

# Farm workers face dangers

Many occupations are hazardous, few more so than agricultural labor. Farmers recognize that they must be diligent in their efforts to prevent nonfatal and fatal injuries.

According to the most recent statistics, farmers face a fatality rate of 25.1 for every 100,000 workers. In 2008, 456 farmers and farm workers lost their lives to work-related injuries. What's particularly risky about agricultural work is that it tends to be a family profession. That puts all members of the family at risk for injury. On average, 113 youth under the age of 20 die annually from farm-related injuries.

Tractor rollover injuries, inhalation of chemical pesticides and lacerations from farm equipment top the list of prime agriculture-related occupational injuries. With scores of different mechanical equipment and chemicals, not to mention lengthy exposure to the elements on a normal working day, the risk of injury is



Tractor rollovers are a common cause of injury on farms.

considerable.

There are key ways to prevent injuries on the farm. Here are a few considerations.

\* Proper training of new employees on the use required equipment is essential. If certification is needed, be sure employees

have been trained and practice on equipment prior to independent use. Safety gear should be used at all times, when required. Workers should be careful to keep hair tied back to prevent entanglement in equipment.

\* Care should be used when working in the elements. Workers should be properly dressed for the temperature and conditions. Beverage breaks should be taken so that

dehydration is not a risk.

\* Knowledge of chemical pesticides and fertilizers should be fully understood. Safety equipment, such as ventilators, eye guards and gloves, should be used when handling caustic chemicals.

\* Machinery should be maintained according to OSHA and other federal guidelines. Equipment in good working order is less likely to cause injury.

\* Caution should always be used around livestock.

\* Operating equipment when impaired is a hazard in any profession. Alcohol and drug use do not mix in a farm setting. Individuals who seem intoxicated should not be allowed to work.

\* Children and adolescents should be carefully monitored around the farm. Because of their developing bodies, youngsters should not be allowed to do any activity that is overly strenuous and might tax growing bodies, such as heavy lifting.

\* There should be training in general first aid and CPR so that help can be given to an injured worker before a response team is able to make it to the location.



Crop rotation is a practice that both farmers and gardening enthusiasts can benefit from.

## Understanding crop rotation

Though it's easy for suburbanites or city dwellers to go months, if not years, without seeing a farm, the most recent agriculture census for which information is available notes that in 2007 there were 2.1 million farms in the United States. Those farms spanned 922 million acres, shedding light on the fact that while many Americans might not see farms on a daily basis, that doesn't mean the country isn't still a great home to farmland.

While farming might once have been a part of most Americans' daily lives, today the principles of farming are much more foreign to the average American. One such principle is crop rotation, a valuable agricultural practice that can even pay dividends for suburban homeowners who enjoy gardening. The benefits of crop rotation aren't only applicable to large farms, as they can help keep personal gardens healthy as well.

### WHAT IS CROP ROTATION?

Crop rotation is a practice farmers employ to help their crops fight disease. By growing a variety of crops in a sequential system throughout their field, farmers are hoping to avoid the buildup of disease and pests that is common with

mono-cropping, which is the practice of growing the same crop on the same land year after year. When rotating crops, each succeeding crop must belong to a family different from the previous crop.

### WHY EMPLOY CROP ROTATION?

Crop rotation has many benefits, arguably the most important of which is keeping pests and disease at bay. Since many pest insects and disease-causing organisms are host specific, rotating crops helps ensure these insect pests and harmful organisms cannot make a permanent home or have access to a permanent source of food. If crops aren't rotated, then the insect pests and organisms have a constant source of food, enabling them to live longer and do more damage to crops as a result.

But crop rotation isn't only beneficial to crops. Crop rotation can also promote healthy soil. Different crops have different nutrient needs, so rotating crops with different nutrient needs helps avoid the depletion of any one element present in the soil. Soil structure is often better when crops are rotated as well. Some crops are deep-rooting while others are shallow rooting. By alternating between the two, planters can break up any subsoil that might have grown compacted.

Crop rotation also offers environmental and financial benefits by reducing reliance on synthetic chemicals to fight pests. By rotating crops, planters are making it much harder for pests to thrive, without having to spend money on costly and often environmentally harmful pesticides.

"Don't Gamble" – Insure With  
**M.T. & R.C. SMITH INSURANCE**  
 Serving the Yankton Area Since 1949  
 ... With Excellent Insurance Companies That We Represent!  
**HOME, AUTO, BUSINESS, LIFE, BONDS**  
 204 W. 4th St. • Downtown Yankton, SD  
**605-665-3611**

**J-Bar Feed and Health Center**  
  
 From cattle to household pets, we carry animal health products, feed & vaccine.  
**605-665-1021 • 1-800-658-3476**  
**1003 Broadway • Yankton, SD**  
**cjbar@iw.net • Doug & Char Jeske, owners**  
 Ask about our fencing & tack products!

**NAPA YOUR RADIATOR HEADQUARTERS!**  
 Introducing the NEW **NAPA Radiator Program**  
 • Great Parts • Great Warranty  
**On-Hand & In-Stock! NO WAITING!**  
**Cox Auto** 1007 Broadway Ave. • Yankton • 665-4494

**Valley View Hay Co.**  
 P.O. Box 107 • Volin, SD  
**(605) 267-2025**  
*Steve & Michele Gustad*

**Schuermans Farm Supply**  
  
**NEW IN Stock**  
 Many sizes to choose from  
**1000 gallon Tank Only \$599**  
 We now offer a full robot polishing for your 22.5-24.5 aluminum truck rims! Call for Pricing  
**BEFORE AFTER**  
**SAVE THE DATE! OPEN HOUSE APRIL 9<sup>TH</sup> 11AM-5PM**  
 5 miles West of Tyndall on Hwy. 50 Corner of Hwys. 50 and 37  
**[www.schuermansfarmsupply.com](http://www.schuermansfarmsupply.com)**  
**Ph. (605) 589-3909 or Cell (605)464-1113**

**GENUINE SHURCO** The Ultimate in Trailer Automation  
  
**SMARTrailer**  
**GENUINE SHURCO**  
**NOW AVAILABLE FOR STRAP-STYLE HOPPERS**  
**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO TARP SMARTER.**  
 Load and unload faster, easier and safer, with our 3500 Series Electric and ProTrap® Electric Hopper Door Opener. There's even a Solar Power Pack to run it all on sunshine, without wiring your truck! Our five-channel SMARTransmitter™ lets you operate tarp, front and rear traps, plus two more 12-volt Shur-Co.® accessories. See it in action on our website and call to schedule an install!  
**[www.shurco.com](http://www.shurco.com)** Yankton Outlet Store 2309 Shur-Lok Street **605.665.6000**