



Women in Agriculture

Reducing Risk of Injury

Women working in agriculture have some possible risks for injury or harm that are different from their male peers. There are many steps that women can take to minimize safety risks and stay healthy. On average, women have a smaller body frame with different body proportions. Equipment and tools are often not designed for this, which can mean that protective equipment, like face masks, don't fit well or tools are not the right size. This can increase risk for exposure, injury and disorders of knees, hips and wrists.

- Always look for protective equipment that is designed to fit your size and shape.
- When possible, work with tools and equipment designed for your body frame.

Fertility, Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Fertility, pregnancy and breastfeeding are not always considered when it comes to working on the farm. For example, exposure to pesticides, diseases from animals, livestock hormones, and needle sticks can cause fertility complications and can harm a fetus and mother. Women working on farms may also have challenges scheduling breaks to breastfeed or pump and finding a private, clean space on the farm to do so.

- Check out [womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/employer-solutions](https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/employer-solutions) for resources and ideas on how to support breastfeeding mothers on the farm.
- Always check labels on pesticides and hormones to understand any potential risks. Wear protective equipment that is recommended for the products.
- Wear protective equipment when working around animals.

#WomeninAg

Join the national conversation! To help women across the country connect with other women leaders in agriculture all across the country, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has established a women in ag mentoring network. Join the conversation by emailing AgWomenLead@usda.gov or check out #womeninag on Twitter and on the USDA blog.

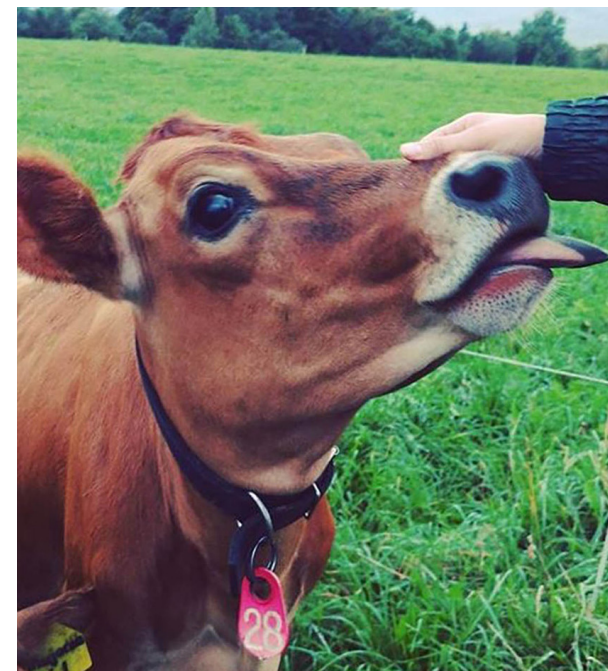
For more strategies and resources, as well as tools for getting started with worksite wellness initiatives, visit: www.healthvermont.gov/worksites-wellness.



Rev. 1/2019

Vermont Worksite Wellness Resource

Tips for Farmers: Staying Healthy on the Farm



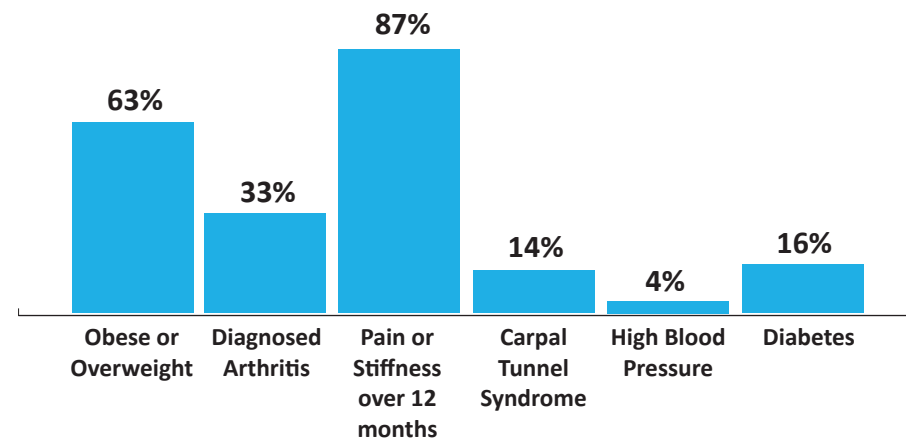
Photos courtesy of Vermont Agency of Agriculture





Vermont is home to more than 7,000 farms. Over 12,000 Vermonters work on farms that provide the food we consume every day. Farmers often have long days without a lot of flexibility in their schedules. This might make it more difficult to find time to exercise, visit the doctor, rest and do stress-reducing activities.

Common Health Concerns for Farmers



Data Sources: UVM Extension 2005 Farm Health Survey and VT BRFSS 2014

Staying Healthy on the Job

Eat healthy

Along with physical inactivity and tobacco use, poor diet is one of three primary risk factors that can cause chronic disease. In Vermont, more people die from chronic disease than all other causes of death combined. Here are some ideas for eating healthy on the job:

- Make half your plate fruits or vegetables at every meal.
- Drink water or unsweetened beverages like iced tea or flavored seltzers instead of soda, energy drinks and sport drinks.
- Partner with a local farm that produces vegetables to do a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) swap for fruit, dairy and other products.
- Have grab-and-go breakfasts and snacks ready for early mornings – such as low-sugar granola bars, unsalted nuts, low-fat yogurt.
- For more ideas, visit healthvermont.gov/mymoment for tips and tools on eating healthy on a budget.

Prevent or manage diabetes

Diabetes affects more than 55,000 Vermonters. Those working in agriculture, fishing and forestry have three times the rate of diabetes than all adults. Many more have prediabetes, which can lead to type 2 diabetes. Losing 5 percent of body weight through more physical activity and healthy eating reduces the risk for diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions.

Get annual checkups, cancer screenings and regular dental cleanings

Unaffordable insurance, unpredictable schedules and long days can make it hard for farmers to get regular check-ups, screenings and dental cleanings. Regular preventative care visits can help prevent disease or detect it early, leading to better outcomes. Most insurance plans cover these services at no cost. For those without insurance, there are low or no cost services available through community health clinics and the Ladies First program. Contact Vermont 211 to learn about resources in your area – call them at 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 898211.

Prevent joint pain and manage stress

Working on a farm can be very difficult on the body. Many farmers push through pain and continue to work. Regular physical activity improves pain, stiffness and mobility. It also helps prevent arthritis-related disability, improving the quality of life and the workday. Here are tips from other farmers:

- When working on tasks that don't require machinery, try walking instead of riding on a tractor or mower.
- Map out a trail on your farm that takes 15 minutes to walk briskly. Try to walk that trail once or twice a day.
- Find leisure-time activities in your area – such as hiking, biking, playing in an adult soccer league or others – that will allow you to be active.

Small changes to your work and the equipment you use can also make a big difference in preventing pain and injury. There is a free program for Vermonters on managing chronic pain. Visit myhealthyvt.org for more information.

Staying active is also a great strategy for stress management. Physical activity can improve your overall wellbeing and promote better sleep. For support with any personal or work-related issues, visit FarmFirst.org, a free, confidential service for all Vermont farm owners and their families.



Prevent injury

Workplace injury is also an important concern on the farm. Many injuries can be prevented by taking proper safety measures. There are many resources available for Vermont farmers to look at and make changes to help prevent injury around the farm. Visit www.healthvermont.gov/worksite-wellness for safety information, on-site consultations, downloadable safety posters, roll-bar ordering forms, resources for children and more.