

**Farm Safety Program  
September 2010 – August 2013  
Keystone Agricultural Producers  
Final Report**

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**Executive Summary**

The Farm Safety Program supported by a grant from the Research and Workplace Innovation Program of the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Manitoba began in September 2010 and was to run for a two year period, but was granted two extensions, with a final end date of August 2013.

The project's goal was to improve safety on farms, reduce the risks of injury to farmers and farm workers and spearhead farm prevention initiatives in the farming industry. Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) utilized the services of a farm safety specialist to undertake the Farm Safety Program and provide one-on-one consultation with farmers to create awareness and education on critical hazards and risk areas on the farm.

A total of 39 farms were visited by the farm safety specialist since the start date of the farm safety project in September 2010. It was found that that the majority of farms visited did not know that they needed to be compliant with the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulations and that the majority of farms did not have anything in place to alleviate potential hazards on the farm. The farm safety specialist put forward recommendations that would help the farmers become safer and in turn more productive and profitable in the future.

It was concluded that a better approach in the farming industry is needed to increase safety awareness and education for farmers and farm workers. Relationships and culture need to be built in the rural farm areas in Manitoba to continue to make farms safe.

**Project Overview:**

The Farm Safety Program provided individualized education and farm safety reviews to select farms throughout Manitoba. This was undertaken by a farm safety specialist that was hired under contract for the duration of the project. The target audience was employers in the farming industry who employed workers that were not family members. WCB covered agricultural businesses were also included in the project.

The individualized education component consisted of a one on one session with the farmer and the farm safety specialist to undertake a risk assessment and identify risk management strategies. A checklist was used to evaluate all aspects of the farming operation. Following this assessment the farm safety specialist provided the farmer with a detailed written report highlighting the risk areas and action items that were recommended to alleviate potential hazards. A second visit to the farm allowed the specialist to review the report with the farmer and evaluate the actions that occurred since the report was provided. If the actions taken by the farmer were satisfactory, a statement of completion was issued which states that they completed their farm safety assessment and implemented recommended actions thereby designating the farm as a safe work environment.

### **Review of Work Completed:**

#### **Year 1:**

The Farm Safety Specialist visited a total of 16 farms from September 2010 to September 2011. These farms ranged from 1 employee to 25 employees. A risk assessment was conducted on each farm and risk management strategies were identified on each individual farm by the farm safety specialist. Out of the 16 farms, 2 farms scheduled a second visit to the farm by the farm safety specialist where the actions that occurred since the report was provided were evaluated.

Manitoba Pork Council provides a Safety and Health Guide to their producers, which focuses on specific safety and health issues that relate to the hog industry. The farm safety specialist revised the Safety and Health Guide to make it applicable to current legislation and best practices. More safety and health topics were also added to the guide to further educate producers. The farm safety specialist worked on this project throughout year one.

Farm safety and health awareness presentations were conducted by the farm safety specialist at five information sessions put on by Dairy Famers of Manitoba across the province in hope of engaging famers to partake in the farm safety program. The farm safety specialist also had a booth set up at four safety expos across the province and at Ag Days in Brandon to provide farm safety and health awareness and education to producers and to promote the farm safety program.

Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health's Ag Officers rolled out a mandatory safety and health program to potato farmers that had three phases to complete over a three year

period. The farm safety specialist attended and assisted with workshops held and was a viable resource to potato farmers when creating and implementing their safety and health program. The farm safety specialist visited farms that required help with different aspects of the program.

The farm safety specialist was a regular guest at Keystone Agricultural Producers Workplace & Employment Committee meetings and Manitoba Pork Council's Workplace Health and Safety Industry Performance Committee meetings to offer guidance and recommendations on safety and health issues and concerns.

## **Year 2:**

A total of 11 farms from September 2011 to September 2012 were visited by the farm safety specialist in year two. These farms ranged from 1 employee to 25 employees. A risk assessment was conducted on each farm and risk management strategies were identified on each individual farm by the farm safety specialist. A detailed report was sent to the farmer highlighting the risk areas and action items that were recommended to alleviate potential hazards but second visits to the farms were unable to be scheduled.

The farm safety specialist continued to work with Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health's Ag Officers on the mandatory safety and health program for potato farmers. Visits to potato farms continued during year two by the farm safety specialist to help farmers with different aspects of the program. The farm safety specialist also continued to assist with workshops.

Manitoba Pork Council sought out Safety Services Manitoba to develop a one year safety management system for producers to purchase and implement into their workplaces. The farm safety specialist worked with Safety Services Manitoba on different aspects of the creation of the safety management system during year two. Visits to hog producers were required to make the safety management system industry specific.

The farm safety specialist continued to be a regular guest at Keystone Agricultural Producers Workplace & Employment Committee meetings and Manitoba Pork Council's Workplace Health and Safety Industry Performance Committee meetings during year two to offer guidance and recommendations on safety and health issues and concerns.

Farm safety and health awareness presentations were done by the farm safety specialist at Keystone Agricultural Producers' General Council meetings throughout

year two in hope of engaging famers to partake in the farm safety program and the farm safety specialist had a booth set up at Ag Days in Brandon to provide farm safety and health awareness and education to producers and to promote the farm safety program.

### **Year 3:**

The Farm Safety Specialist visited a total of 12 farms from September 2012 to August 2013. These farms ranged from 1 employee to 25 employees. A risk assessment was conducted on each farm and risk management strategies were identified on each individual farm by the farm safety specialist. Out of the 12 farms, 2 farms scheduled a second visit to the farm by the farm safety specialist where the actions that occurred since the report was provided were evaluated.

The farm safety specialist continued to work with Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health's Ag Officers on the mandatory safety and health program for potato farmers. Visits to potato farms continued during year two by the farm safety specialist to help farmers with different aspects of the program. The farm safety specialist also continued to assist with workshops.

The farm safety specialist was selected to participate in a National Occupational Analysis for Agricultural Occupational Health and Safety Practitioners and Professionals. The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) contracted the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) to develop a National Occupational Standard and Essential Skills profile for Agricultural Occupational Health and Safety Practitioners and Professionals. A National Occupational Standard defines the scope of an occupation as well as the knowledge and skills that individuals must possess to demonstrate their competence in the field. It provided the industry with a valuable reference that can be used to support the development of training and certification programs and result in increased recognition, credibility and professionalism of workers in this occupation. The farm safety specialist participated in the occupational analysis in December 2012.

Keystone Agricultural Producers joined with Manitoba Farmers with Disabilities and held a Farm Workplace Expo in Elm Creek in January 2013. The farm safety specialist was the planner and coordinator of the event which began in September 2012. The expo had a tradeshow of different safety exhibitors and numerous presenters in order to create awareness and educate producers on loss prevention and farm safety.

The farm safety specialist continued to be a regular guest at Keystone Agricultural Producers Workplace & Employment Committee meetings and Manitoba Pork Council's

Workplace Health and Safety Industry Performance Committee meetings during year three to offer guidance and recommendations on safety and health issues and concerns. Also, the farm safety specialist was asked to be a regular guest at the Agricultural Safety and Health Sub-Committee of the Minister of Family Services and Labour Advisory Council on Workplace Health and Safety meetings. The farm safety specialist attended four of these sub-committee meetings in year three.

Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Ag Officer's held workshops in Brandon to farmers who had under 10 employees to educate and help them create a safety plan for their farm. The farm safety specialist attended these workshops and provided assistance to the farmers as needed during year three.

The farm safety specialist along with the vice-president of KAP had meetings with the University of Manitoba and Assiniboine Community College head agriculture leaders to discuss the implementation of farm safety components into agriculture courses that are offered. It was brought forward that farm safety components will now be a part of agriculture courses in the upcoming year.

### **Results and Evaluation of Project:**

A total of 39 farms were visited by the farm safety specialist since the start date of the farm safety project in September 2010. Out of these 39 farms only 4 farms scheduled a second visit to the farm by the farm safety specialist where the actions that occurred since the report was provided were evaluated. Farmers did not see the value of having a second visit by the farm safety specialist when they did not complete the action items that were recommended to alleviate potential hazards.

It was concluded by the farm safety specialist that the majority of farms visited did not know that they needed to be compliant with the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulations and that the majority of farms did not have anything in place to alleviate potential hazards on the farm. Farmers who had off the farm jobs or farms that had serious incidents on the farm were more aware and educated about the Manitoba Safety and Health Act and Regulations and about farm safety and health issues. Farmers who had children on the farm were more determined to complete the action items that were recommended to alleviate potential hazards.

As the majority of farms did not have anything in place to alleviate potential hazards or were not aware of risk areas on the farm the farm safety specialist focused on the most critical hazards and risk areas on the farm during the visit. The farm safety specialist

made farmers aware of the risk areas and most critical hazards and educated them on identification, communication and prevention of these risk areas and critical hazards. A Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation book was provided to the farmer and the farm safety specialist would go over sections from the Act and sections from the Regulations that would apply to the farm.

During all the farm visits, the farm safety specialist focused on safety and health awareness and education and put forward recommendations that would help the farmers become safer and in turn more productive and profitable in the future. The Farm Safety Program's goal was achieved by improving safety on farms, reducing risks of injury to farmers and farm workers and spearheading farm prevention initiatives in the farming industry.

### **Recommendations:**

From visiting farms across Manitoba over the last 3 years the farm safety specialist has found that there is a lack of farm safety awareness, education and training in the rural areas of the province. Usually when farm safety becomes a topic of conversation it is because a serious incident or fatality has occurred on the farm. Currently farm safety programs are spread amongst many stakeholder groups, resulting in a lack of consistent awareness and education on priority issues. The culture of farming needs to be changed in order to have Manitoba farms free of serious injuries and death. We want to start hearing about the farmer that emphasizes safety, not just about production and profit.

The farm safety specialist's recommendations on moving forward with farm safety in Manitoba is to:

- Have one unified farm safety program province wide
- Ensure strategic, province wide coordination and awareness of farm safety hazards
- Enhance education and training resources, including certification
- Offer peer to peer teaching of farm safety best practices to foster trusting relationships with farmers and farm workers
- Consider incentives as part of an implementation plan for a farm safety program
- Increase the number of Agriculture Safety Officers that have a background and experience in agriculture
- Mandate workplace safety and health education as a component of high school and secondary education
- Target young farmers with farm safety as they are the future

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Respectively submitted,  
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