



# HEALTHY HORIZONS

Publication of the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health and the Northeast Center for Agricultural Health



**NEC**

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Enhancing Agricultural & Rural Health by  
Preventing & Treating Occupational Injury & Illness

## Field Sanitation Requirements Made Easy - By Sherry Wyckoff

Research Coordinator, Community Collaborations for Farmworker Health & Safety

Safe agricultural practices require that farmworkers follow good rules of hygiene. A key component to good hygiene is hand washing. OSHA mandates safe practices for farms, including field sanitation standards to reduce potentially harmful exposures that farmworkers may encounter. Initiated in 1987, these standards mandate employers of field workers to provide toilets, potable drinking water, and hand washing facilities to hand laborers in the field; to provide each employee reasonable use of these; and to inform each employee of the importance of good hygiene practices. Proper hand washing can reduce illnesses associated with skin and eye irritation as well as agri-chemical related conditions.

The Community Collaborations for Farmworker Health and Safety project has partnered with shade tobacco farms in Connecticut and the University of Connecticut, where the priority concern for occupational injury and illness focuses on skin and eye irritation. Two different interventions were developed to address the concerns of the workers and the farm

owners. Farmworkers are educated on safe work practices including field hygiene, prevention of dehydration and ways to reduce skin and eye irritation during and after work. Workers are offered personal protective equipment such as safety glasses, gloves and sweatbands after attending a training session.

Low cost solutions were created to assist the farm owners to meet field sanitation requirements of providing water, soap and towels within ¼ mile of work area. Our version of "soap on a rope" is made from light trouser socks and a bar of soap that can easily be tied to the wash station. Paper towels stay dry in a low cost holder made from a lidded plastic box that can be mounted to the water station. The community collaborations process help create practical solutions to assist farm owners and farmworkers to adopt safe agricultural practices and help reduce occupational injury and illness.



Shade Tobacco



Wash Station

Spring 2011

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOOK OF HEALTHY HORIZONS...LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL CHANGES  
COMING TO THE NYCAMH WEBSITE [WWW.NYCAMH.ORG](http://WWW.NYCAMH.ORG) IN THE COMING MONTHS!

## DID YOU KNOW?

- While the ear canal, forehead, crotch, and abdomen absorb pesticides faster than any other body part, hands are the most likely to be exposed. Gloves, which can reduce exposure by up to 99%, may be the most important piece of personal protective equipment.
- Pesticides can be carried on soiled clothing and shoes and remain on household surfaces such as carpeting.
- Clothing contaminated with chemicals or pesticides should never be washed with non-contaminated clothes.

### Welcome Aboard!

A warm welcome to NY-CAMH's newest employee, Jennifer Farley! Jennifer is a data entry clerk providing support to a variety of NY-CAMH research studies.



## Phytophotodermatitis- By Christine LaLonde- Meade, Project Coord.

It goes by many names: Harvester's, Meadow Grass or Weed-Wacker Dermatitis, Margarita or Lime (as in the citrus fruit) Disease, and the scientific tongue-twister, phytophotodermatitis. Call it what you will, the results are invariably the same: an intense burning and blistering reaction, that, once resolved, often leaves dark blotching or scarring that can take several months to fade. White skin is more at risk than darker, more pigmented skin.

The culprit? Certain plants produce compounds known as **furocoumarins**. These compounds, used by the plants as a defense mechanism, can easily penetrate human skin—especially during humid weather. Each individual furocoumarin has a specific wavelength of light with which it reacts. Once furocoumarins are absorbed by the skin, if exposure to the correct wavelength of light (mostly within the UVA spectrum) occurs, so, too, does a phototoxic reaction that leads to the burning and blistering seen here.

Fortunately for us not all plants produce furocoumarins. The most common offenders are plants in the Umbelliferae and Rutaceae families—that's parsley & carrots and citrus fruits to you and me. A typical reaction, beginning anywhere from 30-120 minutes after sun exposure, will vary with the degree of exposure to both furocoumarins and UVA rays.



Rash caused by furocoumarins

Workers most at risk for exposure include dairy farmers who are exposed to cow parsnips, vegetable harvesters and produce workers who work with fennel, parsley, celery, dill, parsnips, turnips, and carrots, and forestry workers, gardeners, or maintenance workers who are exposed to Queen Anne's lace, False Bishop's Weed, or Giant Hogweed (an aggressive invasive). Bartenders (especially those in sunny climates) who work with lemons and limes, and anyone exposed to bergamot oil or figs are also at risk.

Unfortunately, the only way to avoid phytophotodermatitis is to avoid contact with the offending plants. Wear long sleeves and gloves whenever possible when working with members of the parsley or citrus families. Use sunblocks regularly, and limit sun exposure after known contact. See your health care provider who may prescribe topical or oral steroids for severe reactions. Cold water & vinegar compresses can temporarily relieve the burning and pain.

#### Sources:

<http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/817226-overview>  
<http://www.empowher.com/contact-dermatitis/content/phytophotodermatitis-also-known-margarita-dermatitis?page=0,0>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00000464.htm>

## Featured Personal Protective Equipment — Work Safely!

Safe pesticide use requires protective clothing, including gloves, disposable suits, hats, boots, goggles, and respirators. Pesticides are easily absorbed through the skin; so protecting yourself with the proper clothing made of the correct fabric is essential.

Featured from our Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Catalog: **Nitrile Gloves**

#### For sales or to request a catalog contact:

Todd Fiske- [todd.fiske@bassett.org](mailto:todd.fiske@bassett.org)

Maureen Conners- [mconners@bassett-healthworks.com](mailto:mconners@bassett-healthworks.com)

Or call:

(800) 343-7527

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## Additional Resources for Information on Chemical Safety and Skin Hygiene and Health

### NIOSH and CDC Workplace

#### Safety & Health Topics:

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/chemical-safety/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/skin/>

Tox Town also offers some resources in Spanish (<http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/espanol/>), and has a text version ([http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text\\_version/](http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text_version/)).

### Tox Town: <http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/>

A source for information on environmental health concerns and toxic chemicals where you live, work and play. Designed to give information on:

- everyday locations where you might find toxic chemicals
- non-technical descriptions of chemicals
- links to selected, authoritative chemical information on the Internet
- how the environment can impact human health

## Pesticides & the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) - By Jim Carrabba, Ag. Safety Specialist

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is an important regulation that protects workers from exposures to agricultural pesticides. This regulation is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Under WPS guidelines, any farm that uses pesticides, or employs workers or pesticide handlers that use pesticides must provide employees with the following safeguards:

- Pesticide application notices must be posted in a central location. Warning signs must be posted on treated areas. Restricted entry intervals (REI's) for pesticides must be communicated to workers.
- Pesticide safety training for workers and/or handlers must be provided. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be provided.

### Pesticide Safety Training

Both pesticide handlers and workers are required to have pesticide safety training. Unless the workers possess a valid EPA WPS training card, both workers and handlers must be trained before they begin work and at least once every 5 years. Workers can be issued the blue WPS training card and pesticide handlers will have the green WPS training card. Both cards will have an expiration date written on them. The pesticide safety training is based on the WPS pesticide safety educational materials which are available for both workers and handlers. These training materials must be used for the safety training and they contain specific topics which must be covered in the training sessions. The training can be delivered with written or audiovisual materials. A certified pesticide applicator must deliver the training.



### Personal Protective Equipment

Employers need to provide handlers with the type of PPE specified by the pesticide label. Respirators need to fit each handler correctly. Employers need to provide a pesticide-free area for workers to keep their personal clothing and to put on and remove PPE. Employers must also ensure that PPE is:

- Clean and in operating condition
- Worn and used correctly
- Inspected before each use
- Repaired or replaced as needed

Even though WPS regulations only require pesticide safety training once every 5 years, NYCAMH recommends that employers provide this training on an annual basis.

Through a grant from the New York State Department of Labor Hazard Abatement Board, NYCAMH can provide WPS safety training at no cost to agricultural operations in New York. Training is also available in Spanish. If you would like to schedule an on-farm safety training session, or a farm safety survey contact me at (800) 343-7527, ext 239 or e-mail me at [jcarrabba@nycamh.com](mailto:jcarrabba@nycamh.com).



# KID'S CORNER

Bee Safe, Bee Smart, Bee Careful on the farm!

## Chemical Safety On The Farm Word Search

K	H	I	G	E	B	D	C	P	B	A	F
M	A	N	P	W	A	S	H	O	R	T	E
H	N	G	F	D	R	P	C	I	Q	V	R
I	D	L	K	M	N	E	O	S	P	R	T
B	S	O	A	P	V	S	U	O	T	S	I
L	W	V	X	A	C	T	D	N	F	G	L
E	Q	E	P	O	M	I	J	Q	I	H	I
A	R	S	T	R	A	C	T	O	R	A	Z
C	T	C	H	E	M	I	C	A	L	S	E
H	U	B	D	F	H	D	J	L	M	R	R
E	M	A	N	U	R	E	F	H	J	L	N
D	C	B	A	G	A	S	O	L	I	N	E

## Help Us! Agricultural Health and Safety Programs Targeted for Elimination

"The Administration proposes *no funding for the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing Program (AFF)* within the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)..." However, agriculture remains one of the most dangerous industries in the nation with a fatality rate of 38.5 compared with an all worker fatality rate of 3.6. Costly workplace injuries and illnesses can have devastating effects on the U.S. economy, and the Ag Centers represent the predominant federal initiative currently in place to address the health and safety of the industry.

A loss of funding would mean the elimination of programs and services for farmers outside of NY and drastic reductions in programs offered to NY farmers. Visit [www.supportsafefarms.nycamh.com](http://www.supportsafefarms.nycamh.com) to send a letter to your legislative official urging them to restore NIOSH AFF funding so we may continue our vital research and programs to help the farming community!

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Empire Farm Days**, Seneca Falls, NY  
August 9, 10, 11, 2011

**Check out your local fair!**

<http://www.nyfairs.org/fairdates.htm>

TRACTOR      FERTILIZER      BARN      CHEMICALS  
BLEACH      GASOLINE      POISON      HANDS      GLOVES  
SOAP      MANURE      PESTICIDES      WASH



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