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IT'S SAFE TO SAY

A message from our leader

We made it through January and now, I am really starting to notice the days getting longer as we head into February. I know that extra daylight is good for my mental health and I hope it is for you as well.

We still have to get through February and March but we're almost there. At least that's what I'm telling myself!

Recognizing that these winter months can be long on a regular year (global pandemic notwithstanding), we wanted to help you get through them while learning some valuable skills along the way. That's why we planned a series of webinars to take place throughout this winter.

If you've already attended one or more, that's great! We'd always love your feedback on whether the content was valuable to you. If you have not attended a webinar, you've still got time! We have a few coming up.

Our FarmSafe Getting Started webinar was designed to help you get a proactive start on safety planning for this year – because we all know how it can fall to the wayside once you get into your busy seasons again. The next one will be March 23.

[Learn more about these and register.](#)

We also have a very interesting webinar coming up featuring Reg Steward, Provincial Ranching Safety Consultant with AgSafe British Columbia. Reg is an experienced rancher who also has 20 years of experience as a member of the RCMP. He takes a proactive, boots-on-the-ground approach to safety and promotes practical, experience-based solutions for your farm safety needs. I highly recommend you take time to sit in on this one, taking place March 9.

[Learn more about these and register.](#)

In the meantime, if you have time for some light reading over the next couple weeks, why not also invest in the safety of your farm and family? There are many resources on our website to help you start making safety a seamless part of your 2021 farming year (while also giving you one less thing to stress about this season).

[Browse them all here.](#)

Finally, this month's Take11 theme is air quality on your farm. This is such a serious concern as the deadliest gases, fumes, mists and viruses are often unnoticeable. Learn more about how to recognize and minimize the risks in the "Safety Minute" section of this newsletter.

Questions or concerns? We are always here to help you out. Contact our team anytime:

- General inquiries: info@agsafeab.ca

403-219-7901

- Hotline for incidence assistance:

1-833-9AGSAFE

Jody Wacowich
AgSafe Executive Director



SAFETY MINUTE

Inhalation of dusts and moulds on the farm

The dusts and moulds that can be found on farms may affect your respiratory tract in many ways. Some of these effects may be just temporary and annoying but others can be life-altering and eventually fatal. Consider these less obvious illnesses:

- **Toxic Organic Dust Syndrome (TODS or Grain Fever)** TODS results from heavy exposure to grain dusts and commonly occurs when dusts are confined to an area. Symptoms in newly exposed workers can occur 4-6 hours after exposure or within a few days, and include: chills, flushed face, muscle pain and general body discomfort.
- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)** Exposure to dusts and moulds can result in permanent lung damage, similar to what smokers experience, and can manifest as chronic bronchitis and airway obstruction. Symptoms include a recurring cough, phlegm production for more than two years, laboured breathing and wheezing.

- **Farmer's Lung (Extrinsic Allergic Alveolitis)** Farmer's Lung is an allergic disease resulting from inhaling allergy-causing dusts such as: hay, straw, corn, silage or grain. Symptoms start 4-8 hours after exposure and even small amounts of exposure can cause illness after someone has become sensitized. This disease that can also cause permanent lung damage and death. Unfortunately, there is little information on Farmer's Lung in Canada but we do know it's generally more common on dairy farms, particularly those that do not use automated equipment for handling hay or feed. More information: [click here](#).

The degree of risk for these diseases depends on exposure rates and duration, as well as the amount of dust and mould in the air. Risks increase in areas with poor ventilation, such as closed sheds, barns and storage bins, and during years where crops do not dry properly.



Steps to prevent these illnesses:

- When hay is unlikely to dry properly, store it as silage instead (of course, when possible)
- Properly ventilate any building on your farm that is likely to have high amounts of dusty materials inside
- Use automated equipment where possible to handle hay and feed
- When sweeping dusty areas, wet the floor down to keep dust from becoming airborne
- Use appropriate respiratory protective equipment, such as an N95 or half mask with cartridges

- Ensure workers are trained in the use and care of any required respiratory protective equipment

I moustache you a question! Does your mask fit properly?

If a mask is not worn properly or does not fit correctly, it can't protect you. Often, people are not aware of how facial hair (even a five o'clock shadow) can prevent a proper seal. Moustaches, long sideburns (mutton chops), stubble and facial piercings can interfere with the face seal. The effectiveness of the equipment depends on the effectiveness of the face seal. The wearer needs to be clean shaven so that the facepiece of the mask seals with the skin on the face.



MASK FITTING WITH MENS FACIAL HAIR



ACCEPTABLE



NOT ACCEPTABLE

What is a fit test?

A fit test will test the seal between the respirator's facepiece and face, using irritant smoke or a machine to check for leaks. Once fit tested, you must use the same make, model, style, and size of respirator that you were fit tested with. Do not use respiratory protective equipment for which you have not been fit tested or that fits poorly. Weight loss, dental work, facial surgery and even the natural aging process can change our faces enough to reduce the seal on respiratory protective equipment. It is important to be fit tested after any of these occurrences, and at minimum, be fit tested once every two years.

General safety practices

Below are some points to help you develop safe work practices for areas on your farm where air quality may be an issue.

- Verify that exhaust, ventilation or air cleaning equipment is working properly. Always test the atmosphere using a gas monitor before entering confined spaces and continuously monitor while inside. Move generators, vehicles and running equipment away from the work area in an effort to eliminate sources of contamination.
- When working with chemicals, read the safety data sheet (SDS) and review the recommended PPE and handling methods; use the product as indicated in farm procedures and as directed by the manufacturer. Ensure products with fumes or vapours which may ignite are addressed in the hazard assessment.
- Ensure all required PPE is worn and used correctly.
- Inspect your PPE (half or full-face mask, filter cartridges, face piece, respirator hose, supplied air cylinder, etc.) before and after use.
- Ensure that contaminated clothing and equipment is placed in a closed plastic bag and properly cleaned before being used again. Do not wear or take contaminated clothing home to be laundered.
- Avoid sweeping in areas where hazardous particulate is present. Dampen down the area first, use a sweeping compound or a vacuum with a HEPA filter, where practicable.



Farmers Care Air Quality Video



Watch Here



TAKE 11

Reacquaint yourself with the fundamentals of farm safety!

Last month we launched Take11.ca – a campaign designed to help you make your farm safer in only minutes a day.

This month's focus is on air quality. You can't always see air quality hazards, but you can always take measures to identify, eliminate or minimize them.

Learn more about **AIR QUALITY** by visiting **Take11.ca**



SAFETY FIRST, LAST THOUGHTS

Air quality hazards are common on the farm and you cannot always rely on your senses to identify them. Here's a quick guide to help you assess and address risks.

Hazard	Example of Where	Can You See it?	Can You Smell it?
Low Oxygen/No Oxygen	Sealed root cellars with rotting vegetables	No	No
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Blocked/clogged flue pipe on a wood stove or a malfunctioning furnace	No	No
Hydrogen Sulfide	Manure Pit	No	At low

(H ₂ S)			concentrations; high concentrations deaden the sense of smell instantly
Hantavirus	Storage shed where mice are present	No	No

It is critical that you identify where and when air quality hazards may be present on your farm and perform assessments to determine ways to eliminate or control these hazards sufficiently.

Need more support, help and resources? We are here to help. Visit www.agsafeab.ca, email us at info@agsafeab.ca or become an AgSafe member and receive regular safety information and a visit from an AgSafe Advisor to help you make a safety plan for your farm. To become a member, simply sign up on our website.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Speaker Series Webinars

- **March 9 @ 1 pm**

Being Right or Being Regulated with Reg Steward

Reg Steward brings regulation and culture all home by combining his two decades of safety and boots in the barnyard experience to help us view safety as a way of doing business: by doing the right things for the right reasons.

[Register Here](#)

Getting Started Webinars

- **March 23 @ 7 pm**

Let us help you get started on your farm safety plan! Join the AgSafe team for a one-of-a-kind webinar on how to build your safety plan.

[Register Here](#)



Your Safety, Your Way
agsafeab.ca



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