Spring Farm Safety Checklist
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With this warm sunny weather over the past couple of weeks it has made it feel like spring and can only mean that the spring rush is just around the corner for everyone. Unfortunately with the hustle and bustle of spring farm safety sometimes gets a back seat in our minds. With agriculture being one of the most hazardous industries, it’s important for farmers, farm workers and farm families to remember farm safety.

Here are seven steps to help keep your farm safe this planting season:

1.) **Know your risks.** Awareness is key to safety on the farm. Know where risk is greatest like around electrical utilities, machinery, and tools, etc. Consider farm worker’s age, specific equipment and protective equipment when creating a safety plan for your farm.

2.) **Keep a constant eye out for hazards.** In keeping your farm safe, a quick inspection of potential dangers and hazards on the farm can pay off big. Take a quick walk around your tractors for example, and make sure that all PTO guards are on your equipment before you start working.

3.) **Read all manuals, instructions, labels and safety information.** It is very easy to let this pile up on a desk or work branch but spending time reading up on any material, product or equipment that could pose a safety risk is never time wasted.

4.) **Keep worker, machine and surroundings properly protected.** Keeping up with proper machine maintenance can help to prevent accidents. Having and using personal protective equipment, i.e. safety gloves, boots, googles and face shields to name some, can help to significantly reduce injuries.
5) **Stay lit up and visible.** During busy fieldwork in the fall or spring, roadway safety should take a high priority. That includes making sure all tractors, combines, and other machinery is adequately labeled with Slow-Moving Vehicle (SMV) signs. Also, make sure all your machines lights are fully functioning so you are extra visible during at dark and during early morning and dusk hours. Don’t forget about yourself, it never hurts to wear high visibility clothing too!

6) **Communication on the farm.** Communication these days on the farm is much easier thanks to texting and cell phones but it is still crucial for farm safety. No one should work alone and there should be good communication between everyone on where people are and when they should be done that job.

7) **Create a response plan.** Though a serious farm accident is not something you want to think about, you should have a plan in place if the unthinkable happens, and share that plan with everyone on your farm.

In general, the best way to keep safe on your farm, in addition to these specific things, is to watch and take care of all potential dangers and be ready to act quickly if a hazardous situation arises.

For more information on farm safety please check out [http://www.wsps.ca/fsa](http://www.wsps.ca/fsa) and [http://www.agsafetyweek.ca/](http://www.agsafetyweek.ca/).

Now let’s have a safe 2016!