

Media Release

For Immediate Release
December 1, 2006

Can farmers afford NOT to take farm safety seriously?

CASA Conference highlights benefits of including farm safety as part of good business.

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) held its conference and Annual General Meeting in late November in Canmore, Alberta. The focus of the conference demonstrated why it makes sense to include farm safety as part of a good business strategy.

“Industries across Canada struggle to implement safety climates within their respective organizations. At this conference we highlighted some lessons learned from other industries, showcased a cross section of farmers, and identified some unique challenges to implementation of standard safety practices within the agricultural workplace.” said Glen G. Blahey, Chair of the Board.

“Before listening to Dave Myrol, an occupational health and safety lawyer, I thought I was doing enough on my farm to minimize the risk. With the constant increase of regulations, our farming operation will continually need education so we can ensure the protection of our farm operation and our employees”, said Lorne Henry, a vegetable farmer from Manitoba. Judy Nelson of Alberta Beef Producers said “We need to let our members know more about the risks of not addressing safety in the agricultural workplace. Just understanding some key hazards will help protect farmers, their families, and their workers.”

Speakers from across Canada contributed to the “Taking Care of Safety is Good Business” theme. Topics ranged from “Zoonotic Disease Risk for Livestock Production Workers” by Dr. Craig Wilkenson, Director of Animal Care at the University of Alberta, “Agricultural Safety Culture & Manufacturing Crossover” by David Stuewe, a professor from Dalhousie University, to “The Big Change and 7 Deadly Sins” by lawyer, Dave Myrol. Conference proceedings will be posted on the CASA website shortly for interested parties to view.

-30-

Canadian Agricultural Safety Association is a non-profit organization funded through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Renewal chapter. Our mission is to have Canadian agriculture free of workplace injuries and illnesses.

For further information:

Marcel Hacault
CASA, Executive Director
(204) 261-4948

Backgrounder

2006 CASA Conference Presentation Synopses:

An Injury Prevention Strategy from Canadian Farmers, Dr. Robert Conn from SMARTRISK: This session reviewed CASA's national injury prevention strategy on how to reduce the risk of death and serious injury for farmers.

Agricultural Safety Culture & Manufacturing Crossover?, David Stuewe from Dalhousie University: David illustrated the technique of leadership development used in the industrial industry to reduce the level of unsafe behaviours. David determined if this approach would also reduce the incidence of injury and illness on Canadian Agriculture.

HR Part of Good Business, Terry Betker from Meyers Norris Penny: Terry discussed farm safety from a business management perspective by compare and contrast of the best management practices of leading farmers.

Ergonomics, John Kozey from Dalhousie University: John addressed the ergonomic issues related to the manual labour and intervention strategies.

Evidence to Action, Denis Bilodeau from L'Union des producteurs agricoles and Scott Hyshka from Sunterra Farms: Presentation illustrated the positive experience and employee satisfaction of their farming operation as a result of safety in the workplace.

Minimizing Risk in the Workplace, James Dosman, Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture: Dosman discussed research findings on health of swine production workers and how his results could be used to reduce the risks for others in the industry.

The Importance of Due Diligence in Canadian Law, Dean Anderson from Farm Safety Association and Dave Myrol from McLennan Ross Legal Counsel: The presentation examined the changing legal landscape in Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Law, and how those changes impact upon personal and corporate liability.

Zoonotic Disease Risk for Workers, Craig Wilkinson, University of Alberta: Many zoonotic diseases have important animal health and food safety implications. Discussion on the importance of veterinary input into the family safety audit was highlighted.

Implementing a Health and Safety Plan, Mike Waite from Manitoba Safety Council: This workshop provided a framework on how to best implement a health and safety system using partnership in the workplace.

Planning for Risk on your Farm, Leslie Watson from Renewal & Farm Debt Mediation Services Program, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: Available health and safety training services for farms by Renewal Services were discussed.