PROTECT YOUR HEARING ON & OFF THE FARM

Did you know? Noise injury affects 2/3 of the farming population. There are thousands of tiny hair cells in our ears that send hearing signals to the brain. These hair cells can be damaged by long-term exposure to loud noises. The best way to prevent hearing loss is to reduce farm noise and exposure!

QUICK FACTS

- Noises over 85 decibels are too loud
- Hearing damage is irreversible
- Earplugs and earmuffs are both suitable forms of hearing protection

What noise levels require hearing protection devices?
- If you have to speak loudly to someone three feet away, you are working around noises that require hearing protection.
- The danger zone for hearing damage starts at about 85 decibels (dB).
- With each 3 decibel increase, the “safe time” is cut in half.

When should you be concerned about your hearing? If you...
- Need to turn up the volume on the TV or radio.
- Have difficulty understanding consonants in words and high notes of music.
- Have difficulty hearing a person’s voice when they are standing only a few feet away.
- Hear muffled sound after noise has stopped.
- Have ringing in the ears.

Noise induced hearing loss is preventable, possibly cumulative, and irreversible.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECIBEL LEVEL</th>
<th>TYPICAL FARM SOUNDS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td>Normal conversation</td>
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**THE DANGER ZONE**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DECIBEL LEVEL</th>
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| **80**        | • Tractor idling, barn cleaner, conveyers, elevators.  
• These noises can damage hearing if exposure is for more than 8 hours continuously. |
| **90**        | • Tractor at 50% load, lawn mower, compressor, combine.  
• As loudness increases, the "safe" exposure time decreases; damage can occur in less than 8 hour. |
| **100**       | • Tractor at 80% load, pig squeal, power tools, chain saw.  
• Even 2 hours of exposure can be dangerous. |
| **120**       | • Tractor at full load, bad muffler, old chain saw.  
• The danger is immediate. |
| **140**       | • Gunshot, back-fire, dynamite blast.  
• Any length of exposure time is dangerous. At this level, the noise may actually cause pain in the ear. |

**FOLLOW THESE EASY RULES**

- **E** Wear earplugs or earmuffs
- **A** Avoid loud noises
- **R** Reduce the volume
- **S** Shorten the time in noise

**RESOURCES**

- CDC: How to wear soft foam earplugs (Video)
- NIOSH: Sound level meter app
- NIH: Keeping noise down on the farm