



Canadian Agricultural Safety Week, March 14 – 20, 2010

FACT SHEET #7

Certified Safe Farms are coming

If you had some sort of financial incentive would you work toward certifying your farm as safe? Researchers at the University of Saskatchewan may have a deal for you.

The concept of a 'Certified Safe Farm' began as an experimental program at the University of Iowa in 1998. Iowa producers who achieved Certified Safe Farm status were rewarded with reduced health-care premiums along with the other cost saving aspects of the program, and the combined financial incentive was effective in reducing farm-related injuries and illnesses.

Similar incentive-based programs are being piloted in several provinces including Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and British Columbia, and there is growing interest in establishing a comprehensive, national research project lead by the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture (CCHSA) based out of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. CCHSA already has a well-developed agricultural occupational health screening program and a strong farm safety education program.

John Gordon, principle investigator of Certified Safe Farms Saskatchewan, says that while pieces of such programs have been developed in many provinces, CCHSA will bring together the Canadian and international architects of these programs to help develop a broadly-based Canadian approach to a Certified Safe Farm program. A five-year study would determine whether financial incentives actually help to reduce the current unacceptable death and injury rates in agriculture.

“It has been demonstrated in other industries that a good safety record is associated with higher productivity and therefore higher profits,” says Marcel Hacault, CASA Executive Director. “Fewer injuries and illnesses lead to less down time as well as less stress and mental strain.”

Certified Safe Farms offers a uniform quality system with the primary goal of reducing farm-related injuries and illnesses and passing along associated cost saving to farmers, insurers, and agribusiness. Key elements of the program include health screenings, safety assessments, action plans, incentives, buy-in and recruitment.

Better health has indirect benefits for the suppliers of seed, feed, machinery, chemicals, loans and services. Healthier farmers are more reliable as customers. They suffer fewer health problems and are more likely to fulfill their commitments to business partners.

“*Plan • Farm • Safety*” is the theme of this three-year Canadian Agricultural Safety campaign. Each aspect of the theme will be promoted over the next three years. This year the campaign will promote

"Plan" with safety walkabouts and planning for safety. In the second year, the focus will be on "Farm" including implementation, documentation and training. In the third year, emphasis will be on "Safety" including assessment, improvement and further development of safety systems.

The year-long "Plan" campaign will be launched with Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW), from March 14 to 20. 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.

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

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