



**Agriculture Safety and Health—Summer Stress**

Andy Bauer – Ohio AgrAbility Educational Program Coordinator

**Agriculture is one of the most hazardous industries in the U.S. affecting a wide demographic.**

The diversity of audience groups is reflective of the fact that agriculture does not have occupational restraints like other industries, especially regarding workforce age, competency level, and certain regulatory practices. Teaching injury prevention practices in this environment requires a specific approach. The OSU Ag. Safety and Health Program directs, coordinates, and administers educational programs, demonstrations and resources to support agriculture and the safety of those working in the industry.

Heat stress is a factor that we must all be aware of during the summer months. Working long hours during times of extreme heat and direct sun can be hard on your body. The body must get rid of excess heat to maintain a stable internal temperature. This is done mainly through circulating blood close to the skin and through sweating.

When air temperature is close to or greater than normal body temperature cooling the body be-

comes more difficult. Sweating then becomes the body's main way of cooling off, but is only effective if the humidity levels allow evaporation and fluids and salts that are lost are adequately replaced. If the body cannot get rid of excess heat then the core temperature increases causing the heart rate to increase.

**Here are some tips to follow during hot summer days:**

- ◆ Wear light colored, loose fitting cotton clothing.
- ◆ Try to schedule your workload around the cooler parts of the day.
- ◆ Above all make sure you and your employees all stay well hydrated in hot weather and use sunscreen when working out in the hot sun.
- ◆ Avoid drinking alcohol and drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar
- ◆ Take regular water breaks and try to get out of the sun during breaks.
- ◆ Heat stress injuries can become serious medical issues if precautions are not taken.

For more information contact the Ohio AgrAbility Program at [agrability.osu.edu](http://agrability.osu.edu) or Andy Bauer at [bauer.528@osu.edu](mailto:bauer.528@osu.edu) or (614) 247-7681.

*This article provided by Jacqueline Kowalski, ANR Educator, OSUE, Cuyahoga County.*