

# TAILGATE TOPIC



## **TOPIC: Harvesting Cotton at Night**

**OVERVIEW:** Work on the farm or ranch in the daylight hours is hazardous enough. In some cases farming requires harvesting into the night or beginning early in the morning due to time or environmental factors. This tailgate talk highlights special precautions to be taken when the job requires working after the sun is down.

### **TALKING POINTS:**

#### Planning

- Plan the work to be performed prior to getting out to the field at night.
- Meet with crews to discuss the job tasks, associated hazards and safety rules.
- Inspect all equipment in daylight hours. Fix hazards before operating any equipment (i.e., Unguarded PTOs).
- Walk the field during daylight hours to identify potential obstacles and hazards like overhead lines and electrical wires and low hanging branches.
- Consider mobile lighting so employees have light when going to get water or to portable toilets.
- Set up lights in daylight hours.
- Trim bushes and trees before working at night.

#### Administrative Controls

- Perform warm up exercises before performing manual harvesting and material handling.
- Temperatures may be mild at night, but the potential for heat illness still exists. Provide at least one quart of water for each worker and 5 minute rest periods each hour.
- Workers should work in pairs when working at night.
- Get enough rest prior to performing work at night or early morning hours.
- Supervisors and co-workers should be aware of fatigue and the related safety issues. Working on or near machinery should be closely monitored and controlled.

#### Personal Protective Equipment

- Wear long sleeves and have warm clothes available as temperatures may drop quickly. It is always best to keep your muscles warm prior to and during harvesting.

- Wear high visibility vests and stay alert especially when tractors or harvesters are in use.

#### Emergency Management

- Have a plan of action in place in case of emergency.
- Have a reliable means of communication available (i.e., cell phone, two-way radio). Check to make sure it works in all parts of the field. Keep extra batteries on hand.
- Have first aid supplies.
- Know how to describe your location to emergency medical service.

#### Vehicle Safety

- Have a staging area for equipment that is well lit and has plenty of space. Look for overhead electrical wires.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. What should you keep handy in case of cold temperatures at night? (Answer: Warm clothes (jacket, thermals, etc.)
2. What should you do in the daylight hours before beginning night activities? (Answer: Plan the work, inspect equipment, walk the fields, look for overhead electrical and other obstacles, set up lighting and trim trees and bushes, if necessary.
3. How much water should be made available for each worker per hour? (Answer: 1 quart per hour)
4. What hazards are associated with working outdoors at night that would most likely not be present during the day? (Answer: Darkness, cold temperatures and fatigue)

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