

MAFES Dawg Tracks



March 19, 2012



Safety Tips: Hearing Protection

Agriculture noise joins other hazards in the industry that we must take safety steps to protect all employees and ourselves from becoming hearing deficient. Agriculture noise is a common hazard on farms and ranches. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 10 percent of the nation's agriculture workers are exposed to excessive noise levels.

The National Safety Council (NSC) reminds us that tractors, combines, choppers, and grain dryers can cause permanent hearing loss.

The following are tips with explanations of how noise can affect you and steps to take for protection from hearing impairments:

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF NOISE-

- We all are exposed to excessive noisy conditions at various times.
- Too much exposure to loud noise can hurt you and can:
 - ~Cause you to miss hearing important safety instructions.
 - ~Result in stress from straining to listen and be heard, ultimately leading to hearing loss.
 - ~Prolonged exposure to loud noise will lead to permanent hearing loss.
 - ~Even if you are temporarily exposed to loud noise for a short time, you may experience hearing loss.

EXAMPLES OF LOUD NOISES-

- Noise levels are measured in "decibels."
- Noise levels in excess of 85 decibels can affect your hearing if you work around it more than 8 hours in a day.
- Examples of noise levels above 85 decibels are: idling tractors, combines, grain dryers, a barn cleaner and a conveyor.
- Old chain saws, power tools, or working on a tractor without an enclosed cab can expose you to even more dangerous noise levels.
- Using power tools for more than 1 hour each day without hearing protection can damage your hearing.

SYMPTOMS OF HOW NOISE CAN HURT YOU-

- ✓ If you hear ringing or other noises in your ears
 - ✓ Can't hear people when they are talking to you
 - ✓ Can't hear high pitched or soft sounds
- If you recognize or experience any of these problems notify your supervisor. You may need to have your hearing tested.

TIPS ON HEARING PROTECTION-

- ✓ Wear earplugs when you're exposed to excessive noise levels. They will reduce the noise levels when you use them.
- ✓ There are several types, some are disposal and others are reusable.
- ✓ Wearing earmuffs is another good way for hearing protection. They cover your whole ear, resembling in appearance of stereo headsets.
- ✓ Earplugs and earmuffs come with a "noise reduction rating" or NRR. The NRR should be at least 25, which should allow the noise level to be below 90 decibels (dba).
- ✓ Fully insulated tractor cabs may provide adequate hearing protection. Check the owner's manual to verify the noise protection level provided by the tractor cab.
- ✓ Do not use cotton balls or stuff cotton pieces into your ears. They do not furnish any protection and may damage your ears.

WEARING EARPLUGS AND EARMUFFS-

- Wash your hands before inserting earplugs or putting on earmuffs.
- Check for cracks or other damage. Report any problems to your supervisor and get other hearing protection.
- Check the manufacturer's manual for instruction on how to properly insert earplugs or put on earmuffs.
- Foam earplugs are inserted by rolling each earplug in a real tiny cylinder, compressing it and then inserting it in the ear. Once it is in the ear it will expand to furnish the needed protection.
- The earplugs should feel comfortable, not too tight or too loose.
- The cups on earmuffs should also be comfortable and shouldn't be pinching the ears.

REMINDER: THE DO'S & DON'T'S OF HEARING PROTECTION-

DO:

- Use earplugs or earmuffs in noisy environments.
- Make sure both ear protection devices are comfortable.
- Clean reusable earplugs after each use.

DON'T:

- Don't stand too close to noisy machinery for long period of time.
- Don't use reusable earplugs.
- Don't share earplugs with your co-workers.

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Excerpts: www.gemplers.com
www.nasdonline.org

2/8/2012