



Tractor Talks

Noise Exposure

Research suggests that farmworkers have significantly higher rates of hearing loss than the general population. In fact, farming is included among occupations with the highest risk for hearing impairment.

Tractors, harvesters, silage blowers, chain saws, skid-steer loaders, and grain dryers, are just some of the sources of noise on a farm. Studies suggest that lengthy exposure to these noises have resulted in noise-induced hearing loss in farmworkers of all ages, including teenagers. While hearing loss is not as dramatic as an injury from a tractor overturn or machine entanglement, it is permanent. In addition to hearing loss, regular and prolonged exposure to noise can also lead to other physical symptoms (tinnitus, inability to sleep, dizziness) and psychological problems (depression, anxiety). Here are some of the warning signs of hearing loss:

- **Ringing, buzzing, or whirring in the ears.**
- **Difficulty understanding normal conversation.**
- **Turning up the volume on a radio or television when others are able to hear adequately.**
- **Failing to hear background noises; such as a ringing telephone or doorbell.**

Protect Your Hearing

- **When working in noisy areas or near loud equipment, use ear plugs or muffs.**
- **Keep equipment lubricated, properly adjusted, and maintained to help reduce noise.**
- **Limit the time you spend in noisy areas.**
- **Put as much distance as possible between the yourself and noisy equipment.**
- **Tractor cabs can decrease the noise level to the safe range.**

This material was produced under grant number SH-27619-15-60-F-37 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. It does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.