



# Tractor Talks

## Environmental Safety

### Tips for Talking

- **Plan ahead.** Be familiar and comfortable with the topic.
- **Make it relevant.** Include related tasks and work areas or events.
- **Involve your workers.** Ask questions that lead to participation. See suggestions under "Discussion Drivers."

### What went wrong?

*January 4, 10:15a.m.*

After cutting flowers in the greenhouse all morning, Susan was due for a break! She and a co-worker stepped outside into cooler temperatures and a slight breeze. A nearby pile of 2x8 pieces of plywood served as a spot where they could sit and rest for a few minutes before returning to work. It was later that evening when Susan noticed a small spot on her thigh and 3 days later it had grown, was painful, and Susan had a fever. Her doctor admitted her to the hospital where she was treated for tissue decay from a suspected Brown Recluse Spider bite. It is believed that the spider may have crawled through a tear in her jeans just about the knee level. **What went wrong?**

### Environmental Safety

Farm work brings a whole array of environmental hazards that vary by geographic region and season of the year. It is important to know how to identify and respond to potential environmental hazards. Here are some basic tips:

- **Weather** — Stay informed and prepare for the weather forecast in your area daily. If lightning is in the area, avoid open fields, move to safe shelter and, when in the cab of a vehicle, avoid contact with metal parts.
- **Insects, Bugs and Poisonous Plants** — Know how to recognize the dangerous plants and insects common in your region. Wear long sleeves, pants, boots, and gloves when you know there is a risk. Avoid burning brush that may contain poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac—inhaling the smoke can cause severe respiratory problems. Spiders like quiet, dark places so be cautious around wood piles and tall grass. Clothing, shoes, or towels stored where spiders, insects, or even small animals have easy access should be shaken out before use.
- **Animals** — Farmworkers involved in caring for and managing animals should receive training on hazard awareness, identification, and response specific to the animals with which they work. Wild or stray animals require great caution — consider calling local authorities or organizations that specialize in handling these situations.

### Keep an Eye Out For...

- Severe Weather
- Snakes
- Poisonous Plants
- Spiders
- Mosquitoes
- Ticks
- Bees, wasps and yellow jackets
- Wild or stray animals

### Discussion Drivers

1. What factors may have contributed to Susan's injury?
2. What environmental hazards (weather, bugs, plants, or animals) have you experienced?
3. What is your greatest concern related to your job and environmental hazards?

For more information on Environmental Hazards to Outdoor Workers visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/outdoor/>