

Appendix C - Worksites

Modifying Your Farm or Ranch

Assessing and modifying your home is a great start to living well. However, your home isn't the only area that needs attention. Your worksites hold the same risk of injury or falls. Making changes to your worksite before they are needed could help you continue to work longer with fewer complications. This appendix includes how to assess your worksites along with suggested modifications to make your work less stressful on your body.

Yard and Approach

Your yard, farm, or ranch is unique to you and your location. It is important to assess your landscape to ensure you are aware of workplace hazards. What to look for in your terrain relates to how accessible it is or how easy/hard it is to get around from one place to another.

Some Questions to Ask Yourself:

1. Is your terrain: Rocky? Sandy? Flat? Hilly? Wooded?
2. How do you get around?
3. Do you have freedom of movement?
4. How far apart are your buildings or structures?
5. Can you easily walk on your terrain from place to place?
6. What are the types of land and surfaces in and between fields?
7. Are there natural or man-made barriers such as ponds or fences?
8. Where does water drain in your yard?
9. Does your work area get muddy?

Access, Entries, and Exits

Your worksite entrances should not be forgotten. It is important to assess your outdoor entrances to become aware of potential hazards.

1. Are your steps difficult to climb?
 - Add handrails on both sides from below bottom step to past top step.
 - Repair broken or loose steps.
 - Add non-slip surfaces.
 - Rebuild/replace steps that are too narrow or too steep.
 - Build a ramp to decrease hazards.
2. Are your doors hard to open and close?
 - Replace doorknobs with lever handles.
 - Modify doorknobs with an add-on lever.
3. Is there a raised threshold that causes a tripping hazard?
 - Replace raised threshold with one that has a tapered lip.
 - Install wedge-shaped lumber to bridge the gap between the threshold and the floor.

You can make your farm or ranch more accessible by utilizing the following tools or materials:

- EZEdge Modular Ramp System
- Good Gravel Driveway
- EcoTrack Tiles
- Expanded Steel Ramp
- Non-Skid Adhesive Strips



- Paint-on Grit
- Safety Deck II Glass Surfacing
- Skid-X Floor Coating

Lighting

Evidence suggests that lighting impacts your physical and social wellness, which ultimately affects your work performance.

Problems evolving from poor lighting in the workplace can range from eye-strain to serious musculoskeletal injuries.

1. Is the lighting too bright?
 - Decrease the amount of watts in your light bulbs.
2. Is there a lot of glare around your workshop?
 - Change lights to achieve an indirect ambient lighting. This will distribute your light upward to reflect off the ceiling.
3. Is it hard to get around because there are a lot of shadows?
 - Increase the wattage of your light bulbs or add more lighting in your shop. Shadows are likely caused by dim lighting or lighting that projects light directly downward instead of upward.
4. Does the lighting support you in the task at hand?
 - Install a task light. This could even be a table lamp.

Noise

Research indicates that exposure to noise is one of the leading causes of hearing loss. It is estimated that 1 in 4 people who are exposed to loud noises in the workplace develop a hearing loss not related to aging. Loud noises are not only bothersome but they can also decrease concentration and cause serious injury.

- Modify the way your equipment operates to generate less noise by improving lubrication and balancing rotating parts.
- Segregate noisy areas with sound barriers and partitions.
- Wear a pair of noise canceling earplugs or headphones when in these noisy environments.

Air Quality

Healthy air quality is an important element of a safe work environment. You should be safe while working on the job. Poor air quality could threaten your life.

- Identify the source of the problem.
- Remove the problem. This can be simple (like taking out the garbage) or difficult (like switching chemicals). Clean or replace damaged or dirty materials. Remove or replace materials that are too saturated to be cleaned.
- Make sure the ventilation is working and that airflow is not blocked.
- Store seed and other products properly.
- Dispose of garbage correctly.

Appendix C - Worksites

- Do not bring chemicals or products with strong odors into your shop.
- Be aware of safety hazards when handling chemicals or other products.
- Keep air vents open.
- Wear a mask when working with strong chemicals or products.
- When it is difficult to limit your exposure to particles in the air, such as riding in the tractor, take necessary steps to reduce exposure, such as wearing a mask.

Floors and Surfaces

Your floor and surface conditions are another important factor in being safe at work. Slips and trips are the most common causes of injuries in the workplace. The main causes of these slips, trips and falls are:

- Uneven floors
- Unsuitable floor coverings
- Wet floors
- Changes in levels
- Trailing cables
- Poor lighting
- Poor housekeeping

Arrangement of Workspace

Your workspace should be arranged to what fits you. A well-designed workspace prevents pain in your back, neck, arms, and legs. This could increase your work productivity and efficiency. A work height at elbow level minimizes the energy you spend and doesn't require as much muscle strength.

Seating: Use appropriate chairs and benches to make your work easier. Use a backrest to relax your back muscles by leaning against it.

Work Methods: Choose a variety of work methods to switch between standing and sitting. You should also be aware of how much you bend over at the waist or squat during the workday. This will increase your quality of work by resting particular muscle groups while preventing overuse syndromes.

Tools: Put frequently used tools, products, and other materials within easy reach. This will minimize reaching and twisting in order to reach frequently used things.

Storing Your Tools: Providing a place for each tool to cut clutter will be a simple solution to increase safety and efficiency.

Handling Materials

Handling Loads: Moving objects by hand may cause injury. Therefore, if possible, move objects by pushing or pulling a dolly, cart, trolley, or conveyor. Lifting lower loads causes the most injuries when moving loads. Always squat to pick things up and lift with your legs, not your back.

Manipulating, Reaching, and Grasping: Manipulations should be done most easily at about elbow height, in front of the chest and close to the body, which allows steady and secure arm and hand motions.



Tools

Choose tools that can be operated easily or with minimal grip force to decrease your fatigue. Select light (but strong) tools with bigger handles. Having an appropriately sized handgrip will decrease the amount of energy spent holding onto your tool. To measure your grip size, touch the tip of your thumb and the tip of your middle finger together. The size of the circle made should be the size of your tool grip.

Summary

The right modifications can assist in creating a safer work environment and make participation easier, more efficient, and more satisfying for farmers or ranchers who are older, have chronic health issues, or disabilities.

For more information on making changes to your farm or ranch to increase accessibility to the work environment, tools, or machinery contact the National AgrAbility Project at agrability.org or call Toll-Free at: 1-800-825-4264.