OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ON HOG FARMS

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Introduction

There are many reasons for working safely and preventing accidents. Obviously we do not want ourselves, or our coworkers to experience pain and suffering. Depending on the injury, it cost both the employee and the company a significant amount of money. It also can be an inconvenient for a family member or friend because the injured employee may not be able to do those normal tasks around the house, run errands, etc.

Agriculture continues to be one of most dangerous industries in the United States. While there are many factors that can contribute to accidents and injuries on the farm, the good news is that you don’t necessarily have to spend a lot of money or time to maintain a sound safety and accident prevention program. Everyone has heard the saying, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” There’s a lot of truth to that saying and it will go a long way in keeping you and your coworkers safe.

Below are 10 types of mistakes often made in the agricultural industry that can result in injury, or in some cases death. Preventing these basic mistakes can go a long way in preventing employee injury.

10. Operating equipment/vehicles in an unsafe manner
    - Tractor rollovers
    - Farm trucks and tractor-trailers
    - Defensive driving

9. Failure to apply safety 24/7
    - Continual focus on safety
    - Practicing safety at work and home

8. Taking shortcuts
    - Being a daredevil
    - The quickest way isn’t always the best way

7. Using hand tools improperly
    - Inspect tools for wear or damage
    - Using the right tool for the job

6. Not be aware of surroundings
    - Insects
    - Unleveled floor surfaces, protruding obstacles, etc
5. Not wearing proper personal protective equipment  
   Eye protection  
   Hearing protection  
   Foot protection  

4. Poor housekeeping practices  
   Fundamental of safety  
   Prevention of slips, trips and falls  

3. Not following lockout/tagout  
   Controlling electrical hazards  
   Other sources of energy  

2. Using chemicals improperly or without proper ventilation  
   Mixing chemicals  
   Proper labeling of chemicals  
   Material Safety Data Sheets  

1. Moving animals without cutting boards  
   Knee injuries  
   Contusion/lacerations  

Reviewing these top 10 mistakes made on the farm clearly points out that accidents can be easily prevented. Taking a common sense approach to performing your day to day activities can make safety and accident prevention successful. The hardest thing about working safely is staying focused on the task at hand and applying those things we already know. Since it only takes a second for an accident to happen it is important you never let your guard down. While on the surface that sounds like a simple task, but with the many distractions we face on daily basis, it is easier said than done. However, the more you work safely the quicker it becomes a habit and the less effort it takes to be safe.