



October 7, 2011

## ***OSHA hits Wisconsin dairy farm with \$70,000 in fines*** **(Dairy Herd Network – June, 2011)**

Is your farm safety program ready for an OSHA inspection? According to the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), any dairy farm that employs 11 or more employees at any time during the previous 12-month period or offers temporary housing to employees during that period (regardless of how many employees) is subject to OSHA regulatory oversight. A dairy farm is exempt from all OSHA enforcement if the dairy farm employs 10 or fewer employees currently and at all times during the last 12 months and has not had an active temporary labor camp during the preceding 12 months. Family members of farm employees are not counted when determining the number of employees for OSHA oversight. A part-time employee is counted as one employee. **\*\*It's important to note that while dairy farms that employ 10 or fewer employees are exempt from inspection, they are not exempt from OSHA regulations.** Every farm should have a written safety program in place no matter what size they are.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, in conjunction with UVM Extension and the Vermont Department of Labor has a program that offers dairy producers the opportunity to strengthen and improve their on-farm safety program. We have developed tools and programs to assist farms with safety issues. You might feel your dairy farm is a safe place to work. You may even hold employee safety meetings or safety trainings. But if your program isn't written down – documented – it doesn't exist from an OSHA and or insurance perspective.

The "Vermont Farm Safety Program" is in its fourth year of demonstrated success in lowering workers' compensation premiums for dairy farmers. Numerous farms that have participated in the farm safety program receive discounts off their premium. A key component for producers is to have open and on-going dialogue with insurance providers to work toward lowering rates.

We salute each of the past years program participants. Participating producers voluntarily reduced hazards on their farms and set up ongoing employee safety trainings. Program participant quote:

Vermont's Secretary of Agriculture, Chuck Ross: "It is important to recognize that dairy farms in Vermont are working hard to create a culture of safety on their farms. This program helps producers develop and or strengthen that culture and create safe working environments on the farm."

Dairy producers need to apply to take part in this program and pay a registration fee of \$90.00. The program has **limited space so it will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. Apply Today!** Please fill out the enclosed application and return to us no later than **Tuesday, October 25, 2012**. The Vermont Farm Safety Program is a voluntary program and all information will be kept confidential.

### Participating Producer Commitment:

- Pay the \$90.00 program registration fee
- **Attend the Vermont Farm Safety Program orientation meeting on November 1, 2011** and at least one additional meeting during the program year – through October, 2012
- Agree to a farm safety check/audit on your farm during the month of November
- Follow through on recommendations for "hazard reduction" from the audit
- Identify a farm "Safety Manager"
- Develop an individualized "Farm Safety Plan" & implement it
- Conduct monthly on-farm employee safety trainings

If you are interested in taking part in the Vermont Farm Safety Program, please contact: Louise Waterman, VT Agency of Agriculture, (802) 828-6900, or [Louise.Waterman@state.vt.us](mailto:Louise.Waterman@state.vt.us)

**Enclosed: Farm Safety Application**

## **Application for Vermont Farm Safety Program 2011-2012**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Employees covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance (family and non-family) \_\_\_\_\_

### Program Commitment:

- Pay the \$90.00 program registration fee
- Attend the farm safety program orientation meeting on November 1, 2011 and at least one additional meeting during the program year – through October, 2012
- Agree to a farm safety check/audit on their farm
- Follow through on recommendations for “hazard reduction” from the audit
- Identify a farm “Safety Manager”
- Develop an individualized “Farm Safety Plan” & implement it
- Conduct monthly on-farm employee safety trainings

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**All applications are due by Tuesday, October 25, 2011**

**Mail Application and check for \$90.00 to:**

**Louise Waterman  
VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets  
116 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901**

**Make checks payable to VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets**