

**Canadian
Agricultural
Safety Week
Mar. 11-17, 2009**

FACT SHEET #3

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Skid lids save lives

The vision of a farmer wearing a ball cap could soon be replaced with a hardhat. Skid lid, brain bucket, noggin wrapper, skull shell – call it what you like – just as long as you and your ag-workers are wearing one.

“PPE only works if you use it!” is the theme of this year’s Canadian Agricultural Safety campaign with a focus on the use, fit and access of personal protective equipment (PPE) in agriculture. The yearlong campaign will be launched with Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW), from March 11 to 17, 2009. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) and Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) deliver CASW in partnership with Farm Credit Canada (FCC) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

“Many times, safety equipment is looked at as an expense rather than an investment,” says Greg Stewart, FCC President and CEO. “However, investing in the health and safety of yourself and your workers pays very high returns in productivity, minimizing work stoppages, and most importantly, protecting the people that keep your farm or ranch productive.”

There are many situations on farms and ranches that require head protection such as driving all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), construction projects, welding, and chainsaw work, among a host of other situations that could risk falling objects or electrical shock.

If head protection is required, establish a complete safety protection program including selection, fit testing, training, maintenance and inspection of headwear. In Canada, all types of head protection must be “CSA approved” by the Canadian Standards Association or other standards organization specified by provincial regulations.

“It is hard for parents and employers to expect children and employees to wear head protection if they do not follow the same practice,” says Greg Stewart, FCC President and CEO. “The strongest way to deliver a safety message is to lead by example.”

Helmets and hardhats must resist penetration, absorb shock, be water resistant, slow to burn, and be adjustable. The hardhat liner must be adjusted to ensure that there is an open space between the rigid helmet and the top of the head, to absorb the blow from a falling object. Adjust headband size so that headwear will stay on when the wearer is bending over, but not so tight that it leaves a mark on the forehead.

The key to a more comfortable or “wearable” hardhat is to have a good centre of gravity, ventilation holes to allow for improved air circulation, and if needed a full-brim for workers who are in the sun for long periods of time. A wide variety of hardhats are available in many colours and designs, including cowboy hardhats and hardhats specially designed for women.

Type I hardhats protect the top of the head only, whereas Type II hardhats protect the sides of the head as well. Hardhats can be further grouped based on voltage with Class E or Electrical hardhats that can endure 20,000 volts; Class G or General hardhats which protect against 2,200 volts; and Class C or Conductive hardhats that have no protection against electrical voltage. Remember – only trained, authorized individuals should be working in close proximity to energized electrical equipment.

Replace your protective headwear when it has sustained an impact, when cracks appear in the shell, if it becomes brittle, or when the surface appears dull or chalky. Replace your suspension when it becomes brittle; if one or more of the cradling straps or mounts break off; or if the suspension will no longer hold securely to the head. Inspect your protective headwear before and after each use. Ultra violet light, decals, solvents, and markers can also cause deterioration of the protection shell. Although there is no set service life for head protection, manufacturers recommend replacement after no more than five years.

How does *your* farm safety knowledge rate? Try taking the FCC Farm Safety Quiz at www.fccfarmsafety.ca .

The CFA along with FCC, CASA and AAFC want to remind Canadian farmers that “*PPE only works if you use it!*”

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*** Free photos and cartoons are available to accompany this article at www.casa-acsa.ca .

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