



Health and Safety in Agriculture: Drivers for Change

by

**Sue Bruning, Ph.D.
I.H. Asper School of Business
University of Manitoba**

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Outline of Presentation

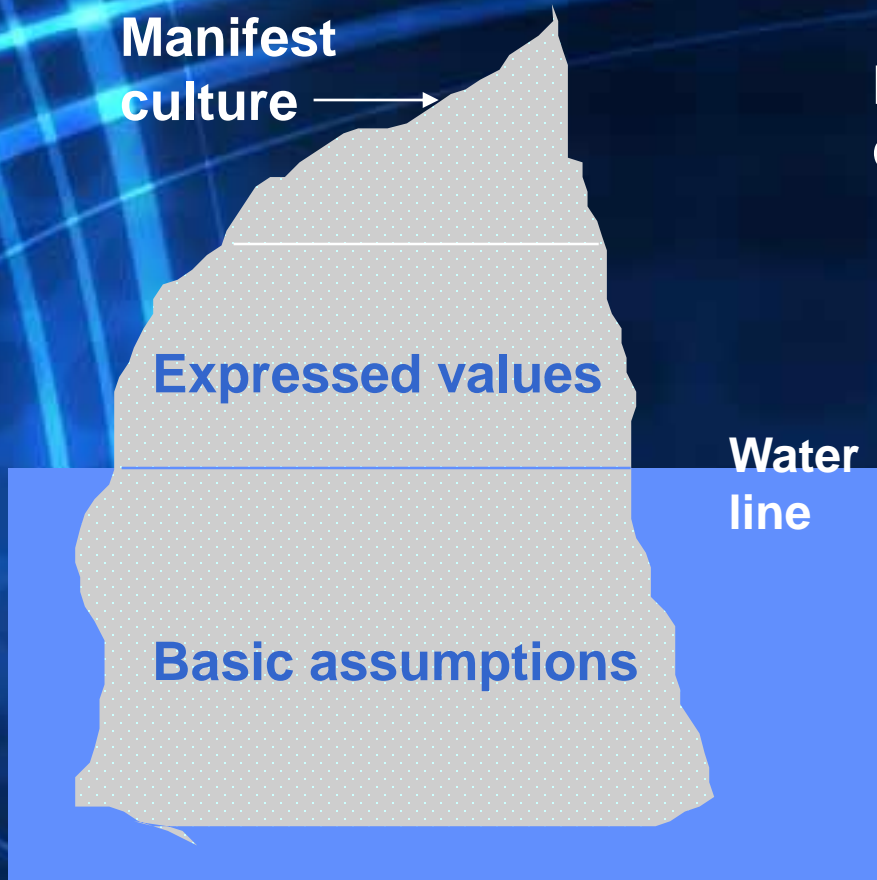
- Reviewing H&S statistics and risks in agriculture
- What is a positive health and safety culture?
- How is it applied to agriculture?
- Relationships between H&S culture and personal risks, accidents and injuries
- Drivers of change in agriculture
- Resistance to change in agriculture: Why isn't the record better than it is?
- The changing culture in agriculture



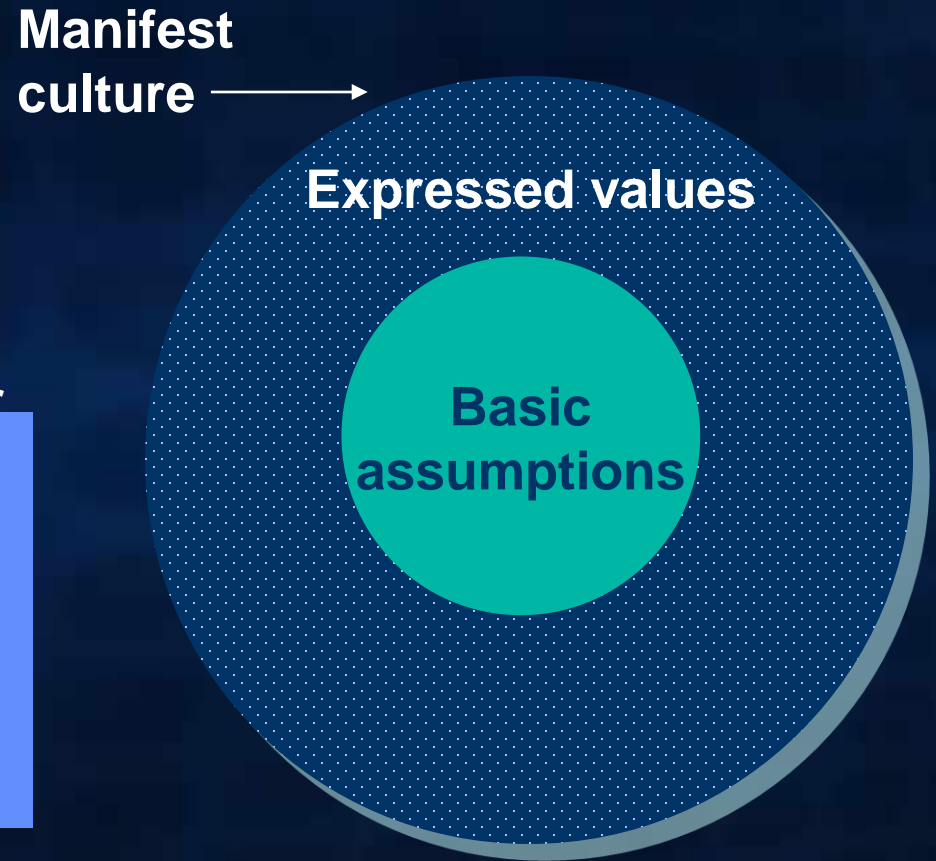
Health and Safety Stats to ponder

- 1769 deaths in the 1990-2005 period, approx 121/yr for '90-97 period and 100/yr for '98-'05 period – better but good enough?
- Seniors and small children higher proportion of deaths than their percent of the population
- Most deaths occurred in fields, farm yards and adjacent ditches (45%)
- 71% machine related, 47.4% accounted for by 3 types of machine-related causes (rollover, runover and entanglement)
- Mining, agriculture and construction industrial sectors have highest levels of fatalities – some statistics suggest that the rates are falling faster in mining and construction than in agriculture

Sathe's Levels of Culture



Iceberg



Onion

What are culture characteristics?

(Schein, 1992, 9-10)

- Observed behavioural regularities when people interact
- Group Norms
- Espoused values
- Formal philosophy
- Rules of the game
- Climate
- Embedded skills
- Habits of thinking, mental models, and/or linguistic paradigms
- Shared meanings
- “Root metaphors” or integrating symbols

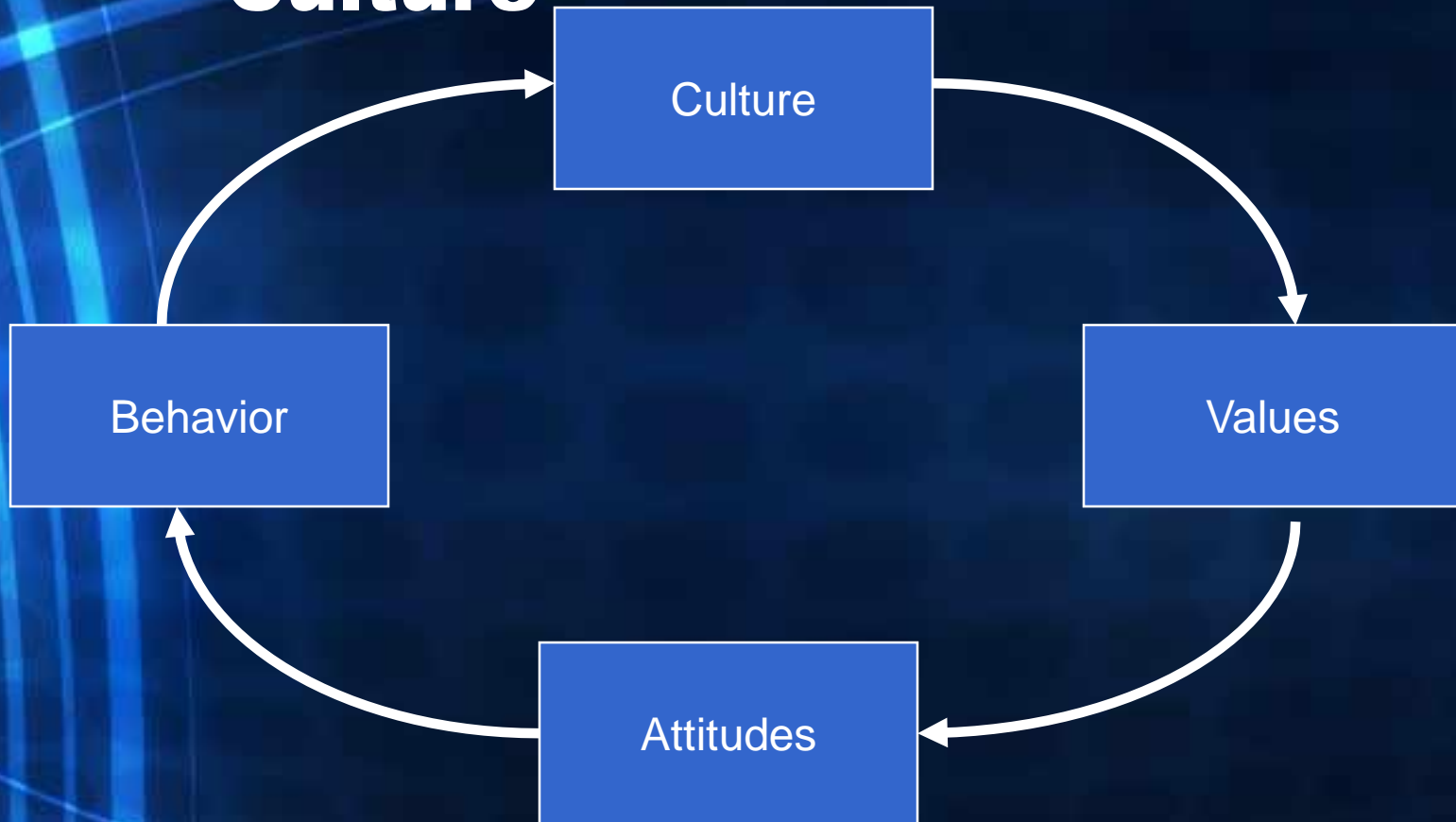
Safety Culture

- Industrial accidents in 1980s such as Chernobyl nuclear reactor, Exxon Valdez oil spill and Union Carbide disaster in India forced questions about how best to reduce human error and improve H&S systems
- Recent statistics majority of accidents are caused by unsafe behaviour (85%) and 15% by unsafe conditions
- So the question has become how to reduce unsafe behaviours and how best to influence those behaviours.

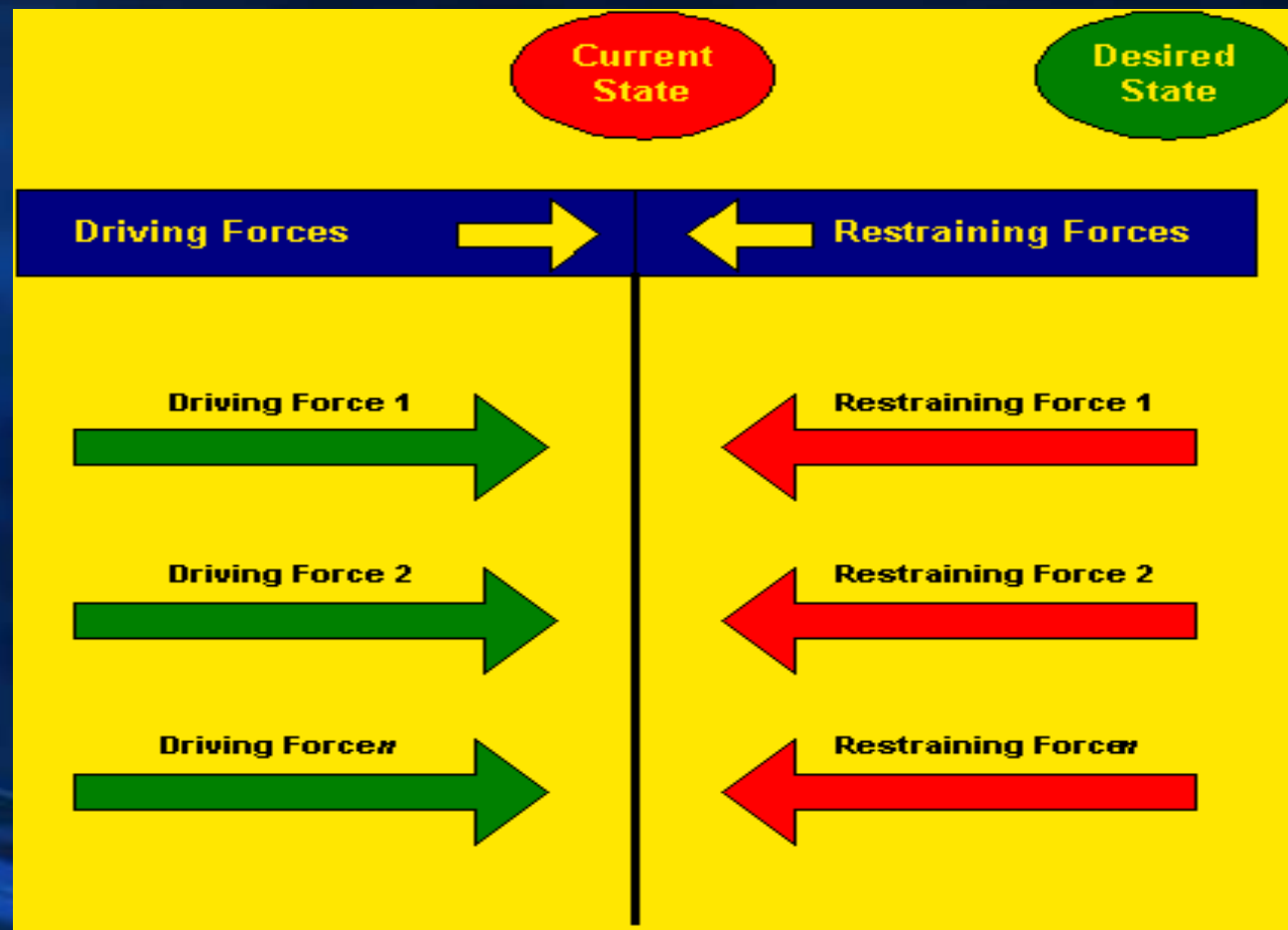
Safety Culture and Safety Climate

- Safety Culture - The shared perceptions amongst managers (farm owners/managers) and staff (farmhands) concerning the importance of safety. (Clarke, 1999)
- Safety Climate – how do people feel about the safety within their work context

Influence of Culture on Behavior and Behavior on Culture



Force Field Analysis



Changing the Health and Safety Culture

Driving Forces

An incident occurs to increase awareness of a problem

Increased recognition of health and safety hazards

Health and safety regulations

Understanding and acceptance of controllable risks

Plan:

Develop a comprehensive positive health and safety culture on a farm operation

“Hardy” image related to agriculture

Lack of knowledge

Perceived lack of resources

Established practice

Restraining Forces

Health and Safety Drivers in Agriculture

- Major H&S threats as drivers for change
 - Children in hazardous work situations
 - Weather – heat and cold
 - Exposure to chemicals
 - Traumatic injuries
 - Respiratory illness
 - Hearing loss
 - Cancer
 - Skin and infectious diseases
 - Musculoskeletal disorders

How do we increase the Driving forces?

An incident occurs to increase awareness of a problem

Increased recognition of health and safety hazards

Health and safety regulations

Understanding and acceptance of controllable risks

- Selection and hiring of employees with H&S sensitivity
- Training and education
- Establishment of positive H&S policies and practices and back up with explanations
- Model appropriate behaviour
- Post notices, signage, etc.

How do we decrease the Restraining forces?

- Role models who are looked up to model proper behaviours
- Training and education
- Ensure proper equipment is available
- Explain changes in established practice

“Hardy” image related to agriculture

Lack of knowledge

Perceived lack of resources

Established practice

Difficult Challenges – how to address?

- “It won’t happen to me”
- “I have done it this way all of my life”
- “Who do you think you are telling me how I should do things?”
- “I find x uncomfortable to wear” (respirator, harness, seat belt, gloves, protective clothing, etc.)
- “I want my grandchildren to develop a love of the land by sharing my job with them” (e.g. riding in the tractor, hay truck, playing around the buildings, etc.)

Summary

- The health and safety statistics in agriculture present an alarming picture and one that needs focused change.
- Most of the incidents are preventable with proper behaviours and equipment.
- Changing the culture is a key component to improving the H&S experience in agriculture
- Changing culture is difficult and requires focused attention but can be done. There are several “points” where changes can be introduced and the new cultural expectations reinforced.
- The improvements in other hazardous industries, e.g. mining and construction, provide good examples of improved practice.
- Positive change can have major benefits to those who are at risk in agriculture.



Thank You
Questions?