

Eye Safety On The Farm

Farmers can reduce and possibly eliminate the 7,500 farm work-related eye injuries that occur each year by putting eye safety first, says the Vision Conservation Institute.

In a statement issued during National Farm Safety Week, July 25-31, Dr. Richard Feldstein, president of the optometric organization pointed out that good eye safety equipment is available to protect a farmer's vision from needless permanent or temporary damage.

"The human eye is tough and has a certain degree of natural protection," Dr. Feldstein said. "However, natural protection is usually not sufficient against most environmental hazards." Farmers need additional protection when handling agricultural chemicals, operating machinery, welding, repairing buildings, lumbering and tree trimming, working in orchards, blasting, or performing any other job with danger of flying pieces or particles.

Various types of lenses and frames are used in safety eye wear and the choice depends on

the job hazards involved; the type of job or activity; the farmer's vision abilities; his vision limitations; the type of lens prescription, if any, needed to provide clear, efficient, comfortable vision; and the advice of the vision care specialist.

To protect the eyes from splashing chemicals, dust and flying objects, there are three major types of impact-resistant lenses - heat - or chemically-treated glass lenses and plastic lenses.

As of January 31, 1972, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has required that most eyeglass lenses be impact-resistant. Heat-treating and chemically-treating processes are used to strengthen glass lenses to meet FDA requirements.

Dr. Feldstein stressed that FDA-required lenses can break and do not provide adequate protection for the farmer in his

harmful rays.

Every farmer can obtain the proper eye protection equipment to meet his specific needs from a professional vision care specialist, Dr. Feldstein said. Optometrists, located in 6,237 communities and in 73.5 percent of the counties in the United States, are easily accessible to farmers and others in rural communities.

Dr. Richard Feldstein added that modern farming has come a long way from horse-and-plow days and that today's farmer needs sophisticated safety equipment to protect his eyes from today's environment.

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