**Minor Back Pain Now May Become a Big Problem Later!**

What may seem like minor events of back pain from improper lifting techniques and poor physical fitness in a physically demanding job on the farm can lead to major back problems in the future. From uneven terrain, to the heavy lifting, handling livestock, and harvesting by hand. Strains and sprains can occur with poor posture, lifting heavy and/or awkward loads, carrying heavy loads away from the body, falls from height, slips & trips, and more. Small farms often don’t have the extra hands or machinery to help with the heavy lifting which may leave these farmers more at risk for back injuries.

Over time, the stress and strain on the back can cause damage and the damage builds up without being noticed. Then one day you make a lift or turn to reach for something and suddenly you have a serious back problem. By preventing minor back injuries on a regular basis, you may head off a serious back problem in the future.

Keeping good posture and maintaining the natural curves in the back while you work is key in preventing strains and sprains. Maintain posture while sitting or standing. While sitting, ensure the back is supported. Check that seats in farm machinery are properly adjusted. You may need to add cushions or pads to maintain good posture and support. While standing, periodically lift one foot off the floor and rest it on an object a few inches off the floor. This helps ease pressure on the spine. Switch feet throughout the day. Periodically take breaks from your seated and standing positions.

Poor physical fitness can also contribute to an unhealthy back and contribute to injuries as well. Exercise regularly to strengthen the muscles, specifically the muscles in the back and abdomen. Exercising to increase flexibility is also the key to back health. Maintaining a healthy weight through diet and sufficient exercise can help prevent back strain.

You may be thinking there are just not enough hours in the day on the farm to include an exercise regime. Try and be creative by including the exercises as part of the work and tasks done on the farm. It may take a bit of time to figure it out, but the investment will pay off in the long run by having a strong and healthy back in your later years. Every time you lift incorrectly or use poor posture, you may be contributing to a future back injury.

Here are a few reminders for proper lifting technique:

**Minor Back Pain Now May Become a Big Problem Later! – DISCUSSION RECORD**

**Agenda:**

* Does the farm have a history of workers with back pain or injury?
* What tasks on farm can cause back injury?
* Are there methods to avoid manual handling of items on the farm?

Comments or safety concerns as a result of the discussion or observed since the last rally?

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Follow-up to concerns raised at previous rally?
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Action Items?
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Near Miss/Incidents/Unsafe Acts/Conditions to Report?

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Topics recommended for future Rallies: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank the rally members for their participation.**

**Quiz Answers:** 1. T, 2. T, 3. f, 4. b, 5. T

**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

1. What may seem like minor events of back pain from improper lifting techniques and poor physical fitness in a physically demanding job on the farm can lead to major back problems in the future.

True or False

2. Over time, the stress and strain on the back can cause damage and the damage builds up without being noticed.True or False

3. Strains and sprains can occur with:

1. Poor posture.
2. Lifting heavy and/or awkward loads.
3. Carrying heavy loads away from the body.
4. Falls from Height
5. Slips & Trips
6. All of the Above

4. Keeping good posture and maintaining the natural curves in the back while you work is key in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ strains and sprains.

1. Ignoring
2. Preventing
3. Causing

5. Exercise regularly to strengthen the muscles, specifically the muscles in the back and abdomen. True or False

**Attendance RECORD**

\*This is to acknowledge that I understand and agree to actively participate in the safety meeting.

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