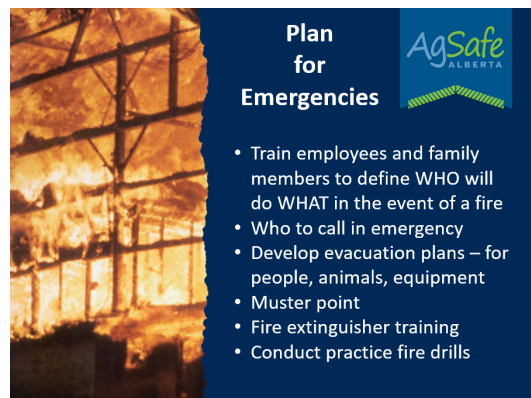




Thursday November 1, 2018

REDUCING THE RISK OF FIRE ON YOUR FARM



There are three leading causes of farm fires, as reported by fire services, including:

- mechanical/electrical failure,
- misuse of ignition sources or igniting equipment, (heating equipment)
- design, construction or maintenance deficiencies.

There are also other factors that contribute to the impact of fire growth and the magnitude of losses from fires. Combustible materials cannot be totally avoided on the farm, but reducing their use in construction and establishing good housekeeping practices goes a long way in reducing fire growth. Early detection and rapid fire response are key to reducing the magnitude of farm fires. Farm and agribusiness owners should periodically review potential hazards and conditions that could lead to a fire and develop a fire safety plan.

There are several operational and maintenance practices that farm operators can use to reduce the risk of fires on the farm.

GENERAL BUILDING SAFETY

- All farm buildings, regardless of size, should have a minimum of two exits, both easily accessible.

- Use building materials that are flame retardant or fire resistive. Install and maintain lightning rods and grounding cables.
- Practice good housekeeping; cobwebs and dust are combustibles.
- Remove brush, weeds, and tall grass from around buildings. Keeping a clean, clear space around buildings and general yard areas can help reduce the risk of fire spreading from one building to another.
- Store hazardous products (e.g., herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, fertilizers) according to manufacturer's recommendations and applicable regulations.
- Compressed air cylinders should be kept in good repair; protect valves from mechanical damage.
- Provide adequate ventilation in work areas to reduce carbon monoxide or fume buildup.
- Perform welding and cutting operations only in areas that are free of combustible materials.
- Ensure that emergency generators are in good working order and only use in areas that are well ventilated, away from children and pets, and away from air intakes to the home.

READ FULL ARTICLE

SHELTER IN PLACE

Shelter-in-Place means to stay indoors because it is safer than leaving your current location. Depending on the situation, you may be instructed to shelter-in-place or to evacuate. Shelter-in-Place should be used when there is little time to react to a situation too dangerous to be outside or when life-threatening agents are in the air. How to Shelter-in-Place

- Bring all people and pets indoors right away. If exposed, shower and change clothes
- Close and lock all windows and outside doors
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems
- If you have a fireplace, close it.
- Choose an area that you can seal off easily, preferably one with access to phone, water and a toilet. An upstairs bedroom with an adjoining bathroom would be ideal. Upper level is best, because some gases and chemicals are heavier than air, and they sink to lower levels
- Use plastic sheeting and duct tape to cover and seal windows, cracks, vents and doors.
- Keep listening to your radio until emergency management officials tell you that it is safe to leave or evacuate.

View Red Deer County's video demonstrating [Sheltering in Place](#)



Alberta Emergency Alert

Download the Alberta Emergency Alert App to your smart phone. Alberta Emergency ALERTS are issued by the communities where a disaster or emergency is occurring. By signing up to receive this information directly you will be better informed about potential risks to your health, safety or community.

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

Short stories from producers who have been injured in a farming incident

So Easy to Become Complacent

It was calving season in March and Gary was out checking the cows as he did every morning. "There has never been an incident and you think you will never have an incident. Then you do." Gary went to check the cows and one of the cows took exception to Gary being near her calf. The cow shoved him against the wall and cracked his skull open. Gary got out of the barn and somehow got to the house where he passed out on the kitchen floor. Gary's daughter found him in a pool of blood. Gary was hospitalized and spent 4 months out of commission and unable to help out on the farm. His absence was hard on the kids and hard on his wife who had to run the farm, manage the family, not to mention the trauma of having her husband in critical condition. After head injuries, the victims are often not in a good place emotionally which can make life difficult for everyone around. "My wife was afraid to leave me alone because I was emotionally unstable." Gary lost his independence and had to hire extra help for the farm which put their farm in a financial struggle.



Gary and his family have now made changes to their calving practices so that it is not necessary to be in the barn with the cows during calving. "If I was to say something to myself back then, I would say IT'S WORTH IT TO PUT IN ANOTHER GATE NOW! to make it safer." Gary wants to prevent a similar incident from happening again. Gary considers himself lucky to survive the incident and has set his farm up now to rely less on luck and more on safe work practices and prevention.



SHARE YOUR STORY: If you have a story and lessons learned from an incident

that took place on your farm that you are willing to share, tell your story. Your experience may help prevent similar incidents from happening to a fellow farmer. Please send in your stories to donna@agsafeab.ca

Ag Safe Alberta Society OUT AND ABOUT

The Ag Safe Alberta Advisor team is out working individually with farmers and ranchers across Alberta. Ag Safe will also be providing farm safety management information at the following events:

November 5-8: Alberta Beekeepers Commission Conference Edmonton

November 10: Bezanson Ag Society Farm Safety workshop

November 13: Next Level Farming Lacombe

November 14: Next Level Farming Strathmore

November 14: Farm Safety Workshop MD of Foothills

November 13-15: Potato Growers of Alberta Conference Edmonton

November 19: Next Level Farming Rycroft

November 21: Next Level Farming Westlock

November 21: Powering Your Profits Stony Plain

November 22: Next Level Farming Willingdon

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR EVENT DETAILS

If you would like Ag Safe Alberta Society to attend or present at one of your winter agricultural events in Alberta please email: jwacowich@agsafeab.ca with details.



BE PREPARED: 72 HOUR KIT

Disasters cause confusion and distress. Your own personal preparedness can make a big difference in helping you manage an emergency and speed your recovery afterwards. Taking the steps to be more prepared now can reduce the stress of making important decisions about where you will go and what you will do if you find yourself in an urgent situation. Create your own emergency kit to help you and your family stay safe until emergency responders can reach you. Alberta Emergency Management Agency provides guidelines to prepare and build your own [EMERGENCY KIT](#).



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