

# Dressing Up the Farm Family

---

Bill Field

Extension Safety Specialist Jean Goodrick, Extension Textiles Specialist  
Purdue University

One of the most frustrating responsibilities facing many farm wives is keeping each family member properly clothed. The unique tastes of individual members usually require that special attention be given to style, color and comfort as well as durability and washability. However, one aspect that is often overlooked concerns the personal safety of the wearer. Inappropriate or poorly maintained clothing has contributed to numerous personal injuries on Hoosier farms. The following case histories identify just a few.

- \* A teen-age boy on a northern Indiana farm was helping unload corn into a portable auger. When he inadvertently got too close to the spinning auger, the untied lace of his workboot became entangled. His leg was pulled into the auger and severed.
- \* Several small children of one Indiana farm family were taken to the doctor for treatment of skin rashes. It was determined that the children's underclothing had become contaminated with pesticides when those

garments were washed with the clothing worn by their father when he was applying farm chemicals.

\* A farm wife was helping her husband dig fence posts with a tractor mounted auger. The hood of her parka became entangled in the power-take-off shaft, and she was injured severely before her husband could shut off the tractor.

\* Another Indiana farmer went to his doctor complaining of severe headaches and dizziness. After several tests it was discovered that the sweat band of his "seedcorn" cap had become contaminated with pesticide. Unknowingly, he was exposing himself to the chemical every time he wore the hat.

Taking a few minutes to check the clothing worn by family members as they leave each morning for work, school, or play will help keep them healthy and safe. Use the following seasonal checklist as a guide.

## **SPRING**

- \_\_\_ layered clothing to allow for adjustment to changing temperature
- \_\_\_ rain gear to keep inner clothing warm and dry
- \_\_\_ heavy duty workshoes when doing farm work
- \_\_\_ eye protection available and worn during application of anhydrous ammonia
- \_\_\_ long-sleeve shirt or coveralls, rubber gloves, rubber boots and chemical goggles when handling or applying pesticides
- \_\_\_ shoes or boots worn when horse riding

## **SUMMER**

- \_\_\_ adequate coverage of skin to prevent overexposure to the sun
- \_\_\_ hearing protection from excessive machinery noise
- \_\_\_ reflective clothing worn when walking or biking on the highway at night.
- \_\_\_ shirttails tucked in
- \_\_\_ pant cuffs free from excessive frays
- \_\_\_ helmet worn when motorcycle riding
- \_\_\_ personal flotation devices worn when boating

## **FALL**

- \_\_\_ parka strings tied
- \_\_\_ clothing free of loose threads or buttons, broken zippers or dangling strings
- \_\_\_ wrist jewelry, rings and neck chains removed or covered
- \_\_\_ highly visible clothing worn when hunting
- \_\_\_ non-flammable clothing worn when burning leaves or exposed to open flames

## **WINTER**

- \_\_\_ warm hat to conserve body heat and protect ears from cold
- \_\_\_ windproof coveralls or snowmobile suits worn when exposed to the cold for long periods
- \_\_\_ neck scarfs tucked inside jacket
- \_\_\_ non-slip footwear to prevent slips and falls
- \_\_\_ warm, dry gloves to protect from frostbite

Proper care and maintenance, as well as choice of clothing appropriate for the job or activity, figure strongly in the farm family's well-being.

**Keep Clothes in Good Repair:** Open jackets, flapping sleeves, loose hems and frayed edges can be hazardous.

Replace missing buttons or broken zippers

Secure loose hems, especially at the bottom of sleeves and pant legs.

Refinish frayed edges.

**Keep Clothes Clean:** Garments that are dusty, dirty, soaked with oil or solvent, or contaminated with chemicals can cause skin rash or disabling dermatitis. Because pesticides can enter the body through the skin, careful handling of garments contaminated by drifts or spills is required.

Clothes worn while mixing and applying chemicals should be washed after each wearing.

Do not mix contaminated clothes with other laundry; they should go right into the washer for laundering as soon as they are removed, or into a plastic bag to await laundering.

Use laundry procedure (Recommended procedure based on results of a study conducted at Iowa State University) normally used heavily soiled clothing:

- \* Use hot water which is at least 140°F.
- \* Use full water level, even for a small wash load.
- \* Use manufacturer's recommended amount of heavy-duty detergent. A laundry product with an ingredient that ties up water hardness minerals in a soluble form (phosphate or sodium nitrilotriacetate) is preferred.
- \* The addition of one-half cup household ammonia **OR** chlorine bleach (**not both**) could enhance cleaning action.
- \* Dry clothes thoroughly in an automatic dryer for 30 minutes at the regular fabric setting.
- \* Remove any left-over pesticide from the washer by running the machine through a complete wash cycle, with detergent but without clothes.

In the event of a concentrated spill, get clothing off immediately and wash the affected area with plenty of soap and water. Garments contaminated with the concentrated pesticide should be washed several times or even discarded.

**NOTE:** Some chemicals may require more specialized treatment of laundry than outlined above. Be sure to read product label information, and observe all handling instructions.

R 4/85

---

S-85

*Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service  
West Lafayette, IN 47907*

*Cooperative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, state of Indiana, Purdue University, and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating; H.A. Wadsworth, Director, West Lafayette, IN. Issued in furtherance of the acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service is an equal opportunity/equal access institution*