



Harvest and Market the Crop

Handout I

Guidelines for a Health and Safety Plan

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Agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries. Farmers and workers, both men and women, are exposed to many hazards in the agricultural workplace each day. In particular, individuals who have been farming less than 10 years are particularly susceptible to equipment, livestock, and environmental worksite hazards due to their limited experience.

These best practices provides risk reduction information and resources for agricultural entrepreneurs and will help farm owners and managers to plan for effective safety and health management programs. There are five topics recommended safety and health best practices for production agriculture.

A safety and health management plan must be in a written format to be viable and effective. There can be serious legal and financial consequences for farm operators when workers or guests are injured or become ill, and the farm has no written safety and health plan. Written safety and health plans should include these major components:

1. Establishing safety policy and procedures. The safety policy statement for your business should be the foundation of your safety program. A safety policy is a statement of goals, objectives, and operational procedures that are created and approved by the highest-ranking owner/manager at the farm or ranch. The policy should be written and then shared with all workers on the farm or ranch. The policy should include the most important safety and health procedures that apply to all workers, family members, managers, and owners. It should also identify ways that workers are actively involved in the development and implementation of the plan.

2. Identifying and assessing hazards and risks. A list of methods that the business can use to inspect and/or monitor the worksite for hazardous equipment, chemicals, and environmental conditions should be compiled. It should include control procedures for eliminating or reducing the hazard to employees, customers, and the general public.

3. Preventing and controlling hazards and risks. The most positive approach to preventing injury and property loss is the elimination of hazardous conditions. Management should also make specific statements in the written safety program about risk reduction through the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

4. Educating and training employees. All aspects of employee training and education related to hazardous work conditions and safe work procedures are part of safety and health planning. Both the timing and type of training are important. Training and education should take place before new workers start work, for hazards and risks identified during seasonal tasks, for workers who need

retraining, and to meet legal obligations. In order for the training and education to be effective, it should be completely described with appropriate evaluation methods and tools included.

5. Evaluating training programs and resources. The only way to determine if safety and health training has been effective in correcting hazards and reducing risk is to evaluate the training program.

Methods include:

- Observe employees after the training has been conducted. This is referred to as observational analysis.
- Administer short pre- and post-tests before and after the training session to determine if the desired
- knowledge gain has been achieved.
- Have employees demonstrate their newly learned skills and capabilities after the training has been completed.