

Farm/Ranch Safety Equipment FactSheet

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One of the most frustrating responsibilities facing many farmers and ranchers is keeping each family member properly clothed for personal safety. The unique tastes of individual family members usually require that special attention be given to style, color, and comfort as well as durability and washability. However, one aspect that is often overlooked concerns the personal safety of the wearer. Inappropriate or poorly maintained clothing has contributed to numerous personal injuries as the following case histories demonstrate.

A teen-age boy was helping unload corn into a portable auger. When he accidentally got too close to the spinning auger, the untied lace of his work boot became entangled. His leg was pulled into the auger and severed.

Several small children were taken to the doctor for treatment of skin rashes. It was determined that the children's underclothing had become contaminated with pesticides when the garments were washed with the clothing worn by their father when he was applying farm chemicals.

A wife was helping her husband dig fence posts with a tractor-mounted auger. The hood of her parka became entangled in the power-take-off shaft, and she was severely injured before her husband could shut off the tractor.

Another rancher went to his doctor complaining of severe headaches and dizziness. After several tests it was discovered that the sweatband of the cap he wore regularly had become contaminated with pesticide. Unknowingly, he was exposing himself to the chemicals every time he wore the hat.

Taking a few minutes to check the clothing worn by family members before working on the farm or ranch will help keep them healthy and safe. Use the following seasonal checklist as a guide.

SPRING

- _____ layer clothing to allow for adjustment to changing temperature
- _____ rain gear to keep inner clothing warm and dry



- _____ heavy-duty work shoes when doing farm/ranch work
- _____ eye and respiratory protection worn during application of anhydrous ammonia or any other hazardous material
- _____ long-sleeved shirt or coveralls, rubber gloves, rubber boots, respiratory protection and chemical goggles when handling or applying pesticides
- _____ shoes or boots worn when horse riding

SUMMER

- _____ adequate coverage of skin to prevent overexposure to the sun
- _____ hearing protection from excessive machinery noise
- _____ reflective clothing worn while walking, or riding a horse or working near the highway at night
- _____ shirttails tucked in
- _____ pant cuffs free from excessive frays
- _____ helmet worn while riding a motorcycle or an all terrain vehicle
- _____ personal flotation devices worn when boating or working in or near water

FALL

- _____ hooded jacket strings tied
- _____ clothing free of loose threads or buttons, broken zippers, or dangling strings
- _____ wrist jewelry, loop or hanging earrings, rings and neck chains removed or covered
- _____ highly visible clothing worn when hunting
- _____ non-flammable clothing worn when burning leaves or exposed to open flames

WINTER

- _____ warm hat to conserve body heat and protect ears from cold
- _____ windproof coveralls when exposed to the cold for long periods
- _____ neck scarf tucked inside jacket
- _____ non-slip footwear to prevent slips and falls
- _____ warm, dry gloves to protect from frostbite

Proper care and maintenance, as well as choice of clothing appropriate for the job or activity, figure strongly in the farm family's well being.

Keep Clothes in Good Repair:

- Open jackets, flapping sleeves, loose hems, and frayed edges can be hazardous.
- Replace missing buttons or broken zippers.
- Secure loose hems, especially at the bottom of sleeves and pant legs.
- Refinish frayed edges.

Keep Clothes Clean:

- Garments that are dusty, dirty, soaked with oil or solvent, or contaminated with chemicals can cause skin rash or disabling dermatitis. Because pesticides can enter the body through the skin, careful handling of garments contaminated by drifts or spills is required.
- Clothes worn while mixing and applying chemicals should be washed separately after each wearing.
- Do not mix contaminated clothes with other laundry; they should go right into the washer for laundering as soon as they are removed, or into a plastic bag to await laundering.

Use laundry procedure (recommended procedure based on results of a study conducted at Iowa State University) for heavily soiled clothing:

- Use hot water that is 140°F.
- Use full water level, even for a small wash load.
- Use manufacturer's recommended amount of heavy-duty detergent. A laundry product with an ingredient that ties up water hardness minerals in a soluble form (phosphate or sodium nitrilotriacetate) is preferred.
- Add one-half cup household ammonia OR chlorine bleach (not both) to enhance cleaning action of the washing machine.
- Dry clothes thoroughly in an automatic dryer for 30 minutes at the regular fabric setting.
- Remove any leftover pesticides or chemicals from the washer by running the machine through a complete wash cycle, with detergent but without clothes.

In the event of a concentrated spill, get clothing off immediately and wash the affected area with plenty of soap and water. Garments contaminated with the concentrated pesticide should be washed several times or even discarded.

NOTE: Some chemicals may require more specialized treatment of laundry than outlined above. Be sure to read product label information, and observe all handling instructions.

In cooperation with the Cooperative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, state of Indiana, Purdue University, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating; H.A. Wadsworth, Director, West Lafayette, IN.