



The Skin Cancer Foundation and AgriSafe Join Forces to Urge Agricultural Workers to Protect Their Skin During National Farm Safety and Health Week

The organizations recommend that agricultural workers adopt a comprehensive sun protection strategy to lower skin cancer risk due to increased UV exposure while on the job.

NEW YORK and COVINGTON, LA. (September 21, 2026) — The Skin Cancer Foundation, a leader in skin cancer public health education and advocacy, and AgriSafe, a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping agricultural workers healthy and safe, urge outdoor workers to practice sun safety and early skin cancer detection during National Farm Safety and Health Week 2026 (September 21-25). Skin cancer due to UV exposure is an often-overlooked occupational health hazard for the 2.9 million farm laborers (includes full-time, temporary and seasonal workers) estimated by the National Center for Farmworker Health and the 3.4 million producers (includes farm and ranch owners and operators) reported by the United States Department of Agriculture. This year, September 25 is focused on cancer prevention, providing an important opportunity to educate workers about occupational sun exposure as a skin cancer risk.

“Unprotected UV exposure causes nearly 90 percent of all skin cancers. While the immediate effects of sun exposure, like sunburn, may seem temporary, cumulative UV damage significantly raises skin cancer risk,” says Deborah S. Sarnoff, MD, president of The Skin Cancer Foundation. “If you work outdoors, it’s important to protect your skin from sun damage to reduce your likelihood of developing skin cancer. Employers should also educate their workforce about the dangers of sun exposure and support sun-safe practices in the workplace whenever possible.”

The health risks associated with occupational UV exposure are significant. Research conducted by the World Health Organization and International Labour Organization found that exposure to UV radiation while working outdoors increases the risk of nonmelanoma skin cancer by 60 percent. Additionally, in the U.S., about 50 percent of outdoor workers reported getting sunburn, according to a survey by the American Academy of Dermatology. UV exposure that leads to sunburn has been proven to play a strong role in melanoma incidence.

“For farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers, spending long hours outdoors is often necessary, making sun protection especially important,” says Natalie Roy, CEO of AgriSafe Network. “Building sun protection into the workday — through sunscreen, protective clothing, hats, shade and routine skin checks — can help agricultural workers reduce their risk of skin cancer while continuing to feed and sustain our communities.”

Nearly 90 percent of skin cancer cases are preventable with a good sun protection strategy. Outdoor workers should make sun protection a part of their daily routine, just as they would other workplace safety practices. The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends taking the following precautions throughout the workday to limit UV exposure and reduce the long-term risk of developing skin cancer:

- **Cover up:** Wear a densely woven, long-sleeved shirt and pants with a UPF of 50 or higher when possible. Consider wearing a bandana or gaiter for added protection. Wear UV-blocking sunglasses (if your job allows) to protect your eyes.
- **Wear a hat:** The bigger the better, but some jobs may have uniform or safety requirements. A hard hat, hoodie or baseball cap can provide protection but still may expose parts of the face and neck.
- **Apply sunscreen:** Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 50 or higher on all exposed skin, including the hands. It’s important to use a water-resistant

sunscreen, especially when sweating or working in wet conditions. Reapply every two hours or more often when sweating heavily. Don't forget your face, ears, back of the neck and chest.

- **Know the UV Index:** Check the UV Index before beginning the workday and take additional precautions when UV radiation is high.
- **Seek shade:** If shade is available at certain times of day at your worksite or on breaks, use it — or ask about it — particularly during peak UV Index hours between 10 AM and 4 PM.
- **Protect your skin regardless of weather:** UV rays can damage skin even when conditions are cloudy, foggy or cool.
- **Check your skin:** Examine your skin from head to toe every month for anything new, changing or unusual, and see a dermatologist at least once a year for a professional skin exam.

Employers can also help create safer working environments by providing access to shade, educating employees about the risks of unprotected UV exposure and supporting the use of sun-protective clothing, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen.

The Skin Cancer Foundation and AgriSafe encourage agricultural workers and employers to make sun protection a routine part of workplace health and safety, not just during National Farm Safety & Health Week, but throughout the year. For more information about skin cancer prevention, visit **SkinCancer.org**. For agricultural health and safety resources, visit **AgriSafe.org**.

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About The Skin Cancer Foundation

The Skin Cancer Foundation (SCF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, saves and improves lives by empowering people to take a proactive approach to daily sun protection and the early detection and treatment of skin cancer. The Foundation delivers public education programs, provides patients with guidance and reassurance, engages medical professionals, awards research grants and leads advocacy campaigns that call for policy

changes. As a service to consumers, SCF grants its industry-recognized Seal of Recommendation to products that meet its criteria for safe and effective sun protection. SCF also operates Destination Healthy Skin, a program that works with local dermatologists in communities around the U.S. to provide free skin cancer screenings to those in need. Since its inception in 1979, the Foundation has recommended regular skin exams and following a complete sun protection strategy that includes seeking shade, using sunscreen daily and covering up with clothing, hats and sunglasses. [SkinCancer.org](https://www.skincancer.org).

About AgriSafe Network

AgriSafe Network is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that is leading the nation in agricultural occupational health and safety education, offering over 75 trainings for healthcare professionals and agricultural communities. Their mission is to *Protect the People who Feed the World*, by reducing occupational-specific health disparities for agriculture, forestry, and fishing workers, and by supporting a growing network of healthcare professionals who embrace the [Total Farmer Health®](#) model. For more information, visit their website and follow them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

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