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## PRESS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*By UNMC, Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, Omaha, NE*

#### **A GIFT OF AG SAFETY**

***Safety tools are gifts with lifetime value.***

Struggling to find a valuable gift for that farmer on your list? Don't overlook the options for boosting safety practices with a gift such as high-quality work gloves, earmuffs to help prevent hearing damage or a warm chore coat.

If budgets allow, retrofitting a tractor with a Roll Over Protective Structure (ROPS) is a gift that can provide a lifetime of safety. Or maybe the tractor's seatbelt needs to be replaced.

For farmers who spend a lot of time in the farm shop, it may be beneficial to update electrical tools or appliances. Small gift items that are useful in the shop include extension cords, storage bins, and hand tools. Perhaps new personal protective equipment, such as safety glasses or welding aprons, will be useful. A new fire extinguisher or first aid kit may also be valuable additions to a farm shop.

Larger shop items that help improve safety in the farm shop include storage cabinets, upgraded lighting systems, a welding table and/or accessories. Shelving, new railings or upgrades to stairs, loft, etc. may also improve farm shop safety.

Five types of eye protection are available for agricultural use. They include basic safety glasses, prescription safety glasses, goggles, face shields and welding helmets. Prescription safety glasses are available in both bifocals and tinted lenses. Tinting is especially helpful when work includes bright light flashes.

Goggles provide protection from all angles, fitting snugly around the eyes. They are especially useful when using a chainsaw and for grinding or riveting jobs. They generally fit over prescription glasses and come with anti-fog features.

When using face shields, they must be worn in conjunction with either glasses or goggles. Face shields are helpful to protect users from heat, glare and flying objects. Welding helmets protect against damage to eyes as well as deflecting sparks, rays and airborne particles.

On the farm, work boots must withstand daily wear and tear and many different types of weather conditions. Boots that are 100% leather may feature water-proofing. Look for adequate traction and durability, which is generally found in a rubber sole. Some boots are designed with cushioned collars and superior traction in the sole. Boots with adequate support reduce foot fatigue. Quality boots also offer flexibility and may feature a steel toe.

For farmers who use rubber chore boots, there are numerous options and features in different boot brands. Consider whether or not the boots need to keep the feet warm. Look for a boot that offers breathable features for warmer days such as air mesh material that enhances air flow. The boots should be flexible and easy to clean.

Some farmers may require rubber boots that are lightweight but offer adequate cushion sole for arch and heel support. These types of boots are washable and replaceable so they can be used long term. Look for ample traction in the soles to help prevent slipping on wet surfaces. To keep costs down, you might consider boots that incorporate some recycled materials and give good service without a high cost.

For stocking stuffers, new varieties of polyester and spandex socks can be a great accessory. Most brands are odor resistant and their synthetic fibers quickly dry. They're breathable and soft and comfortable. More expensive varieties often provide a cushion through the foot and leg and have reinforced heels and toes.

Weather radios make a great gift and help farmers stay on top of changing weather conditions no matter where they're at. These safety devices come in handheld and portable versions. Some brands/varieties will also provide different types of emergency alerts.

Some very basic farm tools include a quality pocket knife and variety of flashlights. Traditional pocket knives fold and provide simple functions in a slim package. Other brands are made for great durability and come in a variety of sizes. Pocket knives also come in the form of multi-tool varieties that include scissors, bits and more. For hunters, there are a variety of pocket-sized knives that meet their needs as well as multi-tool brands that feature pliers, a screwdriver, file, saw and more.

Most farmers keep more than one flashlight on hand. They also use a variety of lights, including headlamps that provide hands-free lighting. LED flashlights require less power to operate, so batteries last longer. LED bulbs also have a longer life. In choosing an LED flashlight, keep in mind that brightness is measured in lumens. The greater the lumens number, the brighter the light.

When selecting a flashlight, consider how available and how expensive batteries are. Sticking with simple flashlights that use widely available batteries is recommended.

Solar phone chargers may be a great fit for many farmers. In selecting a charger, review the item's IP rating, which indicates the quality of the charger's electrical enclosure, which should keep out intrusive elements such as dust and liquid. Waterproof is a relative term; IP rating verifies the level of waterproof protection.

Other small items that help farmers practice safety principles include a heated ice scraper, ATV helmet, emergency kit, smoke detectors, particulate respirators and warm coveralls.

Larger items that contribute to a safe farm environment may include generators, a fall protection harness for use when working at heights, and new ladders.

One item that can greatly contribute to a farmer's health is a vacation away from the farm. Whether it's a short term or longer-term vacation, the change of scenery can help support the mental health of a farmer and their family.

The needs of every farmer and farm vary but, because farmers work in one of the most dangerous occupations in the world, there are plenty of ways to help them make their daily work safer.

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