

Illinois Departments Of Agriculture And Labor Highlight National Farm Safety Week, September 18 – 22

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – As Illinois and the nation approach the fall harvest season, the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and Labor (IDOL) is encouraging farmers to stay vigilant and safe during this year's harvest.

Governor Pritzker has proclaimed National Farm Safety and Health Week in Illinois the week of September 18-22, 2023.

“Bringing awareness to the general risks associated with day-to-day operations on Illinois farms and our state’s leading industry is something I understand firsthand,” said Jerry Costello II, Illinois Department of Agriculture Director. “Illinois farmers face the

enormous task of ensuring that Illinoisans and Americans alike have sustainable access to fresh and healthy foods. The safety and health of our farmers and farm workers is and must continue to be a leading priority.”

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics continues to show that the agriculture sector is one of the most dangerous in America, with the farming profession seeing more than 500 fatalities annually. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), most farmworker-related injuries and fatalities occur due to tractors overturning. On average, these incidents result in approximately 130 deaths each year nationwide.

“As we enter the hectic harvest season, it is critically important to follow best practices to safeguard farmers' and farm workers' safety,” said IL Occupational Safety and Health Chief Erik Kambarian. “Now is the time to remind employers and farm workers to put safety first, especially around grain storage facilities, which can be deadly.”

Maintaining visibility is critically important for farmers on Illinois roads. All farm vehicles traveling on public roads are required to display fluorescent orange Slow Moving Vehicle triangles. In addition, tractors and other farm vehicles and equipment must have adequate lighting. Drivers should be advised that farm vehicle operators often have limited rear visibility. Individuals passing these vehicles should exercise extreme caution.

Each National Farm Safety and Health Week day is devoted to the following topics of emphasis:

- Monday, Sept. 18: Equipment and Rural Roadway Safety
- Tuesday, Sept. 19: Health and Wellness
- Wednesday, Sept. 20: Priority Populations
- Thursday, Sept. 21: Confined Spaces
- Friday, Sept. 22: Brain Health

Since 1944, the third week of September has been officially recognized as National Farm Safety and Health Week.