



March Newsletter

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IT'S SAFE TO SAY

A message from our leader

March came in like a lamb and seems to be staying that way, which is welcome news after all that cold weather in February. It also means that we are in or approaching a busy season for many of you.

There are many safety concerns that arise during these next couple months for farmers and ranchers in Alberta. Busy times are generally more stressful and active and that means more risk overall.

We want you to keep in mind, there are simple ways for you to integrate safety into your daily activities. AgSafe Alberta has tools and resources to help you do

this.

Hopefully, you took some time over the winter to update your farm safety plan for the year (perhaps you even attended one of our webinars or checked out the resources on our website). If not, there's still time. Visit our website or reach out to us directly for ways to help. Having a safety plan is crucial for farms and ranches – not only is it part of running a business, it's part of your farm's risk management, not to mention that it can be, literally, a matter of life and death.

Having a plan in place is only one part of the equation. Another is keeping safety top of mind in your day-to-day operations. This doesn't have to be a big or onerous task – in fact, it only takes minutes a day. In January, we launched Take 11, a campaign highlighting the most common farm/ranch accidents in our province and simple ways for you to prevent them.

This month's Take 11 feature is run over/roll overs on the farm. Did you know these are the most common farm accidents in Alberta during Spring and Fall? Check out the tips below for ways to prevent them on your farm or ranch.

Over the next couple months, take time to manage your farm team's schedules so that we avoid incidents related to fatigue. Did you know that going too long without sleep can impair your ability to drive the same way as drinking too much alcohol? See below for more information about the risks of fatigue and how to stay safe.

Lastly, with calving season well under way, we have included some safety reminders for your review. Check them out below for ways to keep your family, employees and yourself safe this spring season.

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

The next couple months are busy ones for farmers/ranchers in Alberta. Here's how to prevent some of the most common injuries for this time of year.

Fatigue

More daylight hours typically mean longer work days for farmers and ranchers, and unfortunately this also tends to result in less sleep. The more sleep you miss, the harder it is for you to do what needs to be done. In fact, studies have shown that going too long without sleep can impair your ability to drive the same way as drinking too much alcohol does. For example, being awake for at least 18 hours is the equivalent of having a blood content (BAC) of 0.05%, while being awake for at least 24 hours is the same as having a blood alcohol content of 0.10%, which is higher than the legal limit in Canada.

Individuals who sleep six hours or less per day are more likely to:

- Fall asleep while driving or operating equipment.
- Be less attentive.
- Have a slower reaction time.
- Have decreased judgement (reduced decision-making abilities).
- Have decreased coordination.

Signs to watch out for include:

- Yawning or blinking often.
- Blurred vision.
- Feeling tired, even after sleeping.
- Trouble remembering things, even if they happened recently.
- Difficulty concentrating on what you are doing.
- Irritability.
- When driving or operating equipment, missing your turn onto a road or driveway, drifting from your path of travel or hitting the shoulder of the road.

How to prevent fatigue:

- Eat healthy foods such as vegetables, fruit and protein.
 - Stay hydrated, drink plenty of water.
 - Reduce caffeine, nicotine and alcohol (which increases your heart rate and interrupts sleep patterns).
 - Get moderate aerobic exercise if you are sitting behind the wheel of a tractor or other machine most of the day; this may be as simple as walking through another field to check its condition and clear your mind.
 - Maintain a good and consistent sleep and waking schedule wherever possible; keep your bedroom dark, free of distractions and only use it for sleeping.
 - Practice relaxation techniques that work for you. Examples include breathing techniques, getting a massage, playing your favourite instrument, enjoying yoga, going for a run or playing fetch with your four-legged farm hand.
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Calving

Calving safety tips:

- Stay on guard at all times; don't turn your back on a cow.
- Do not get between the mother and her newborn calf without a barrier or some form of protection.
- Always be cautious when dealing with mothers and their newborns and be especially careful with first-time calvers.
- Enter a pen only if completely necessary and have someone else with you; bring a fully charged mobile phone in case of an emergency.
- If you have a cattle dog, be mindful that the mother may now see the dog as a threat.
- Avoid lifting calves if possible; if you must, squat beside the calf, hold it close to you (one arm around the front and the other behind the legs), lift with your legs and keep your back straight.
- Always watch for aggressive cows on the farm; cull them before they become aggressive with you or any of your workers.

Runovers

According to the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (CAIR), runover injuries and fatalities occur most frequently on Alberta farms between the months of March through May and again from September to November. These

types of accidents can include:

- Bystander runovers, where a bystander (commonly a child under 14 years of age) is inadvertently run over by a tractor, machine or pickup truck.
- Extra rider runovers, where an extra rider falls from a tractor or other machine and is run over by the machine, an implement or a wagon.
- Operator runovers, where the operator falls from the tractor or machine and is run over by the machine, an implement or a wagon.
- Alighted operator runovers, where the operator is run over after dismounting or climbing down from the tractor or machine to perform a task.
- Improper start runovers, where an operator is run over or pinned by a machine after starting it in a manner not recommended by the manufacturer, such as starting it from the ground or short circuiting the ignition box (pass starting).

CAIR also reported that individuals over the age of 60 were at highest risk of a fatal runover. This age group represented 62.7% of alighted operator runovers, 62.9% of the fatal operator runovers and 68.2% of the fatal improper start runovers.



Farmers Care roll over video



[Watch Here](#)

Runover prevention tips:

- Always perform a vehicle walk around before use and make sure to check under them as well.
- Keep young children away from the work site wherever possible, as it is difficult to get the job done while adequately supervising a curious young child.
- Avoid having extra riders, even on machines and tractors with cabs, due to the elevated risk of a fatal injury (this does not apply when the rider is using a manufacturer designed passenger seat).
- Avoid parking tractors and machines on slopes.
- Before repairing a tractor, machine or vehicle take precautions to ensure that it will not move or roll by engaging the emergency brake, blocking the wheels and of course, ensuring the transmission is in neutral or park and that the engine is off.
- Do not stand while operating a tractor or other machine and always wear the seatbelt if one is equipped.
- Do not start a tractor or machine by reaching up from the ground level.
- Remember that pass starting equipment is associated with a high rate of fatal runovers.

For more information, see the full report [here](#).



TAKE 11

Reacquaint yourself with the fundamentals of farm safety!

*Visit **Take11.ca** a campaign designed to help you make your farm safer in only minutes a day!*



SAFETY FIRST, LAST THOUGHTS

Take care out there

It's not too late to make a farm safety plan for the year! In the last couple months we hosted a series of webinars outlining everything farmers need to be mindful of these days as we head into another growing season, including current OHS regulations, COVID considerations and how to design a safety plan customized for your farm.

If you missed them, don't worry. We have one more coming up on March 23 (see info. below).

If you missed our Speaker Series webinars and would like to watch them, we have

them recorded and available to watch here:

Chris Spasoff - OH&S Law: J.D. Edition

Alan D. Quilley: Safety is Everyone's Responsibility

Reg Steward: Being right or being regulated?

If you need more help with making a farm safety plan at any time of the year, we are here to help. Get in touch.

You will hear more from us on mental health in the coming months but for now please participate in this survey from the University of Guelph.

Are you a Canadian farmer?

You are invited to complete an **online survey** to help researchers at the Ontario Veterinary College understand the **impacts of your work on your mental health**.

It will take about **20 minutes** and will provide our agricultural community with important information on the mental health of our farmers.

Enter 5 draws to win \$200 (odds of winning ~1 in 1000)

This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants (REB#21-01-001)

https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dgmMRnTsAYoChEN



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Please contact **Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton**
with questions or concerns:
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UPCOMING EVENTS



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](#)

An illustration of a green field with a series of black utility poles and power lines receding into the distance under a light grey sky.

Your Safety, Your Way
agsafeab.ca



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