

# Be The Difference

# RANCH SAFETY

Submitted by Reg Steward

Doing things right, doing them well, and doing them safely are never at odds. Safety should support the way you do business, make you better and more efficient at what you do. It should never be an add on. Let's make a difference, let's be the difference.

## Be the difference

What does that mean? What is it to "be the difference"? Perhaps it is just being the person who takes the extra time to help a new worker, to do it right. Maybe it is the employer who makes all workers better at what they do and satisfies those simple due diligence issues of tell the worker, show the worker, watch the worker. Being the difference is sometimes a very deliberate and determined thing. Sometimes it is just you doing what you do, because, know it or not, you are making a difference.

### **The question becomes, is it a good difference or a bad one?**

Make no mistake about it, every day, in every way, in every situation, you are making a difference. You are making a difference, the kind of difference you make is up to you. AgSafe is here to help.

*Thanks to our contributors who chipped in with words of wisdom, contributing to the Safety Tips, because they all want to make a difference, they want to "be the difference."*

Photo by Ashcroft Ranch

## Working alone...

The dangers of working alone, or with others in isolation, are evident. Everything from being thrown from your horse, to encountering wildlife, losing your way, becoming ill, having a heart attack or being delayed long enough to have to stay out for the night. Of course, there are countless more things that could and do go wrong and so the questions become - how prepared am I for such an event? How well have I trained or equipped an employee, or family member? What plans are in place to check on their well being? What is the plan in the event something does go wrong, and who will check on me?

The risks and hazards associated with working alone or in isolation are real and there are some things that you can and must do to minimize or limit those situations. None of us like regulations, but the one used to measure our performance, directs and sets a standard, and is helpful in knowing what is expected. This helps us build solutions that are practical and “doable”, and make sense for each of us in our circumstances.

### *Regulatory excerpt*

*Section 4.21 of the OHS Regulation (“Regulation”) states:*

*(1) The employer must develop and implement a written procedure for checking the well-being of a worker assigned to work alone or in isolation.*

*(2) The procedure for checking a worker’s well-being must include the time interval between checks and the procedure to follow in case the worker cannot be contacted, including provisions for emergency rescue.*

*(3) A person must be designated to establish contact with the worker at predetermined intervals and the results must be recorded by the person.*

*(4) In addition to checks at regular intervals, a check at the end of the work shift must be done.*

*(5) The procedure for checking a worker’s well-being, including time intervals between the checks, must be developed in consultation with the joint committee or the worker health and safety representative, as applicable.*

*(6) Time intervals for checking a worker’s well-being must be developed in consultation with the worker assigned to work alone or in isolation.*



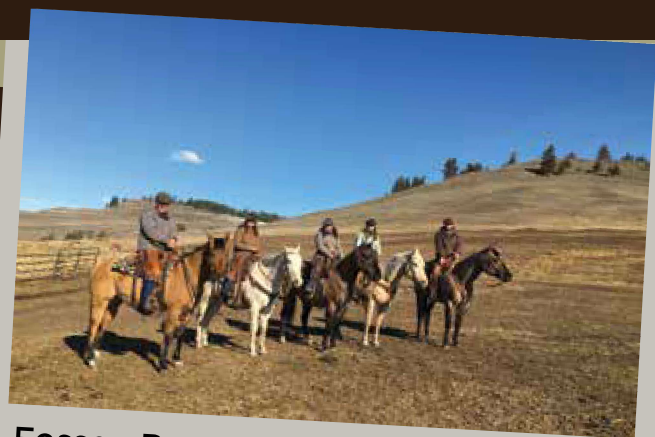
### **Gang Ranch - Larry Ramstad**

When travelling or using a tractor with a bucket, keep it low, take it off, and never drive around with it lifted up to see better. Take the time and take it off.

When gathering cattle on range, know who is on your left and who is on your right and keep them there.

When working on range, let people know where you will be at different times of the day. If you know you will be at a certain meadow, for example, at a certain time, let someone know that or if you usually stop for lunch at a certain spot, let people know that.

## Safety Tips



### **Fossen Ranch - Doug and Erika Fossen**

I think for summer riding on range our biggest safety tip is to get your horses in shape, early. A fit well-trained horse is a safe horse, and it is rewarding to spend time riding with family getting them in shape.

My Summer field work safety tip is *Three strikes and you’re out*. My dad used this when flying agriculture planes. It is a simple way to rate simple safety issues that will pile up to have an accident. As an example in flying, the wind might be the wrong way - strike one; the plane might be over loaded - strike two; and then frost on your wings - strike three and you’re out. This can be applied to all ranching situations and gives you an opportunity to think through potentially dangerous plans and avoid accidents.

## Safety Tips



### **Taylor Grafton**

Before every ride I like to take a good minute to be pessimistic about my plans for the day. Pessimists can always tell you what might go wrong.

Simply stated, you need to have a plan, you need to ensure others know the plan, and you need to follow the plan. Regulatory hogwash and lingo? Nope, simply good business, really good employee and family member care, and a really good work practice. Ask anyone who has been out there overnight, anyone who has been hurt laying there hoping for, waiting for help, anyone who was lost, and no one had a clue where they were.

**Time intervals**

Time intervals should be developed after considering the risks to which the worker is exposed. They must be developed in consultation with the worker assigned to work alone or in isolation, and with the joint committee or worker health and safety representative as applicable. This may be done as part of the hazard identification process required under section 4.20.2 of the Regulation. High risk activities require shorter time intervals between checks. There is no “2 hour” rule - the higher the risk the shorter the interval. Risk evaluation and assessment dictates the check-in intervals.

**Methods for checking well-being**

In selecting procedures to check a worker’s well-being, employers are to give preference to procedures which allow for the visual confirmation of the worker. That is rarely possible, so the next best is two-way voice contact. Where this is not practicable, employers may use other approaches. For example, if there is cell service available, or if handheld radios can be used, an employer could call the worker or require workers to make calls at regularly scheduled intervals. These contacts need to be logged by the supervisor or check in person. Talk to AgSafe about some easy ways to do this.

Employers may use other available technologies to check the well-being of workers. These technologies are improving all the time and can be a great solution. Whatever method you choose to use, the employer is still required to develop written procedures. You must ensure that all persons are familiar, competent and understand the system and procedures. There must be a record of all such check-ins, some way established to document or capture the check-ins. AgSafe can help with this.

Checking worker well-being in remote locations Working alone often places a worker in distant, difficult, or inaccessible areas. This is a real part of everyday life on the ranch and range. The very nature of the work will present challenges to providing a means of checking worker well-being.

Having an effective means of communication is an employer responsibility and part of an effective plan for any ranch family. Knowing where your family members or employees are and that they are okay is important for many reasons. It brings peace of mind, attends to issue of due diligence, and increases productivity and effectiveness for the operation.

**Response Plan:**

It is also required, essential and just plain sensible that you have a response plan ready to be activated. If a worker indicates a problem, fails to show up at an arranged time or place, or through other means you are aware of a worker, family member or neighbours’ situation you want to be able to enact a response plan quickly. Time is important. These plans should be simple, effective, and easily undertaken to be effective, AgSafe can help.

**We Can Help:**

Your Regional AgSafe representative or I are available to assist you in determining all your needs in this vital area and welcome the opportunity to work with you to establish practices and responses that are effective and realistic.

AgSafe, Superintendent of Field Operations  
 Cariboo-Chilcotin Regional Consultant  
 1-877-533-1789  
 Reg Steward, Provincial Ranch Safety Consultant



**Safety Tips**

**BC Natural Beef - Jim Wyatt**

Always look over your shoulder, so you know where you came from so you can get back there.

**Dane Ranch - Cordy Cox**

During branding season, proper preparation and communication at the beginning of the day can make all the difference. If everyone knows the system, their task, and is aware of the hazards, there’s less stress on the cattle, horses and the people. That usually means a smooth, successful day in the branding trap.



# Slips, Trips and Falls Quiz

Test your slips, trips and falls safety knowledge with this AgSafe BC Quiz. Read each statement and determine if it is True or False. Circle your answer (T/F) and check how many you got right on page 56-57.

1. Slips, trips and falls are not an issue in agricultural work. **T / F**
2. This is “good news” because this is something that we can do something about. **T / F**
3. Farmers and ranchers don’t need to worry about fixing slipping, tripping or falling hazards because they are just part of rural life. Workers should just learn to live with the things that cause slips, trips, or falls and “be more careful”. **T / F**
4. Distraction can cause a slip, trip, or fall to occur. **T / F**
5. Many times, we create a tripping hazard in our workspace or in the way that we are doing our job. **T / F**
6. Changing floor or surface conditions are expected in ranch and farm work. People should expect this and pick their feet up. **T / F**
7. Uneven surfaces, ground and floor conditions should be part of your inspection process. **T / F**
8. How you mount or dismount mobile equipment, tractors, in particular, is a matter of personal preference. **T / F**
9. Clearing ice and snow build up on tractor steps or other mobile equipment access points is the responsibility of the mechanic, maintenance person or the owner/ employer. **T / F**
10. In the summertime there is no need to worry about how I get on or off a tractor step. **T / F**
11. I should consider the task I will be performing today whenever possible and think about what the floor or ground conditions might be like today at work. **T / F**
12. Every tripping hazard can be easily eliminated. **T / F**
13. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is a must if there is a slipping or tripping hazard. **T / F**
14. Spills, wet floors and other liquids or materials that are on your shop floor should be cleaned up immediately. **T / F**
15. If I did not make the mess, I should not be the one to clean it up. **T / F**
16. Slips, trips and falls that do not result in injury should still be investigated. **T / F**
17. Employers need to have a system in place to educate, train and supervise workers on the selection of, and wearing of appropriate footwear. **T / F**
18. Slips happen when there is not enough grip or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. **T / F**
19. Trips happen when people lose their balance after their feet collide with objects, tools, cords, machine parts, uneven surfaces, irregular pavement, or when they miss a step going up or down, getting on or off. **T / F**
20. Falls that occur from same elevation are among the highest number of time loss and injury causing falls in agriculture. **T / F**
21. Cellphone use is increasingly a factor in slips, trips and falls. **T / F**
22. Putting tools away is more than just a safer way to work, it is good business. **T / F**
23. Poor lighting is never a contributing factor in slip, trip and fall incidents. **T / F**
24. Workers and family members have no say in what is considered a tripping hazard. **T / F**
25. Slips, trips and falls can be reduced in agricultural workplaces through inspection, training, alert workers, and caring employers. **T / F**

## Tyrone Johnston

Communicate!

Ensure everyone knows what the plan is. This includes Plan A ... through to Plan G ... When dealing with cattle, the plan changes so knowing the plan saves time, friendships, marriages and is also safe.



## Woodjam Ranch - Chad Seelhof

Always tell someone where you are going. Cattle move best early in the morning, it’s easier on the cattle, horses, dogs, and the marriage.

## Safety Tips

### Reg Steward

Be prepared, don’t be in a rush, slow is fast, range work is not a timed event.

Make sure someone knows where you are and when you will be back.

It will usually take longer than you thought, in worse weather than you imagined, in tougher terrain than you knew was out there.

## Being Media Savvy... should you really post that?

I am increasingly aware of the interface we have globally, the value and the horror of electronically connecting at will with, pardon the pun, “virtually” the whole world. We are all, or need to be, increasingly aware of the benefits and the challenges. I have a growing awareness of the need to use and to understand my laptop and how to use my phone, and to do both without having them master me. I, like a growing number of you, are keenly aware of the importance of staying current with rapidly changing ways of communicating. A tweet used to be what a bird did. Instagram was what we nicknamed grandma when she discovered the microwave, and a platform was what we performed on with my amazing George Strait impersonations.

We live in a time with the ability to quickly and immediately share good stuff, funny stuff, personal stuff. An immediate ability to lay out there our deep-felt convictions and our heart felt joy. An unchecked and uncensored ability to ensure that everyone knows about our troubles, our anger, our frustrations, or indignation, and all of this is right at our fingertips. We can speak to the world, or listen to it, we can show things to the world or look at things from the world, we can shout out support or challenge with a contrary opinion, all while eating Doritos in our pajamas while seated in a bean bag chair in the mother-in-law’s basement. We can share lifestyle and personal matters revealing the very most private parts of our lives as well as the joy of desktop or couch surfing to find information or connect. Amid this I cannot emphasize enough the continual and growing need to be media savvy. The vast expanse of the internet world makes entry into it seem inconsequential, and because it just seems so big, falsely gives a sense of being anonymous. Well, it is not. We live in quite a bubble, and so what we post, and how we go about that is important. The one-off

picture that you post of an animal doing something “cute”, or the kids doing something that makes you proud or takes your breath away, or the safety issue that is now part of the virtual now and forever to come, can be a problem.

We need to be aware of issues that we create through our online activity. These range from issues related to personal and family safety and well being, to issues that depict things that animal rights groups, agricultural critics and regulators are keenly aware of. I used to be a policeman, when done I went cowboying. Many of my colleagues when done go to other agencies that hire investigators. They often reflect now that they spend little time out of the office. They tell me that surveillance is a thing of the past and that they most often find just what they need on the internet. A picture of the “injured” person bungee jumping or water skiing. All to say that the picture you take, and post is an all time, never going away, out there for all time snap shot into your life, family, work, and the way you do things. Is it a picture or a comment that you want others to hear or see? Is it a picture that, in combination with 100 other similar pictures, makes a case for those out to damage the agricultural industry and shift public opinion? Who knows, it might never happen, but it can and often does. I am familiar with one picture that keeps showing up in an agricultural column. I have received several calls on the picture from members of a regulatory body. They are asking what the deal is. I have mentioned it, but it is still the photo in use with that column. There are more out there, I have seen them. There are many pictures and comments that are redirected to me with question marks.

So, is it wrong to post something, or are we never supposed to do that? Absolutely not the case. We can post things, need to, and should post things to show the great care of animals and people. Show and say things that reflect upon the great life that is ranch and rural life in BC. To post well we should consider and evaluate the post, here are some helpful hints.



### Ashcroft Ranch - Todd Wigemyr

Always be aware of your surroundings when handling cattle. Avoid accidents by inspecting the tractor and equipment before using.



### Copper-T Ranch - Janice & Trevor Tapp

We use the TELL acronym around here:

Tell me where you are going on what.

Every 2 hours check in or I’ll check on you.

Long days require breaks.

Let me know you’re back.

This applies to both field work and checking cattle.

Safety Tips

Ask yourself some questions:

- Would you want people who do not like you, people who don't like ranching to see this?
- Would I be comfortable with everyone, anyone at all seeing this?
- Could this be harmful to the industry?
- Could this shine a bad light on ranching or ranching practices?
- Would this be considered safe?
- Is what I am posting (a comment or a picture) showing something illegal or questionable?
- Could this put a member of my family or crew in danger?
- Could this post paint someone in a bad light or expose them to unwanted attention?
- Would I be proud if this were on the front page of the paper?

Remember this:

- You are in control.
- Know who is watching or following you.
- Do not seek out negative attention or controversy, avoid negative attention.
- Always be courteous and kind.
- Do not engage in industry impacting online debates.
- Be aware that images and comments posted can, and often are, shared without your knowledge or consent.
- Regulators, activists, critics, and various agencies monitor posts and may be interested in yours.
- Never do anything illegal, unsafe, or immoral, and you will not fear posting it.
- Be cautious and professional, you are an ambassador for the industry

There are many more questions that you can ask yourself, many more things to consider as you remember the need to be cautious. The internet provides many great opportunities, it also presents some real challenges. My dad had a lot of good sayings, some kept me out of a lot of trouble, one was simply, "if in doubt, don't". Makes sense for a lot of things, maybe makes good sense here. As always if you are uncertain about any matter related to health and safety, including such things as is this an okay picture to post, please reach out to myself or your regional AgSafe consultant.

When it comes  
to agriculture,  
we get it.



Our Agricultural Specialists can help coordinate practical strategies and flexible products and solutions that works for your unique needs.

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# Slips, Trips and Falls Quiz - ANSWERS

Check your answers from the Quiz on page 25

1. **False.** Slips, trips and falls are among the leading cause of time loss and injury incidents in agriculture every year.
2. **True.** Many times slips, trips and falls occur because of poor work practices, not cleaning up an area or making a repair, or creating a hazard as we perform a task. These are often inexpensive, and many times do not take long to correct.
3. **False.** Many of the hazards can be eliminated by simply putting things away or with more effort and attention applied to keeping work areas clean and clear of debris. Paying attention to floor and surface conditions and wearing appropriate footwear for the task help. Many of the hazards that cause slips, trips and falls can be eliminated. If you are not sure how to do this consult your regional agricultural safety association.
4. **True.** Stay focused on the task at hand. Being distracted can cause you to fail to observe a change in conditions or forget about a tripping or slipping hazard that is present in your workspace but cannot be eliminated. Stay alert, stay focused.
5. **True.** Putting tools down, rather than away. Dropping items where we may step on them or trip over them is often the cause of incidents and accidents. Cluttered shop floors, often with parts, shop towels, cords or tools are a significant contributor to slips, trips and falls. Think about where you are putting things, they need to be placed out of the way of your work and where you or others will walk.
6. **False.** As a supervisor or employer, and as a worker, you have a responsibility to ensure a safe workplace. In applying the test of due diligence to your workplace, items that could cause a slip, trip or fall need to be addressed. They must be put in a place out of harm's way. If there are items that will be used in the course of a work task, the worker needs to know how to safely place or store that item or article. They need to be aware of how to work safely in and/or around the item, object, or hazard. It is always best to have items placed away and always where they cannot cause a slip, trip, or fall.
7. **True.** Surfaces can cause a slip, trip, or fall. Identifying the items or area of concern in an inspection is the best, and often regulated practice. Marking, and identifying hazards, instructing, and communicating the risk to workers and then planning and correcting the situation, eliminating the hazard, are all part of a good inspection process. This must be documented.
8. **False.** Best practice is always to treat the tractor step like a ladder. Face the tractor, or other mobile equipment piece when you get on or off. Face in when you get on, face in when you get off. This may require training, or at least the development of a new habit. Supervision and reminding yourself as you modify your habit as you learn to do this will help. Take it slow and use every step. Always maintain 3 points of contact when mounting or dismounting.
9. **False.** This is an operator responsibility and should be part of your pre-shift mobile equipment inspection. Debris, ice, snow, or broken steps or access points must be remedied as soon as practical. Ice, snow, dirt, and debris must be cleaned off and the step cleared to enable safe use of the step. If the step or access point is damaged, then it must be repaired to enable safe use. If you have a supervisor, report the matter to them. You may need to put the equipment out of service until repaired.
10. **False.** Many slips, trips and falls occur in the summer. Loose gravel, sand on hard surfaces, rutted or uneven terrain can easily cause you to slip, trip or fall. Ensure your footing is solid. Whenever possible, park in a place that affords clear, clean mounting and dismounting of the tractor. When exiting onto loose gravel or sand, rutted or uneven ground, be cautious in the placement of your feet, do not "jump" off the unit, and maintain a 3-point contact. Use the "face on, face off" method.
11. **True.** Agricultural workers often perform a variety of jobs, tasks, and activities. These can change from day to day or even change several times within the same workday. Workers must know that the footing conditions can change depending upon the task and should consider the weather, floor type, regulatory requirements, ground conditions and weather conditions when selecting footwear.
12. **False.** Some conditions and work situations will never allow for the complete elimination of tripping or slipping hazards. Some things, like checking calves in a winter storm, stepping over crisscrossed deadfalls in the bush moving livestock, stepping over or around the rails for picking carts or sliding platforms in nurseries, or walking across wet floors in a dairy are simply a reality of the work done on farms and ranches in Canada. When the hazard cannot be eliminated it must be recognized (known) and managed (controlled). The hazard needs to be made known to workers and this instruction must be documented. Working in such environments will require a risk assessment and safe work practice be established for working in and around the unfixable situation or item. When and where possible always eliminate the hazard, but this may not always be possible. When it is not, workers must always be alerted to the risks and hazards associated with the task, the potential for changing conditions, their workspace and the inherent risks associated with a trip, slip or fall in that space.
13. **False.** While Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may be helpful, and it certainly may reduce the injury or impact of a mishap, it will not eliminate the hazard. Workers may be required to wear articles of PPE, and it may be advantageous in certain circumstances where there is a risk of slipping, tripping, or falling, but this is a lesser solution in the hierarchy of controls. Eliminating the hazard is the best. Managing the work in and around the hazard is also required and is preferable to simply counting on PPE to protect you from the slip, trip or fall. PPE can reduce the impact and reduce

injury and should always be a consideration, but PPE is not an excuse for not trying to eliminate the hazard or working safely around the hazard.

14. **True.** It is always best to create and then to maintain a safe working environment. Immediately cleaning up spills, in accordance with protocols and procedures appropriate to the substance, is always best. (Be certain of what the substance is. Once confirmed and known see Safety Data Sheets (SDS) if uncertain of how to clean the liquid or material.) Working around material, items or liquids that are not normally where this spill or item is, will increase the risk of slipping, tripping, or falling. When you have put something down or liquids or materials have come to rest on the floor in your workspace and they are not normally there, it is extremely easy to forget about such things resulting in a slip, trip or fall. Always clean up liquids, materials, and discarded or fallen items immediately. Put tools away, clean up spills, sweep up material, keep walkways clean and clear of debris.
15. **False.** While this is annoying, it may save someone from a serious injury. Be a good worker, be a caring team member and put things away that are out of place, clean up materials or liquids that could cause slips, trips, or falls. (If the material is unknown to you, use caution, find out what it is and clean in accordance with the instructions provided by the manufacturer of a product, consult SDS). Workers can be injured when the action of others leaves a mess, a slipping, tripping, or falling hazard. Always clean up after yourself, put things away.
16. **True.** A simple investigation into a slipping, tripping, or falling incident that did not result in an injury will be helpful in preventing further such incidents in that situation or with other possible situations around the farm or ranch. Use the situation as a learning and teaching opportunity. Reporting and recording the near miss is extremely helpful if there is pain or if an injury surfaces over time.
17. **True.** Employers need to know and be able to advise the right type of footwear for workers to wear based on the slip and trip hazards in the workplace. Your provincial regulators have information on their websites to help you select regulatory compliant footwear for regulated situations and circumstances. Consult your provincial agricultural health and safety professionals for assistance and advice.
18. **True.** A lack of traction often results from substances on the walking surface such as water, ice, oil, grease, dust, and debris. These substances may come from work processes, spills, weather, leaks, loose items, or surfaces with varying traction. Inadequate footwear can also cause slips.
19. **True.** Wear proper fitting footwear, always be aware of your walking path, look where you are going. Do not carry items that impede your vision and the ability to see where you are going. Always be alert to your surroundings and where you are. You may have to work where there is a rut in the ground or a surface issue or a tripping item that cannot be eliminated. You will need to think about it, remember it, and step over or go around it. Plan a route that does not take you across poor surfaces or over items whenever you can. Eliminating the hazard is always the best thing to do.
20. **True.** While falls from elevation do occur in agriculture and require particular attention, safe work practices and special training and attention, most falls impacting agriculture are those that occur from the “same elevation”. While different jurisdictions in Canada classify such falls in different ways, the common denominator is that they are from less than 60cm or two feet.
21. **True.** Cell phones are increasingly among the device or situation causing distraction and putting workers at increased risk of slipping, tripping, or falling. Cell phones have a great purpose and fill a great role in agriculture, but they must be used in a safe environment when safe to do so and in accordance with safe work practices for the task at hand.
22. **True.** Knowing where things are when you need them, or when you must send someone to get something for you from the shop is safer, more effective, and more efficient. Putting tools and shop items away and having a designated place for all the things in your shop area is more than just a matter of safety, it is a better way to do business.
23. **False.** Poor or no lighting can often cause a slip, trip, or fall to occur. Having inspections that include lighting fixtures and lighting conditions ensure that all are operating and providing adequate light for the location or condition will make any workspace safer. Ensure inspections are done and that they include lighting of working areas. If working in an area that is not able to be lighted, a farmyard, corral, or field, ensure a good headlamp or flashlight is available and used.
24. **False.** Workers and family members must have a means of identifying hazards that will, or may, cause them or another to slip, trip, or fall. The input of all workers or family members should be considered invaluable in identifying the many and varied possible slipping and tripping hazards on your farm or ranch. Weather conditions, items struck by vehicles or animals are among the many things that can cause a change in the workplace which will result in a new slipping, tripping, or falling hazard or risk. Employers, owners, and supervisors need to encourage, and to then listen to, input from workers and others. If a hazard is identified, it must be corrected. It may require that a procedure be put in place or education about the hazard provided as the situation is fixed.
25. **True.** If all people at a worksite are more aware of the reality that slips, trips, and falls are among the leading causes of injury in agriculture, and if all work together to eliminate these “fixable” hazards, then we will all make a difference.

*Consult your agricultural health and safety specialist for ideas and help with inspections.  
#standupforsafety*