

# FARM & RANCH SAFETY

## At Diamond Fruit Growers, safety is no accident

By AARON CORVIN  
Oregon OSHA

Diamond Fruit Growers Inc. has served a variety of agricultural markets for more than 100 years, becoming one of the largest shippers of fresh pears in North America.

The farmer-owned cooperative's journey to business success is replete with accomplishments in sustaining family farmers and managing warehouse operations that handle and ship high-quality pears.

Yet the company, headquartered in the Hood River Valley, also moves forward on another trek that it sees as fundamental to its current and future success: continuously cultivating a safe place to work.

The company created the mantra "Safety is no accident: The journey to zero." It forms the core philosophy of the company's safety committee.

To say it is working would be an understatement. For example, the company received the 2017 Oregon Governor's Occupational Safety and Health Conference Safety Committee Award.

Indeed, the company understands that keeping people safe on the job amounts to staring complacency in the eye and overcoming it — during every safety committee meeting and during every work day.

"Employee safety at Diamond Fruit doesn't just occur by accident, but rather through strategic and measurable planning that is constantly monitored and communicat-



Oregon OSHA/Diamond Fruit Growers  
Diamond Fruit Growers' safety committee won the 2017 Oregon Governor's Occupational Safety and Health Conference Safety Committee Award. Back row, left to right, are Alejandro Gutierrez, Rod Walton, Amador Valle and Mike Moore. Front row, left to right, are Denise Patton, Maria Morales, Millie Guisto and Linda Gray.



Oregon OSHA/Diamond Fruit Growers  
Workers at Diamond Fruit Growers pack pears in boxes. The company received the 2017 Oregon Governor's Occupational Safety and Health Conference Safety Committee Award.

ed," said Mike Moore, human resources/safety coordinator for the company. "The safety of our employees is also a

journey, where the destination is zero employee accidents."

For Moore, safety is a personal value. He measures suc-

cess, he said, when employees are "able to return home at the end of their shift in the same physical condition as when they reported to work."

Summer through fall are very busy times for Diamond Fruit's growers, Moore said, as they harvest and deliver crops to the warehouse.

And safety stands foremost in Moore's mind.

"Then, the work begins for us at the warehouse level," he said, describing the 104-year-old cooperative's process.

"Communication with and observing employees in action, as well as providing and using personal protective equipment, will be critical components to employee safety."

## Committee reminds drivers to be careful around tractors

By ALIYA HALL  
Capital Press

A collision involving a sports car and two tractors in Gaston, Ore., on Aug. 9 has prompted the Oregon Farm Bureau Health and Safety Committee to remind drivers to be especially careful on rural roads where farmers are working or moving equipment.

The two occupants of the car were sent to the hospital.

The Farm Bureau committee has created a brochure to educate farmers and drivers about the dangers created when large pieces of equipment are sharing the road with cars.

"The brochure provides tips that help save lives," Anne Rigor, vice chair of the Oregon Farm Bureau Health and Safety Committee, said in a press release. "It's heartbreaking to hear about injuries or deaths involving tractors that could've been avoided if drivers had simply slowed down, or farmers had taken a few simple steps."

The brochure suggests that farmers who drive tractors on the road should mark the edges of their machines

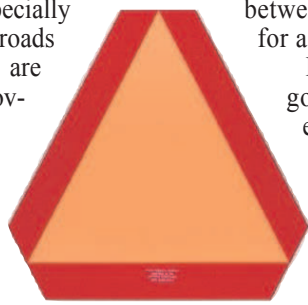
with reflective tape and reflectors to increase visibility, turn on their lights but turn off rear spotlights, use pilot cars and install a mirror.

Farmers should also be aware of heavy traffic and, if moving several farm implements, leave space between each vehicle for a car to pass.

It is also Oregon law for farmers to place a slow-moving vehicle reflector on any machine moving slower than 25 mph, according to the brochure.

For drivers who are passing farm vehicles on the road, the committee suggests using ample caution. The brochure also said drivers must yield to wide vehicles that are approaching them and to not assume the farmer can see or hear other vehicles.

"If you're driving 55 mph on a highway and come upon a tractor that's moving at only 25 mph, it takes only 8 seconds to close a gap the length of a football field between you and the tractor," Rigor said. "In low light, it's even harder to judge how fast you're approaching a slow-moving farm vehicle."



## Safety committees a must

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A strong safety committee is a critical component of building a culture of safety. It's a sounding board for identifying hazards. It's a place for employees and managers to work together to fix those hazards.

If you are an employer in Oregon, your business must have a safety committee or hold safety meetings — unless you are the sole owner and the only employee of a corporation.

General industry and construction employers must follow the safety committee and meeting requirements under Oregon OSHA's rules for those industries.

Likewise, agriculture and

forest activities employers must follow the requirements for safety committees and meetings for their respective industries.

If the rules seem daunting, then check out Oregon OSHA's quick guides to safety committees and safety meetings for agriculture and for general industry and construction.

Oregon OSHA's most violated agriculture rules include no safety committees or safety meetings. In 2016, for all industries, rules about safety committees or safety meetings were the No. 2 most-cited standards during Oregon OSHA inspections. Documentation of safety committee meetings was No. 4.

## Safety checklist for farms

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Cultivating a safe workplace requires commitment and know-how on the

part of employers.

Oregon OSHA's most violated agriculture rules include: toilet and hand washing facilities for hand labor work, living areas and site requirements for agricultural labor housing, no safety committees or safety meetings, and no written hazard communication program.

Here is a brief checklist to be mindful of when promoting safe practices on the farm:

- You display the Oregon OSHA Job Safety and Health poster where employees will see it.
- You either have an effective safety committee or hold effective safety meetings that bring labor and management together to promote workplace safety and health.
- You provide basic sanitation facilities and supplies for agricultural workers who prepare, prune, plant, harvest, package or do other field-crop hand labor.
- You registered farm labor housing with Oregon OSHA by contacting the agency at least 45 days before the first day of operation or occupancy of any housing and related facilities that were not previously registered.

For more details about providing a safe agricultural workplace, read the Oregon OSHA publication "Cultivate a Safe Agricultural Workplace!" online at <http://osha.oregon.gov/OSHA-Pubs/2411.pdf>



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