



May 3, 2013

### **DELAYED PLANTING SEASON SAFETY TIPS**

With the delayed planting season, coupled with the onslaught of more wet/cold weather being forecast, this will lead to a very hectic period of field activities during the next planting window. As farmers wait for the optimum time for fields to dry, there are some key points to remember and that is how to manage a furious pace and still be safe.

Some key points to consider during these times, safety as a priority may begin to slip. Don't let it happen to you. It boils down to the basics. With farm equipment never rush. Conduct safety inspections regularly. While making adjustments to the planter or implement, never rush and always turn off the tractor engine. Never remove guards or shields or other safety devices. If work requires their removal, take the small amount of time to put them back in place.

When working with pesticides, always wear the personal protective equipment when handling and applying pesticides. This includes the chemical resistant gloves. Consider disposable nitrile gloves (convenient, inexpensive, a clean extra pair can be carried in a pocket), long sleeved shirt, face shield to prevent splashes onto the face, apron - typically a spill occurs across one's chest, abdomen, and wash hands with soap and water after each reloading.

Change or adjust nozzles while wearing chemical-resistant gloves, do not use cloth or leather gloves. When warmer, it's common to wear short-sleeved T-shirts so keep a long-sleeved shirt handy to put on over the T-shirt during pesticide loading / mixing operations. Wash it and replace it daily. Wash / replace / rotate caps and hats regularly and keep a one gallon jug of water and liquid hand soap in the cab of the tractor / sprayer and use it when needed.

Before the storm we had an example in Southeast Nebraska where a farmer loading and mixing in an accident received a direct shot of common "Caution" type herbicides to his hair, face and cutoff shirt. The hydrant nearby was not enough to get the pesticide residue off (no soap nearby). A shower one-half hour later with soap and hot water was not soon effective enough. After working a few more hours he felt very tired and a soda and several cookies did not faze the symptoms. After hitting the couch that evening, he was admitted in the emergency room at the local hospital by 9:00 PM with pesticide poisoning symptoms, including severe nausea and cramping.

He's OK now but after working with farm chemicals for 34 years, without any loading and mixing accidents it then happened. We cannot let our guard down when working with ordinary farm chemicals. Always have an oversized long sleeve shirt over that cutoff shirt or T-Shirt while loading and mixing, have soap and water available at all times and use a face shield and apron.

Farm accidents can happen and often do occur because of human error. Get your sleep at night to help stay alert and don't relax with an alcoholic drink at the end of the day, it can disrupt sleep and without proper sleep you are more prone to accidents.



Whether you work for a commercial Cooperative or are a farmer, there's a lot of work to be done when Mother Nature allows in the month of May. Take care of that most important asset and that is YOU.

Randy Pryor, Extension Educator  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Saline County  
306 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Wilber, NE 68465  
Phone (402) 821-2151 • Fax (402) 821-3398 • e-mail: [randy.pryor@unl.edu](mailto:randy.pryor@unl.edu)