
- **Thirst:** water may freeze, leading to frustration
- **Pain:** frostbite or slips on ice can make animals sore or irritable

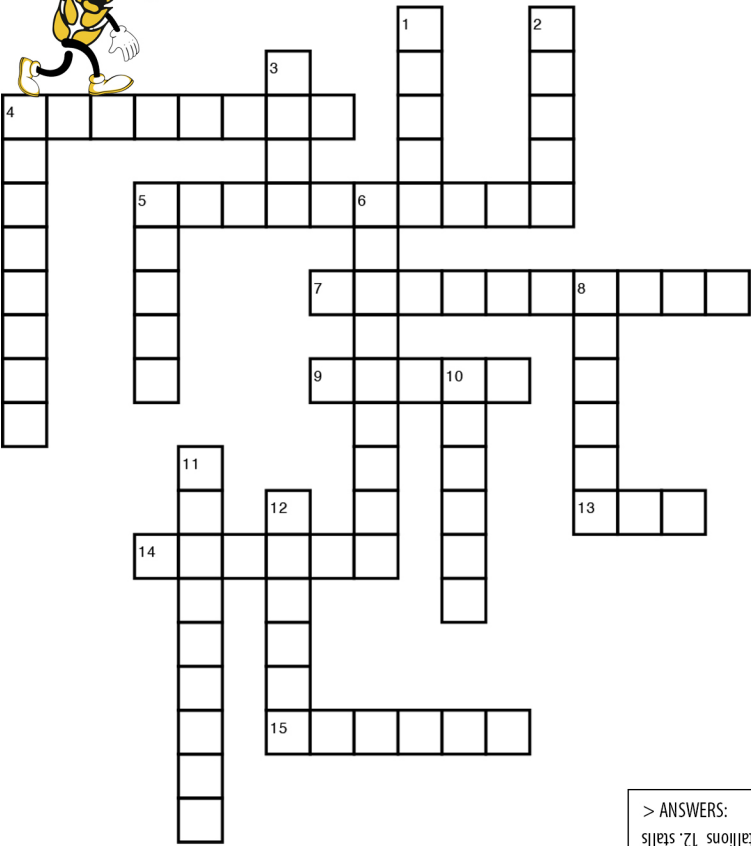
Even well-behaved animals may act differently in the cold.

Stay alert around any animal showing aggression, such as: • **Head down, ears back** • **Pawing the ground or making warning noises**

ANIMAL SAFETY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Kids, I just love
crosswords!!
What about you?



Down:

1. Male bovine animals
2. Grooming is a ____ given to youth
3. This instinctive emotion can cause an animal to act defensively when they are afraid
4. Obstinate
5. Hostile feeling
6. Many animals have _____ hearing
8. Use ____ sense to stay safe around animals
10. An ailment caused from dirty bedding or wet and muddy conditions
11. Male horses
12. Individual places for animals

Across:

4. Approach large animals at the _____
5. Disturbing an animal's normal routine may cause them to become _____
7. Not anticipated
9. This type of bedding can cause several ailments
13. Horses can do this with their teeth
14. Animals that have problems with depth perception
15. ____ movements can frighten animals

DOWN: 1. bulls 2. chore 3. fear 4. stubborn 5. anger 6. sensitive 8. common 10. thrush 11. stallions 12. stalls
ACROSS: 4. shoulder 5. aggressive 7. unexpected 9. dirty 13. nip 14. cattle 15. sudden

Home with Sick Children

Cold and flu season is upon us, and with many kids home sick, parents and caregivers may be unsure of when symptoms can be safely managed at home and when medical attention is needed. The guide below offers practical tips to help parents and caregivers recognize what is usual, what is a warning, and what is an emergency. Use it to stay informed and prepared this respiratory illness season.

At Home with Children with Respiratory Infections?

Here are some things to watch for. Get care for any symptoms that make you feel worried or concerned. Children at high risk due to medical conditions, and all babies, may need care sooner.

Need to talk
to a health care
provider about
symptoms?

Call Healthline
at 811 for free,
24-hour support.



USUAL

Manage symptoms at home,
make sure your child rests,
and keep up with fluids



WARNING

See your doctor/nurse
practitioner or a walk-in
clinic within the **next day**



EMERGENCY

Call 911, go to Emergency at
Hospital/Health Centre **now**



FEVER

- fever and more like themselves after getting fever medicine



BREATHING
EAR, NOSE, THROAT

- stuffy nose
- runny nose
- sore throat
- cough but breathing is okay



RASH

- mild rash that isn't bothersome to child



HYDRATION

- still able to drink enough to stay hydrated
- vomiting or diarrhea that is less than 3-4 times a day



BEHAVIOUR/
MENTAL STATUS

- not as much energy as usual

- fever:
 - lasting longer than 3 days
 - higher than 40.5°C
 - not acting like themselves after getting fever medicine

- earache for more than 2 days
- coughing for more than 2 weeks and not getting better
- runny and/or congested nose for more than 10 days
- extremely sore throat with swollen tonsils/lymph nodes

- rash with a fever
- rash that is new or different from previous rash

- not eating/drinking well and showing signs of dehydration like dry mouth, thirstier, not peeing as much

- unusually irritable
- won't stop fussing

- babies younger than 3 months with a fever (temperature higher than 38 °C)
- fever and child complaining of headaches, neck pain or stiffness or light sensitivity
- fever with seizure

- working hard to breathe
- unable to speak or cry
- breathing faster than normal
- white/blue lips
- skin between the ribs is pulling in with each breath (called retractions)
- noisy breathing (grunting, high-pitched wheeze)

- rash that looks like tiny bruises that don't turn white when you press on them
- rash with blisters or peeling skin

- not peeing for more than 8 hours
- no or few tears
- very dry mouth
- throwing up
- not able to keep liquids down for more than 8 hours

- confused
- not alert when awake
- very sleepy
- difficult to wake up



Alberta Health Services. HEAL - Health Education and Learning [Internet]. Cited 15 Dec 2022.
Available from: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/heal/heal.aspx>

Canadian Paediatric Society. Caring for Kids - Health Conditions and Treatments [Internet]. Cited 15 Dec 2022.
Available from: <https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/health-conditions-and-treatments>

Disclaimer: This is not a replacement for medical advice.

23 DEC 2022
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BUILD YOUR FARM SAFETY PLAN TODAY!



Scan the QR code to register for upcoming workshops or access templates, online course, manual, and workbook.

REGISTER NOW

Scan QR code above or email aghealthandsafety@usask.ca for workshops, templates, online course, manual, and workbook.



Agriculture is the backbone of Saskatchewan's economy, but it's also one of our most hazardous industries. Each year, about 13 lives are lost on our farms - many from machinery incidents during the busy seeding and harvest seasons. These tragedies cause heartbreaking loss and financial strain, but the truth is: **Every injury and incident is preventable.**

A national survey by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association found that **7 in 10 producers** have faced a farm-related incident or near miss in their lifetime. Yet in Saskatchewan, we're behind the curve - only 1 in 10 have a written farm safety plan, even though 7 in 10 are motivated to improve safety.

That's why the **Saskatchewan Farm Safety Plan Project** - a collaboration between the Agricultural Health and Safety Network, Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health (CCRAH), Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, and Vital Insight - is here to make safety simple and effective. Drawing from proven resources like Farm Safety Nova Scotia and Vital Insight, we're providing free tools, templates, and workshops to help you build a plan tailored to your farm.

Ready to build it? Let's make it happen!

The Saskatchewan Farm Safety Plan Project offers FREE tools, templates, and workshops inspired by proven programs like Farm Safety Nova Scotia. Tailor a plan to your operation in just 8-10 hours (not 60+!). Comply with the Saskatchewan Employment Act and Occupational Health & Safety Regulations, 2020 while protecting your crew.



JOIN OUR FREE 3-PHASE WORKSHOPS TAILORED FOR SASK FARMS!



Phase 1 & 2 workshops are delivered virtually. Phase 3 workshops will be offered in rural communities near you with a complementary lunch! Everyone welcome! Go at your own pace and build peer networks for support. Register now!

The Agricultural Health and Safety Network will continue to provide resources and support as you embark and continue your journey in developing a **Farm Safety Plan!**

WHY YOUR FARM NEEDS A SAFETY PLAN?

- **Protect Your People:** Prevent injuries, illnesses, and tragedies for family and workers.
- **Stay Compliant:** Meet legal requirements and build a strong safety culture.
- **Boost Productivity:** Cut losses from downtime, equipment, livestock, and finances.
- **Enhance Communication:** Clarify roles so everyone goes home safe.
- **Strengthen Your Business:** Smart risk management for sustainable success.

PHASE	FORMAT & TIME	WHAT'S COVERED	OUTCOME
PHASE 1 FARM SAFETY PLAN CONTENT	Virtual 5-6 Hours Beginners Welcome	Learn legislation, roles, hazard ID, emergency planning.	Foundational knowledge - ready to start your plan with confidence.
PHASE 2 INTRO & NAVIGATION OF RESOURCES	Virtual 4-5 Hours Builds on Basics	Navigate templates and customize your plan.	Comfortable editing materials for your unique operation.
PHASE 3 WORKBOOK ADAPTATION & FEEDBACK	In Person 5-6 Hours Hands-on	Adapt templates with expert feedback.	Fully equipped to build, maintain, and live your plan.

PROTECTING OUR FARMS, FAMILIES, WORKERS, AND FUTURE.





THE PULLEY WAS GRINDING ON MY HAND

George Lewko's Farm Safety Story

Article by: George Lewko, PAg

THE INCIDENT

What a beautiful day Sept. 30, 1997. Sunny, bright 20 degrees Celsius. Combine was running a little hot. I stopped to clean the radiator of Canada Thistle fluff.

"Bam! I am spun left by something..."

Then I hear the distinct sound of something jamming the combine. I look down to see what it is. Ack, it's my right hand pinned between the cleaner fan pulley and its double v-belts. The pulley is grinding on my hand. The hand is twisted, wrist looks broken, and the glove covers my hand so I can't see what the pulley is doing to my hand.

Mom's gone to town and will not be back for hours, and even then she probably won't come out to the field until later. I've got to get out of this myself or I'll die!

I try to pry the double v-belts off the tightener but can only get one off for a bit because I am working behind my back. I pry some more. No luck. I have no tools to stop this belt. Let's pry off other belts that might have more luck. The screwdriver flies out of my hand, and I lose sight of it. No more prying. The only way I am going to get out is by stopping the engine.

If I flip over, I can crawl under the combine near the engine. I realize the fuel line is now rubber, after I replaced the leaking copper line last fall and I cable tied it up and taped it. Maybe I can pull on it hard, until it wears somewhere. I grab it and pull hard. I can feel it start to bite somewhere. I keep pulling until it eats through the line. I pull with all my might, and feel it give a little bit.



"Boom - my hand comes free."

The skin is gone on the back of my right hand, the white bones are worn down, no blood though, everything is cauterized. I check my watch-- 3:30 pm, I have no idea how long I was stuck for.

I jump in the cab of the combine. I get to the first hill about 100 yards, and the engine runs out of diesel. Still 400 yards to get home. Got to make it to the house. Mom's still not back.

Let's phone the neighbour. I try 20-30 times on the old rotary dial wall phone, and finally...

"Hello, Roseanne, It's George, I've caught my hand in the combine! Mom's not home. Can you take me to the hospital? It's bad."
"Yes, I'll be right over. Have you phoned the hospital?"
"No, but I'll phone right now." I dial 10-15 times to get the hospital.
"Make sure you have a surgeon. I'm coming in 5-10 minutes; my right hand has been caught in a combine. It's bad and it's run on the back of my hand. Neighbour is coming to take me in."



AFTER THE INCIDENT

"I was very independent before my incident. Afterwards, I needed help with many farm-related tasks and other activities, including chopping up a tree, as they didn't make a left-handed chainsaw."



What has been amazing is how much everyone around me has helped me. It really restores confidence in our human species. It was great to have an education, as my boss Wyett Meyers came to me in the hospital and offered me a full-time job, after giving up on farming. I have a BSA from the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, with major in Crop Science and a double minor in Horticulture. I gave advice for 20 years, and now I do Forensic Agrology and teach for both my professional body (The Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists) Forensic Agrology and teach many pesticide applicator courses for Saskatchewan Polytechnic as well. We still have the family farm with orchards, pumpkins and a corn maze (called Haunted Paradise) for the last 14 years, along with 31 years running Paintball Paradise Prince Albert on the weekends.

George's Farm Safety Tips

- 1. Always be cautious around machinery:** A part of the combine broke and struck me when I thought I was in a safe spot - safety incidents can happen when you least expect them.
- 2. Cell phones are a valuable safety tool:** Make sure you have emergency contacts saved, including knowing how to quickly reach 911. A geolocation app would have been helpful in my situation. Also, noting the time of the incident can help first responders understand how long you were trapped or injured.
- 3. If you experience an incident, write down the details within a few days:** Over time, memories fade. I've forgotten much of what happened to me 28 years ago, and documenting it early would have helped.
- 4. Have a will:** regardless of your age. It's one of the most important things you can do to support your loved ones in case something happens to you.

WINTER

WINTER FARM SAFETY TIPS

Winter brings unique hazards to farm work. Use these quick reminders to stay safe, protect equipment, and care for livestock throughout the season.



Dress for Cold Weather

- Wear layers: moisture-wicking base, insulating middle layer, and wind/water-resistant outer layer.
- Keep head, ears, hands, and feet covered; choose insulated, non-slip boots.
- Avoid cotton, which loses warmth when wet.
- Wear high-visibility clothing in case of sudden weather change - this will make you easier to find in low-visibility conditions.

Prevent Cold Stress

- Watch for signs of hypothermia (shivering, confusion) and frostbite (numb or pale extremities).
- Take regular warm-up breaks in heated areas - fatigue sets in fast when you are cold.
- Stay hydrated and well-fed, even in winter.
- Avoid working alone when possible.

Livestock Care

- Consider installing a camera system in the barn so you can monitor livestock from the comfort of the house.
- Check water sources frequently to prevent freezing; insulate pipes as needed.
- Maintain adequate bedding and nutrition during extreme cold.

DID YOU KNOW?

40% of heat loss is through your head!

Plan and Organize Work

- Monitor the weather and pay attention to the wind chill factor.
- Schedule outdoor tasks during the warmest part of the day.
- Rotate jobs to limit long periods of cold exposure.
- Let someone know where you are working and when you'll return.
- Carry essentials: extra clothing, charged phone or radio, flashlight/headlamp, and snacks.

Avoid Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Sand or salt icy areas around barns, walkways, and equipment.
- Wear ice-grip footwear when conditions are slippery.
- Use three points of contact when mounting or dismounting machinery.
- Wear high-visibility clothing during low light.

Emergency Preparedness

- Review your winter storm plan and ensure emergency supplies are stocked.
- Test generators and install carbon monoxide detectors in enclosed buildings.
- Keep extra feed, bedding, water, and medication available for livestock.
- Ensure heating and watering systems have backup options.
- Have candles, gas-powered lamps, and battery-operated lights on hand in case of power outages.

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Farming, Shoulder Pain, and Movement

A new study looked at shoulder pain and its effect on movement during common farm work tasks.

42 farmers participated in this study

23 had no shoulder pain

19 did have shoulder pain

The research team analyzed shoulder blade and arm movements of farmers and farm workers when performing four common tasks:

1. Overhead Drill

2. Lifting & Pouring a Seed Bag

3. Climbing a Seed Cart

4. Shoveling

What did we find?

- Shoulder pain caused movement changes of the shoulder blade and arm in 3 of the 4 tasks measured.
- Risk factors for shoulder injuries exist in many aspects of farm work.

What can you do about it?

1 BE MINDFUL OF YOUR BODY POSITION

When doing work involving your arms or hands, avoid bending or stooping as this requires more reaching & lifting of the arms and shoulders.

- Consider using a squat or kneeling position instead.

This could also help avoid back pain!

Squat position Kneel position

2 KEEP YOUR ELBOWS TUCKED

When working with your hands (lifting, repairing, etc), keep your elbows tucked into your body.

- Avoid a "chicken wing" position when possible.

Reducing the weight or load in your hands can help with this adjustment.

3 SET YOUR SHOULDER BLADES

Before starting work, try to "set" your shoulder blades to begin your work from a strong position.

- Pull your shoulder blades back and down (away from your ears) and return to this position as needed throughout your work.

Seek treatment (doctor, physical therapist) at early signs of shoulder pain!

WORK SAFE BC

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

FARMERS NEEDED FOR SHOULDER RESEARCH

WHO

- Farmers or farm workers
- 18+ years old
- People able to safely participate in physical activity
- People who have **no** current shoulder pain
- People who have **no** history of shoulder pain (pain that resulted in a clinician visit or stoppage in regular activities - work or sport/leisure - for 1 month or more)

WHERE

- Research lab at the Health Sciences building on USask campus

WHY

The goal of this study is to explore the connection between shoulder movement and rotator cuff syndrome in high-risk occupations.

WHAT

- Come to our lab for a 2 hour data collection
- Complete a few arm-focused tasks while your motion and muscle activity are measured with surface sensors
- Short follow up surveys every 3 months
- You will be compensated for your time

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact either:

Dr. Kenzie Friesen
kenzie.friesen@usask.ca
306-966-5971

Dr. Angelica Lang
angelica.lang@usask.ca
306-966-5544

This study had been approved by the University of Saskatchewan Biomedical Research Ethics Board

NetworkNews

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RED CROSS FRIENDLY CALLS



Article by: Canadian Red Cross

BOOST YOUR MENTAL HEALTH WITH CONVERSATION

Rural life in Saskatchewan brings early mornings, long days, and the quiet satisfaction of watching a season’s work unfold under wide-open skies. But it can feel lonely - especially when neighbours are far apart and the need for connection is closer than ever.



Loneliness is now recognized as a serious public-health concern across Canada. Research shows it can be as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke, depression, and anxiety. When the days get long and the conversations fewer, the silence can start to weigh heavy. But connection doesn’t have to depend on proximity. Sometimes, it begins with a simple phone call. That’s where **Friendly Calls**, a free service of the **Canadian Red Cross**, comes in.

A Growing Impact Across Saskatchewan

Last year alone, Friendly Calls provided close to three million minutes of conversation and care across Canada – a testament to the power of connection. Of that total, more than 313,500 minutes have been shared here in Saskatchewan, reaching people across rural, remote, and agricultural communities from Meadow Lake to Estevan, and everywhere in between.

“As someone who was raised on a farm and still farms today, it’s a joy to connect with others who share that background,” says Shawna Green, Senior Coordinator for Friendly Calls in Saskatchewan. “Through Friendly Calls, I’ve had the privilege of swapping calving stories, chatting about gardens and reflecting on the unique rhythm of farm life. Even with town trips and the occasional coffee-row visit, farming can sometimes feel isolating. That’s why this program matters. It brings people together, one meaningful conversation at a time.”

The program pairs trained volunteers with participants for regular phone conversations, heartfelt check-ins that remind people that they matter and they’re not alone.



Why Connection Matters for Mental Health

For many participants, that weekly friendly call becomes a lifeline, a reminder that they’re part of something bigger than themselves.

Friendly Calls volunteers do not offer counselling; they offer connection. And in a province built on community spirit, that’s often exactly what’s needed. Connection has always been at the heart of prairie life – from shared harvests to helping a neighbour fix a fence. Friendly Calls builds on that spirit, reminding us that being there for one another is as essential to community health as rain is to the land. Reach out today to learn how a simple conversation can brighten your week and strengthen the heart of rural Saskatchewan.

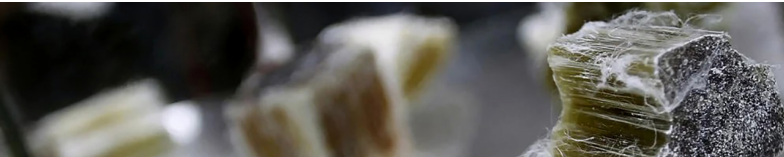
FRIENDLY CALLS is a free and confidential service available right here in Saskatchewan and across Canada.

To learn more, sign-up as a participant or become a volunteer.

Call toll-free 1-833-979-9779

Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 pm, or visit redcross.ca/friendlycalls

ALL ABOUT ASBESTOS



Article by: Vivian Onaemo, 5th year Public Health and Preventative Medicine resident, University of Saskatchewan

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a **silent, invisible enemy**. It is made of tiny, strong fibres that can float in the air without being seen. It was used in homes, barns and farm buildings built between the 1950s and 1990s for fire protection, insulation against heat and noise, and lasts a long time.

It is hard to tell if your home has asbestos because it is often mixed in with other materials. But if your house was built before 1990, there is a good chance that some parts contain asbestos. This asbestos can be released into the air if you do any repairs, renovations, or take the building apart.

THE DANGER: When asbestos fibres break or are disturbed, they can be breathed in and slowly damage your lungs, sometimes even years after exposure.

WHERE ASBESTOS HIDES

- Old roof singles and siding
- Ceiling or floor tiles
- Pipe or stove insulation
- Barn roofs and cement boards
- Tractor brake pads and machinery parts



HOW TO PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY FROM ASBESTOS

- Do not touch or break old building materials that may contain asbestos
- Keep children and pets away from dusty, crumbling areas of building
- Do not sweep, scrape or disturb asbestos yourself–this releases more dangerous fibres
- Call trained experts to test or remove asbestos safely, and repair any holes or cracks in walls or ceilings
- Seal openings and gaps around attic hatches and baseboards



Remember: There is no safe amount of asbestos exposure.

Everyday farm activities like fixing roofs, tearing down walls, and cleaning dusty barns can stir up the tiny and invisible asbestos fibres.



Frightening Truth: Health problems from asbestos can take **10 - 40 years** to appear, making this a danger you might not notice until much later.

If your safety is at immediate risk, call 911

SaskAgMatters - free counselling services	call 1-306-371-7644
Saskatchewan Farm Stress Line	call 1-800-667-4442
National Farmer Crisis Line - 24/7 support	call 1-866-327-6701
211 Saskatchewan	call or text 2-1-1
AgTalk - non-crisis peer to peer support platform	visit domore.ag/agtalk
Family Service Saskatoon	call 1-306-244-0127
Counselling Connect Saskatchewan	https://www.counsellingconnectsask.ca/
Kids Help Phone	text 686868 or call 1-800-668-6868
HealthLine	call 8-1-1
Suicide Crisis Helpline	call or text 9-8-8
Mobile Crisis Services	call 1-306-757-0127
Problem Gambling Helpline	call 1-800-306-6789
Adult Sexual Assault Helpline	call 1-800-214-7083
First Nations & Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line	call 1-855-242-3310
Dementia Helpline	call 1-877-949-4141

Mental Wellness for Saskatchewan Farmers & Ranchers

Immediate Support

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental well-being, remember...
You are not alone—there is hope and there is help!



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL HEALTH
Agricultural Health and Safety
Network (AHSN)
aghealth.usask.ca



Supporting Rural People in Agricultural Health and Safety

NOT 1 one MORE

Ag producer lost by suicide

#NotOneMoreAgProducer

National Farmer
Crisis Line **Call**
1-866-FARMS01
(1-866-327-6701)
— 24/7, 365
days a year

SaskAgMatters Mental
Health Network
— 6 hrs free
therapy



www.saskagmatters.ca

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