



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Illinois Departments of Agriculture and Labor Highlight National Farm Safety and Health Week September 19-25

Dedicated to farm safety and health initiatives

SPRINGFIELD, IL – As another harvest season begins, the Illinois Departments of Agriculture (IDOA) and Labor (IDOL) remind all farm workers to stay safe, especially during the upcoming and busy harvest season.

Each year since 1944, the third week of September has been recognized as National Farm Safety and Health Week. Governor Pritzker proclaimed the week of September 19-25, 2021, National Farm Safety and Health Week in Illinois, with the theme “Farm Safety Yields Real Results.”

The latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows the agriculture sector is still the most dangerous in America. Each year the farming profession sees 573 fatalities, which equals 23 deaths per 100,000 workers.

“It is important to bring awareness not only to the physical dangers of farming, but the emotional toll it takes as well,” **said Jerry Costello II, Director, IDOA.** “While we will highlight roadway safety, chemical safety and other traditional farming hazards, it is also important to encourage farmers to take care of their own health.”

Most farmworker injuries and death are caused by tractor overturns, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). These incidents result in about 130 deaths each year nationwide.

“Harvest season is a reminder of the importance of farmers to Illinois’ economy and our way of life. This hectic time also brings additional risks to agriculture workers. We want farmers to return home to their families at the end of each day,” **said the Director of the Illinois Department of Labor Michael Kleinik.**

Visibility is a key to safety on the roads. All agricultural vehicles using the public roads must display the fluorescent orange Slow Moving Vehicle triangle. Additionally, tractors and other self-powered farm vehicles must have proper lighting. Drivers should remember farm vehicle operators have limited visibility to the rear. Anyone passing such a vehicle should use extreme caution.

Each day during National Farm Safety and Health Week, the Illinois Department of Agriculture will highlight emerging issues and important topics on Facebook and Twitter.

Monday, Sept. 20: Tractor Safety & Rural Roadway Safety

Tuesday, Sept. 21: Overall Farmer Health

Wednesday, Sept. 22: Safety & Health for Youth in Agriculture

Thursday, Sept. 23: Agriculture Fertilizer and Chemical Safety

Friday, Sept. 24: Safety & Health for Women in Agriculture

National Farm Safety and Health week is also a good time to remind growers and grower farm operators who transport or apply anhydrous ammonia of the April 1, 2022 deadline to be certified to work with anhydrous ammonia. The Illinois Department of Agriculture, along with the Illinois Farm Bureau and IFCA are offering free training online and in-person. Please visit the Illinois Department of Agriculture website for more information.

Follow the Illinois Department of Agriculture on social media for these important updates throughout Farm Safety and Health Week.

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