



## Attitude and the Senior Farmer

Byline: Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

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Senior farmers have experience in spades. You have seen it all. Good years, great yields, good(ish) prices. Bad years, terrible yields, awful prices. You can probably fix it all. (Almost – that newfangled equipment has a lot of computer components.) You know your land like the back of your hand.

What about physical capability? Is your back as strong as it once was? How about your eyes? Those reading glasses sure come in handy sometimes. Are you as quick as you used to be? How about your hearing? Those physical capabilities diminish with age. Our eyes grow a little dimmer, our hearing a little less sharp, and our backs a little stiffer.

Our mental capabilities may have grown. With age comes gifts. We often become more patient, make wiser decisions and are better at asking for help – alongside age comes emotional maturity. (Usually, there's always exceptions to the rule!)

What governs our behaviour and helps us better understand our capabilities? What helps us make good decisions about safety? Attitude. A good attitude about farm safety is what leads to a safe farm. There is a saying: A bad attitude is like a flat tire, you cannot get very far until you change it. It is not uncommon to hear a teacher or a coach telling their charges to “change your attitude”! These teachers and coaches know that the success of their pupils depends on a good attitude. Solving complicated math problems, throwing the perfect pitch, and staying safe on the farm is a result of the same combination of experience, capability, and attitude.

It starts with taking an assessment. A safety audit of your farm is a great step to determine the current situation on your farm. By doing an audit, you can take action to control hazards and prevent injuries. It also gives you an opportunity to discover what you're doing well on your farm. The next assessment is on yourself. Ask yourself if there are tasks that are beyond your physical capabilities. Take a close look at farming tasks, break down the steps and determine if you can do the job safely. Be honest with yourself. It's not weak or shameful to acknowledge limitations.



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Think about and make adjustments as needed. A hired worker can help out with particularly physical tasks. A new (or new to you) piece of equipment can make life easier. Reorganize your workspace for efficiency and safety. Or maybe it's time for you to take on a new farming role. After all your legacy is your family and your farm, you want both to be successful for generations to come.

Mature individuals generally are guided by their lifetime of experience. You may remember being able to perform certain tasks, but the reality is your capabilities may have changed and having a good attitude about this will help you stay safe and keep your farm successful. The bottom line is that regardless of age, people can and do get hurt farming. Don't let your legacy be injured because of a poor attitude towards farm safety.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW) is a public awareness campaign focusing on the importance of farm safety. CASW takes place every year during the third week of March. In 2018, CASW takes place March 11 to 17. CASW is presented by Farm Credit Canada. For more information visit [agsafetyweek.ca](http://agsafetyweek.ca).



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