

Although the sun has a major impact on the productivity of farming, it also holds dangers for those exposed to it regularly.

Although the sun has a major impact on the productivity within the farming environment, it also holds dangers for people. A lot of farm work is done when people are exposed to the intense radiation of the sun's rays. Repeated exposure can cause premature aging, eye damage, and even cancer.

Everyone is at risk but some more so than others. People with fair complexions, freckles, blonde or red hair, and blue or grey eyes are more at risk of experiencing damage due to sun exposure. Damage takes place over time, starting at a very young age. For this reason, it's important to encourage protection at a young age.

To limit exposure and prevent long-term damage:

- ▶ Avoid the sun during peak hours between 10 am and 4 pm
- ▶ Wear hats with wide brims that cover the face, neck, and ears
- ▶ Cover as much of your body as possible with light clothing
- ▶ Use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher and reapply often
- ▶ Wear sunglasses rated to filter out UV rays

Recognizing skin damage is important to get appropriate medical attention when needed. Be mindful of:

- ▶ Asymmetrical moles, especially those with irregular colors or larger than 1/4 inch.
- ▶ Elevated, crusty sores that bleed and won't heal
- ▶ Change in a mole, like itchiness or pain
- ▶ Red, scaly patches or lumps
- ▶ Small, shiny, pearly bumps

Research shows a link between sunburns in children and an increased risk of melanoma and skin cancer later in life. Protect the next generation of farmers and ranchers by decreasing their exposure to the sun.

- ▶ Provide play areas in the shade
- ▶ Insist on using sunscreen
- ▶ Purchase sunglasses the kids will actually wear
- ▶ Dress them to cover as much as possible, including a hat

Sun damage accumulates over time. Protect your children and teach them the importance of protecting themselves.