

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY GRADUATE PROGRAM CARLA WILHITE, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA



Aging and Agriculture:

HEALTH, HAZARDS, AND ISSUES OF NORTH AMERICAN ELDERLY FARMERS



Learning Objectives

Participants will be:

- 1. Familiar with health issues affecting elderly farm producers.
- 2. Familiar with major hazards working on farms or ranches.
- 3. Able to identify resources available to ameliorate health issues and hazards.



Agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries in North America



- One of the highest occupational fatality rates in U.S. and Canada (U.S. Census, Statistics Canada)
- ■80% of farms are small family operations
- □ Average age of a farmer is now approaching 60 years of age
- ☐ Farmers over age 54 are at higher risk for farm fatality injuries and non-fatal permanent injuries (Myers, Layne, & March, 2007)

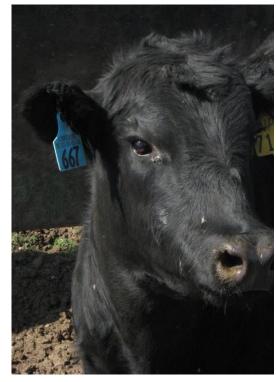


Major hazards in the farm industry involve tractors, farm machinery, livestock, and falls

https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/agriculturaloperations/hazards_controls.html









Positive aging: Solutions to increase older farmer safety include assistive technology, environmental modifications, and aging in place strategies







Positive aging: Older farmers may want to retire from farming and would benefit from transition planning, long term care strategies, and end of life decision-making (Magilly) & Congdon, 2001)









Free resources for older farmers

- ❖National AgrAbility Project
 - http://www.agrability.org/
- ❖ Driving Resources: Car Fit
 - https://www.carfit.org/#:~:text=CarFit%20is%20an%20educ ational%20program,their%20mobility%20in %20the%20community.
- Housing repair and retrofit (USDA)
 - https://www.rd.usda.gov/programsservices/single-family-housing-repair-loansgrants

- ❖ Transition Planning: UM-Extension
 - https://extension.umn.edu/courses-andevents/farm-transition-and-estate-planning
- Advance Care Planning: National Institute on Aging
 - https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/getting-youraffairs-order



References

Magilvy, J. K. & Congdon, J. G. (2001). The Crisis Nature of Health Care Transitions for Rural Older AdultsPublic Health Nursing Vol. 17 No. 5, pp. 336–345

Myers, J. R., Layne, L.A., & March, S. M. (2007). Injuries and fatalities to U.S. farmers and farm workers 55 years and older. Proceeds of the The Aging Farm Community: Using Current Health and Safety Status to Map Future Action, March 6-8, 2007, Indianapolis, Indiana. Urbana, IL: Agricultural Safety & Health Network (ASHNET), 2007 Mar; :1-26

