**Protect Your Hearing with These Simple, Sensible Solutions**

If you’re running a piece of equipment then you’ve probably had to shout to be heard over the noise. While this may seem harmless, it can cause lasting damage over time. Agricultural operations now fall under an Ontario noise regulation that sets maximum exposure levels, however, protecting yourself and your employees is an even greater concern.

“Any noise that leaves you feeling stressed, or that leaves a ringing or buzzing sound in your ears is too loud for any length of time without hearing protectors,” says Dean Anderson, WSPS’ strategic advisor, agriculture initiatives. “When in doubt, wear hearing protectors as soon as the noise starts.”

6 Easy Ways to Prevent Hearing Loss:

1. Maintain your machinery by keeping moving parts lubricated, replacing worn parts, and installing mufflers on engines.
2. Isolate fixed noise sources by enclosing them or putting up barriers.
3. Limit the amount of equipment running in the same place at the same time.
4. Keep people away from noise sources by assigning them to work elsewhere. If that’s not possible, rotate them to limit their time spent around noisy equipment.
5. Get hearing protectors suitable for the type and level of noise, and get comfortable wearing them.
6. Get a sense of how much noise people may be exposed to by taking regular readings of noise levels in the work environment.

You can find out more about the noise regulation online at [**www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r15381**](http://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r15381)**.**

How WSPS Can Help

Visit **wsps.ca/Information-Resources/Downloads** and download this online resource:

Agricultural Safety Topic: Protecting Against Noise and Hearing Conservation.

Common Sounds and Sound Levels

Ontario’s noise regulations set a maximum allowable noise limit of 85 decibels (dB) over an 8-hour period. However, short-term exposure to high-pitched noise may also exceed the eight-hour exposure.

**dB** **Common Sounds**

60 Average conversation level

70 Chicken coop, busy restaurant. This level of noise may start affecting your hearing if you’re exposed to it over the long term.

80 These noises can damage hearing if continuous exposure lasts more than 8 hours.

85 Tractor idling, barn cleaner, conveyers, elevators.

**dB** **The Danger Zone**

88 Tractor at 50% load, blower, compressor, combine. As loudness increases, “safe” exposure time decreases; damage can occur in less than 4 hours. With each 3 decibel increase, the “safe time” is cut in half.

91 Tractor at 80% load, pig squeal, power tools. Even two hours of exposure can be dangerous.

120 Tractor at full load, bad muffler, old chain saw. The danger is immediate.

140 Gunshot, backfire, dynamite blast. Any exposure time is dangerous. At this level, the noise may actually cause pain in the ear.

Adapted from the National Ag Safety Database, http://nasdonline.org/1139/d000933/hearingprotection-for-farmers.html.

Call Customer Care to speak with a consultant.

**1 877 494 WSPS (9777) customercare@wsps.ca**