Objective:
To learn the possible outcomes of overexposure to the sun, and how to prevent overexposure.

Background:
Proper personal protection must be used to limit skin exposure. Farm workers are continually at risk of developing skin cancer of the head, face, ears, or neck. Using a hat, and sunscreen, reduces the chance of getting skin cancer.

Sun exposure is a key factor in the development of skin cancers. Skin cancer is not associated with a single event (for example, a painful sunburn), but with progressive exposure over years. People who burn easily, rarely tan, freckle or have a fair complexion, blonde or red hair, or blue or gray eyes, experience greater skin changes with sun exposure.

Skin Cancer: Be on the lookout for three types of changes:
- Basal cell – shiny appearance. It usually can be removed by excision or topical treatments. If it is diagnosed and treated early, it can be cured. It is more of a later life concern.
- Squamous cell – rusty, warty appearance. It usually can be removed by excision or topical treatments. If it is diagnosed and treated early, it can be cured. More of a later life concern.
- Melanoma – dark mole-like appearance. However, malignant melanoma carries more significant, even fatal implications. Melanoma’s incidence has been steadily rising, affecting people of all ages.
In order to minimize risk of skin cancer, there are a few basic recommendations to follow:

- Avoid sun exposure between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm, whenever possible.
- Protective clothing such as long sleeves, long pants, high socks and gloves act as a barrier between the skin and the sun.
- Wear a wide brimmed hat, cap flap or the flap on cap. A baseball type hat will offer the least amount of protection. (Baseball hats do not protect ear tips, temples or back of the neck.)
- Use a sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more while working outdoors. Reapply the sunscreen every two hours.

Review The Following Points:

- Skin cancers are the most common cancers experienced in Canada.
- A major cause of skin cancers is long-term exposure to the sun.
- Avoid sun exposure between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm and wear sunscreen.
- Wear protective clothing that serves as a barrier between the sun and the skin.