

Servicing farm equipment, safety plans essential before work begins

The ground is thawing, daffodils have bloomed. It must be Spring! This means BC farmers are coming out of hibernation and instead of working 12 hour days, they will now be working 16 to 18. Seasonal workers will soon be arriving and another cycle begins.

Agriculture work is unique and every commodity faces its share of challenges and hazards. Many of the hazards, however, are common and can be managed before everything gets too crazily busy.

So, while each farmer has their own independent situation and environment to consider, it is worth the time to share information with neighbours and friends and combine efforts to address the hazards before they become a problem.



Viewpoint

WENDY BENNETT

The easiest place to start is with equipment – a robust maintenance program means that everything that was stored for the winter is ready to go when it is time for it to be put back into service. But, if time didn't permit this, make sure your equipment is in good shape and safe to use before firing it up for the first time this spring. Guards need to be in place, blades sharp and everything in good condition to ensure there are no surprises when the motor turns for the first time.

Once equipment is safely operable, it may be time to turn attention to what is in store for workers. Every worker arriving at your site needs to have an orientation, be made aware of the hazards and know what to do in an emergency.

Take the time to make sure that checklists have been updated, training records prepared, personal protective equipment considered and all the mounds of paperwork are ready for new labour to arrive.

If you need help to get all your safety obligations in order, contact AgSafe before your workers arrive. The AgSafe team can ensure you have everything in place for a smooth start with no surprises when the motor turns for the first time.

Wendy Bennett is the executive director of AgSafe BC.