

### **Is Safety a Priority on Your Farm?**

“We all have goals, and safety is necessary to achieve them.” Hard to argue with that statement, isn’t it? This was one of the opening comments made by Conrad Spangler during his talk on practical dairy farm safety implementation during the Operations Managers Conference held in Syracuse in January.

Spangler is a veterinarian working for Riverview, LLP, which owns and manages dairies in SD, MN, NE, AZ and NM. The company took a serious look at their safety program a number of years ago and decided to give it a major overhaul. Spangler’s talk offered practical suggestions for any farm business that wants to make safety a priority.

Spangler suggests that you first look at some of your farm’s safety statistics, notably the total recordable incident rate (injuries that must be recorded for OSHA) and the lost time incident rate. Any farm business should be able to calculate these numbers readily, and knowing where you stand gives you a great way to measure your progress going forward.

In order to ensure safety compliance, Spangler suggests starting a safety committee, looking into your state OSHA laws, training employees on safety, and analyzing your “Dairy Dozen” safety risks. At Riverview they focus on one of these safety risks per month. (For information and checklists on each of the Dairy Dozen topics, download NYCAMH’s OSHA LEP Training Binder:

<https://www.nycamh.org/resources/osha-ny-dairy-lep.php>).

Riverview’s approach to safety is more than OSHA compliance. Spangler discussed a practice that started at one of their farms and is now a daily routine on all of them. When employees arrive for their shift, they gather with their supervisor for a few minutes of informal talk about safety and a group stretching exercise. Spangler said that this routine started as a way encourage discussion about anything safety-related, including new dangers or near misses. The stretching portion has also had some unexpected benefits: it gives the supervisor the opportunity to interact with each employee at the beginning of the shift and see how they are doing. It’s pretty hard to convince your supervisor that you are sober if you can’t perform some of the exercises that require balance and coordination!

In summary, Spangler shared Riverview’s “Safety Mindsets”, four principles meant to guide all farm employees.

1. Nothing we do is worth getting hurt.
2. All injuries can be prevented.
3. Safety is a process that we will manage. (Just like we manage reproduction or mastitis).
4. Safety is a condition of employment for everyone.

Do you agree with these mindsets? What areas of your farm’s safety program could be improved?

Don’t forget these great farm safety resources:

<http://www.nycamh.org/>

<http://umash.umn.edu/>

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/agsafety/>



Riverview's safety campaign includes a simple logo with a simple message.

Source: <https://www.riverviewllp.com/core-values.html>

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NY OSHA LEP Has Renewed

Message from the NY Dairy OSHA Team

In December, we reported that the NY Dairy OSHA LEP (Local Emphasis Program) would not be renewed, as that was our understanding based on communications with NY OSHA Staff. Today, we learned that the NY Dairy LEP was renewed for an additional year and is currently in effect. What that means is that the unannounced inspections can still take place for dairy farms with more than 10 employees. The LEP can be renewed beyond 2019 in yearly increments again if OSHA deems that necessary. OSHA is working on an updated webinar which will be available mid-March.

We advise all farms with more than 10 employees to review your safety programs and make sure you are up to date on safety training, have all of your Safety Data Sheets (SDS), and reach out to your resources like NYCAMH and others to schedule any safety trainings you need to meet compliance.

We have also reached out to NMPF to ask when the safety program they are designing will be released. We will send another update when we have more information.

The directive is posted on the US Department of Labor OSHA website:

<https://www.osha.gov/enforcement/directives/2019-03>