

## AGRICULTURAL SAFETY TOPICS

### SUN EXPOSURE

#### 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.



## AGRICULTURAL SAFETY TOPICS – SUN EXPOSURE

### 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.

Based upon: Ohio State University Extension. *Sun Exposure*. Retrieved from website <http://ohioline.osu.edu/atts/modules.html>

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