

Episode Title: New Year's Special

Episode Summary: For this year's holiday special, we talked to farmers and individuals working in the ag safety and health field about their 2024 resolutions. We asked our farming community to share one thing that they commit to doing in the new year to stay safe and healthy on farms and in other rural areas.

Episode Quote:

Don't miss out on safety tips for the new year!

Transcript

00:10 E Presnall

Welcome to the FarmSafe Podcast brought to you by the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health. In the blink of an eye, an injury can change your life and your farm forever. During each episode, we share first-hand stories and real-life tips for making safer and healthier decisions while on the farm.

00:33 E Presnall

For our holiday special this year, we asked our farming community to share one thing they have committed to doing in 2024 to stay safe and healthy on farms and in other rural areas.

While talking to farmers, several mentioned committing to being better at using personal protective equipment while on the farm, including hearing protection, respirators and eye protection. One farmer said that in 2024, he wants to be more aware of hazardous gasses in confined spaces and use a gas monitor to check the levels before entering. Several farmers also mentioned focusing on farm emergency preparedness in 2024, including having fire extinguishers in multiple locations on the farm and checking the expiration dates, creating a map of farm locations for emergency responders, and keeping farm first aid kits in each building and tractor.

I also talked with people in the agricultural safety and health field, some of which also work or live on a farm. One topic that came up frequently was emergency preparedness. Here is what they said:

01:39 Kristina TeBockhorst, Iowa State Extension

Well, OK, one thing for 2024 that I would like to do to keep myself and my family safe and healthy, I guess, so I live on a farm and I am the female on the farm. I'm the daughter-in-law and the mom to a couple little ones. And so I've kind of naturally fallen into the role of kind of the safety officer, as many women, and I do. And so yeah, I just want to continue and kind of get a little better at having all the PPE ready to go for everybody and having it in the right spots. And you know, have the respirators in bags to store them, you know, in the house and not like in their trucks and, you know, the fire extinguishers and all that kind of stuff. So, the gas monitors having that stuff kind of thought of before. It's busy go time because you know someone in the family needs to be kind of the lead in that because it's gets overlooked so easily and it gets forgotten when it's go time. But yeah, I want to be that person for my family and have that equipment ready to go and yeah, kind of be the lead, the safety lead.

02:56 Renee Anthony, GPCAH Director

In 2023, I committed to getting more active. I now walk about two miles a day and it's been great for body and mind. For 2024, I'm going to commit to doing some rural emergency pre planning work sitting down with my husband to identify all the switches and hazards on our property using the latest farm Mapper tool so that I know where all the shut offs are on the property.

03:23 Matison Bentley, ASH PhD Student

In 2023, one thing that I felt like we really succeeded at on my family farm was just to better communication practices. As an ag safety and health student, I am looking into emergency preparedness. And so one of those things that really plays a crucial role in emergency preparedness and response. This communication and so as I'm learning through my studies, more and more about how particular and crucial. Communication can be in the event of an emergency. That's one thing that I've been able to kind of relay back to my family

and make sure that we have things like muster areas and muster points that we should meet up at post emergency, and we all know where those are. So just really having a plan, but also communicating that to the other members of the farm.

As an ag safety and health student, one thing I commit to doing in 2024 on the farm is simply organizing our pesticides and chemicals out of reach of my nephews. As many know, with children running around and especially as fast pace as a lot of things usually go on the farm. One thing that I constantly worry about is my nephews getting a hold of something that is very harmful to their health, and so in 2024, one thing I commit to is putting everything back in its place, but also just keeping it organized and tidy and out of reach of those little hands of my nephews.

04:46 E Presnall

Several people in the outreach core of ag safety and health centers talked about how they plan to be safe on roadways in 2024. This is what they said:

04:56 Ellen Dyson, CS-CASH

Well, hello, Ellen Dyson here from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. I'm here in the College of Public Health at the Central State Center for Agricultural Safety and Health. And I'm going to talk a little bit about not only a resolution that I have for this year, for keeping me safe and my family safer, but also about how I'm going to how I'm pledging to stay a little bit healthier and safer next year. So, the first my resolution for 2024 is to I'm going to start doing a walk around all my vehicles and this comes from a bit of an incident that occurred just the other day when I was pulling out and heard a noise but didn't. It didn't stop and listen to and had a about a about a three-inch nail sticking out of my tire. Unfortunately, I had gotten down the hill a bit far enough that I had to walk up the hill on a very cold, very windy morning. If I had done a walk around, I would have seen that. So, I'm going to put that in my toolbox now for my safety for 2024. I'm going to make sure that I make sure there's no critters underneath my car and make sure that all my tires are intact and no other issues.

And then for my health and safety in 2024 and I started this just a few months ago, my cell phone now goes in the back seat. It does not ride next to me when I'm in the car. And what that has allowed me to do is to avoid even looking at my phone while I'm driving and I think that it's going to make me not only a safer driver but protect those around me as well as keeping me from looking at my phone and checking it when I'm when I'm out there on the roadway.

06:52 Marsha Cheyney, GPCAH

Hi, I'm Marsha Cheyney from the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health. My safety resolution for 2024 is to be a more patient driver when I encounter farm implements on the highway, I know that they are taking the shortest route between fields and that the delay to my destination is likely to be less than 5 minutes. But in the moment, it's easy to get impatient and want to pass that tractor, which I know is one of the biggest causes of crashes involving farm equipment. So, I will take. So instead, I will take a breath and try to enjoy the scenery for those few minutes at the slower speed.

07:26 E Presnall

Other folks in the agricultural safety and health field mentioned things like helping their families stay safe on the farm, being aware of their surroundings, taking care of themselves, and practicing sun safety. Here is what they shared with us:

07:40 Melissa Plockelman, National Children's Center

My name is Melissa Plockelman. I grew up on a small dairy farm in central Wisconsin, and my parents still actively farm on a hobby and beef farm. This winter, my dad will be having a hip replaced, and while he's recovering, my mom will be doing chores on her own. While I'm not calling her old, she is past retirement age and rarely carries a cell phone with her while she does her chores, I don't like her doing chores on her own every day. So, one thing I'm going to work on this year is between my sister and I, we plan to be around more often to help with chores, so Mom isn't working alone with the animals. Thankfully, my dad will be in the house and knows to call me anytime throughout the day if they need help. Working alone can be dangerous and I want to remind all listeners to let someone know what they will be doing and during what times when working alone on the farm.

08:34 Tammy Nobel, Iowa Poison Control Center

If I had to think about what someone on a farm or working in agriculture could do to help stay healthy and safe on the farm is just beware and be aware of what's around them. Remember that poisons are everywhere, and a lot of times poisonings happen because someone is just trying to do something quickly, skip steps, not read the label, they think they know how to handle the situation, so really making sure that they're aware and cautious about what they're doing and just pause sometimes just to protect yourself. And just remember that if a poisoning does happen, your poison center is there to help you. So just give us a call.

09:34 Rich Gassman, I-CASH Director

Pay attention to my surroundings. You know, I'm very fortunate that that my dad's farm is still there and I still do get out there. Nowhere near as much as I'd like to. Many more at the most. Where grounds running out now, but you know, my dad's aging, talking with him and making sure that he's being safe on the farm, you know, while he's out there, he's out there every day, you know, he's my dad's 83 years old, and he's still out there every day. No more livestock. I made him get rid of those. But, you know, mostly doing that kind of stuff. I'm one I'm somewhat blessed where I'm at now. 75% of my workforce is ag. You know, they're farmers that work here during the day. I spend a lot of time talking with them too, you know. Hey, you know, I had. I had one of my employees tell me about a near-miss he had, you know, and we talked about it, what he's going to do different next time and how catastrophic it could have been because it was close.

10:25 Ernesto, ASH PhD Student

For my 2024 AG safety resolution, I'm going to commit to emphasizing heat safety, such as staying hydrated and wearing appropriate PPE, such as a sun safe hat.

10:39 Tabitha Kuehn, I-CASH

In 2024, I am committed to taking better care of my skin and doing a better job of wearing sunscreen when I am out on a farm and just in general.

10:53 Aaron Yoder, CS-CASH

Hello, this is Aaron Yoder from the University of Nebraska and the Central State Center for Agricultural Safety and Health in Omaha, NE. I would like to share with you my New Year's resolution for 2024 that will help me stay healthy and safe throughout the new year. What I would like to do is get more rest and especially quality. And sleep, we know this helps us think clearer and make better decisions. If we're well rested and this can be good for our health, it can reduce our stress levels and eating, eating, minimizing the amount of cravings we have. And hey, when you're sleeping, you can't really eat. So it helps us control our calorie intake so, all those have benefited me in the past. It also helps us with our communications, especially relationships with coworkers and family members and so forth. Helps us control our emotions. So being well rested has many, many benefits. And from the safety side it also helps us make better decisions when we're working around hazardous machinery or other hazardous substances. It gives us more patience. We know a lot of injuries occur when we become impatient. Whether it's a broken-down piece of equipment or other people that we're working around, when we get frustrated, we sometimes don't think clearly. So my New Year's resolution is to get more quality sleep and stay rested and that will make me healthier and safer in 2024.

12:17 Tamy Nobel, Iowa Poison Control Center

Oh, one thing that I'm going to try to do to stay safe and healthy is just, I guess sometimes we get so busy and we try to do so much and we're all taking care of so many people and trying to do so many things. But remember that it's hard to take care of other people if you're not taking care of yourself so, you know, prioritize yourself. Take self-care is really, really important. So take the time to do what you need to do to take care of yourself and that could be as simple. I need to go in and do my annual physical or I need to take a break and take a vacation. OK. Prioritize yourself. You are important to other people, so I think that's something that's important that I want to focus on this next year's focus on me a little bit too.

13:14 E Presnall

As for my own New Year's resolution, this year I have committed to creating an emergency action plan for my family – including making copies of important documents, drafting a physical copy of our emergency action plan, and putting together emergency kits for scenarios where we may need to shelter in-place at our home or if we need to evacuate.

For this week's episode, we have provided several links with additional information. To look for specific tools to address hazards on the farm, visit our resources page by clicking the first link listed below. If you would like to take a deeper dive into ag safety and health, consider taking some free online courses by visiting second the link provided in the resources for this episode.

14:02 E Presnall

In light of this week's topic, my ask for all of those listening, is to reflect on the areas of your farm, or the daily tasks that you do on your farm, that are hazardous. Think about the ways in which you could improve safety and/or health in those areas or while doing those tasks. Then, make a commitment to implement the necessary measures or take the necessary actions to make yourself and others safer and healthier on your farm in 2024.

Stay tuned for our next episode on grain bin safety. From all of us at the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, we are wishing you a safe and healthy new year.

14:41 E Presnall

Listen in on the FarmSafe podcast to join in on the conversation about keeping safe on the farm. We want to hear from you. Share your stories about health and safety issues on the farm, about injuries that made you change the way you work, or about the ways you keep yourself and others safe on your farm. Also let us know if there's questions you have or topics that you want to hear about on the air. You can visit our website at gpcah.org or email us.

Original music for the FarmSafe podcast was written and performed by Ben Schmidt. This work was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as part of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health.

Episode Resources

- To look for specific tools to address hazards on the farm, [visit our resources page](#)
- If you would like to take a deeper dive into ag safety and health, [consider taking some free online courses](#)
- [Farm Mapper Tool](#)

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