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IT'S SAFE TO SAY

A Message from our Leader

Where did the summer go? I imagine starting harvest in August and dry pastures certainly shortened everyone's summer. With the days rapidly getting shorter as we approach fall, it is a great time to get some reflective clothing or arm bands to help keep everyone visible on the farm as we work into the darker hours.

As a runner in a rural area, no matter what time of day it is I make sure I have

something reflective on as I run on the highway. This makes me more visible, especially with distracted drivers. Anything that I can do to catch a motorist's eye, so I do not get hurt. It occurred to me as I was leading a recent 4-H event, that myself and many of you make sure that when we play our sports or do activities with kids, we follow the rules and wear the safety equipment. We all have the skills to be safe, so now is a great time to use those skills to be safe on the farm as well. Take the time this fall to ensure everyone on the farm has the right equipment and knowledge to complete tasks safely.

This month's letter is **A** for animal handling and a great opportunity to think about training for working with animals on the farm. It takes time and experience to learn how to read an animal's behaviour, and it becomes important to share some of this knowledge with others on the farm who have less experience. While many will say it is just "common sense" it is **common knowledge** that we want to achieve with our farm team (this includes workers and children).

Check out the rest of the information in this month's newsletter and stay safe.

Lastly if you have questions or concerns, we are always here to help you out. You can contact our team anytime via:

- For general inquiries:
info@agasafeb.ca /403-219-7901

- For our hotline for incidence assistance: 1-833-9AGSAFE

Jody Wacowich
AgSafe Alberta Executive Director



SAFETY MINUTE

Don't let that pretty face and those long legs get your guard

down, 68% of animal related fatalities in agriculture involved horses!



Findings from the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research using data from 1990 through to 2009 found that 68% of the animal related fatalities in agriculture involved horses (horses/stallions/colts classification) and the remaining 32% involved cows (cows/steers/calves classification).

Better for the Both of You

AgSafe Alberta recognizes you care about your animals. Most farmers put more time into calculating the nutritional needs of their livestock based on age, stage of life (i.e., lactating, weaning), and other factors than they have ever thought about for themselves. For this reason, rather than just focusing on your safety, we are going to look at a few points that will make working your animals safer for the both of you.

- **Non-slip flooring in holding and handling facilities keeps everyone on their feet.** Grooved patterns in concrete floors are better than rough broom finishes as this will be worn smooth over time.
- **Gates, fences, and chutes should be checked for any sharp edges, weaknesses, and damage.** A worker or animal who gets cut by a protruding nail on a board will not be happy or calm... they will be thinking about protecting the injury. A gate that cannot close when you need it to can have severe consequences.
- **Calm animals are safer animals.** It does not take long for an animal to become excited and at least 20 to 30 minutes for it to calm back down.

While every effort to keep animals quiet while being worked should be made, we can recognize things do not always go as intended. If necessary, take an early lunch break so that both two and four legged parties get a chance to destress and calm down. Trying to push through it can be dangerous, ineffective and frustrating.

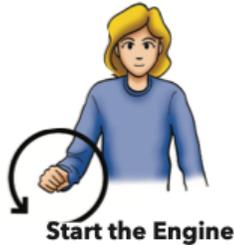


- **Only allow trained individuals familiar with livestock behaviour work with the animals.** While someone might mean well, it can be dangerous for themselves, others and the animals.
 - **Stay out of an animal's blind spot.** It will kick you... and kicks can not only be painful but potentially fatal.
 - **Do not chase an escaped cow.** While it is tempting, unless someone or the animal may be in danger, let it return on its own. If you do have to go after it, a calm approach is key.
 - **Heat stress and cold stress are bad for everyone.** Schedule handling events for when the conditions will be favourable... this may mean early mornings in the summer, but that is nothing new for you.
 - **Keep lighting in mind.** Animals will move from a darker place to a brighter place, but not if the light is too bright. Cattle, hogs, and sheep can see behind themselves without turning their heads which is why they will refuse to move forward when there are shadows.
 - **Keep noise levels as low as possible.** Animals are more sensitive to high-pitched noises than we are. Yelling is stressful and unpleasant for everyone involved.
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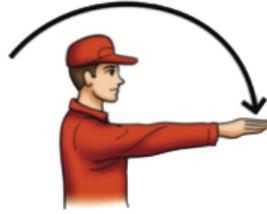
ASAE Hand Signals Save Time, Prevent Frustration

- **They save time**
- **They work well in noisy environments**
- **They prevent miscommunication/misunderstanding and frustration**
- **They can reduce injuries and fatalities**
- **They can reduce equipment damage**

Hand signals communicate needed information quickly and effectively. The following 11 uniform hand signals have been adopted by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) and should be learned and used by everyone living on, working at or visiting your farm.



Start the Engine



Move Out / Take Off



Raise Equipment



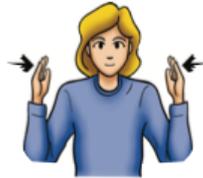
Stop the Engine



Lower Equipment



Move to Me / Follow Me



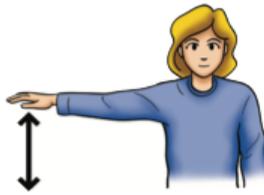
This far to Go



Stop from Behind



Speed it Up



Slow it Down



Stop



Right Turn



Left Turn



Come to Me

Visit Take11.ca for helpful hints on animal handling on your farm



Watch our short video on animal handling

SAFETY FIRST, LAST THOUGHTS

Yearn to Burn? Not so fast...



Burning can be a handy way to get your farm cleaned up before winter, but there are many things you should consider first. A basic consideration is whether or not what is being burned might be prohibited debris. **Prohibited debris** can include certain containers, baler twine, treated wood and plastic or rubber materials/coated materials.

Fire season in Alberta starts March 1 and lasts until October 31, though it may be extended if necessary. Fire permits are required while fire season is in effect and can be obtained for free through your local Alberta Environment and Parks office. Call 310-0000 to locate your nearest office and visit albertafirebans.ca to ensure there are no fire bans in effect for your area.

More detailed information can be found on the Government of Alberta Publication [Prohibited Debris: Before You Burn...Learn!](#)



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