



EAR-FIT CHECK

This display shows how we can quantify the fit of hearing protection devices.

What kinds of stories would make you think about this resource?

- General interest about aging farmers (hearing loss rates range from 9-17% among farmers, no consistent rate published). Information available [here](#)))
- When on the farm and noise levels require you to raise your voice, hearing is at risk.
- When communication issues may have contributed to an injury, sounds may be loud.

What is the risk to Ag Workers?

Exposure to a lifetime of noise results in hearing loss in later ages:

- Hearing loss from exposure to noise is common among farmers and ag workers.
- Hearing loss from noise is permanent and irreversible.
- Hearing loss causes diminished quality of life for farmers and farm families.
- For most farmers, hearing loss occurs gradually over many years and may only be noticed once it is a serious problem.
- Hearing loss from noise can be prevented; selection of hearing protection requires special consideration



However, selection of hearing protection devices requires additional knowledge and fitting to ensure they are providing adequate protection over a working lifetime (see QR code to the right).

Are there recent news stories on noise hazards?

- May 2025 (IL Corn): [Noise Exposure and Farming](#).
- Mar 2025 (KY): [Programs helping farmers hear better](#)
- Jan 2024 (USA Today): [3M to pay \\$253 million to veterans in lawsuit settlement over earplugs and hearing loss](#)

How do we approach the question of hearing protection in an ag story?

When discussing aging farmers (IA median age: 57. 6 yr for farmers, 38.6 otherwise), hearing loss is common. Preventing hearing loss for those new to farming requires adoption of healthy practices early in one's career.

If you are on a farm, how do you protect yourself from this hazard?

If you are in an environment where you feel you are raising your voice to be heard above background noises, you are probably in an environment that is louder than 85 dB, where hearing protection should be worn. Visit [AgHealth 101](#) (Chapter 2) for how you can assess loud environments with a smartphone.