

Ergonomics on the Farm

Avoid Injuries When Doing Farm Work

What is ergonomics?

The science of designing work to minimize the risk of injury. This includes arranging work areas to promote healthy body positions, using well designed tools, and sitting on supportive seats.

What causes injuries on the farm?

Driving a tractor, hauling buckets, hoisting bales, pulling calves, and stooping to pull weeds are part of an everyday farmer's workload. These actions can result in back pain, tendonitis, and other muscle and joint problems. **Back pain among farmers is the most common cause of job related disability.**



How can you role model safe and healthy behaviors while performing safe tasks?

Take into consideration size, physical ability, knowledge level, and past experience when assigning tasks.

POOR ERGONOMICS CAN LEAD TO:

- Backaches
- Shoulder pain
- Hand, wrist, and/or elbow pain
- Muscle ache
- Injuries

CAUSED BY PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO PHYSICAL WORKLOAD SUCH AS:

- Stooped positions
- Carrying heavy loads
- Kneeling often
- Working with raised or outstretched arms
- Repetitive hand and/or wrist motions
- Vibrations from operating machinery

RESOLVE THIS BY REDUCING THE PHYSICAL WORKLOAD:

- Rest periodically when doing physical work
- Alternate between heavy and light work, if possible
- Redesign job
- Modify tools

**LEARN ABOUT PREVENTING
ERGONOMIC ASSOCIATED
INJURIES ON THE NEXT PAGE**



Ergonomics on the Farm

Ergonomic-Associated Injury Prevention Strategies



LIFTING AND CARRYING LOADS

- Avoid lifting from floor or over shoulder height and keep objects close to your body.
- Provide handles on containers using both arms to balance weight.
- Avoid lifting object weighing fifty pounds or more.
- Use mechanical equipment whenever possible.
- Use dollies, pallet trucks, or carts to transport heavy items.

HAND WORK

- Work at below shoulder height.
- Work within 17 inches of body.
- Rotate job to reduce repetition.
- Standing on floor mats will increase comfort, but may not prevent an injury.

POWER HAND TOOLS

- Use tool handles that allow forefinger and thumb to overlap.
- Choose hand tools with handles covered with smooth, non-slip material and at least 4" long.

- Use hand tools to allow the wrist to stay straight.
- When selecting power tools consider purchasing vibration reduction characteristics or use antivibration gloves.

SHOVELING AND STOOPED WORK

- Use long handles for stooped work and keep feet at shoulder width.
- Sit on a stool when doing stationary work.
- Do stooped work intermittently with other tasks and avoid twisting.
- Use leg and arm muscles instead of back when shoveling. Use more small loads instead of fewer large ones.

VEHICLE USE

- Choose vehicle seats with lumbar support.
- Sit using a slightly inclined posture with full back support.
- Maintain three-point contact facing the farm equipment when mounting and dismounting.
- Shift driving position frequently.

