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# Presidential Documents

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**Title 3—****Proclamation 7224 of September 17, 1999****The President****National Farm Safety and Health Week, 1999****By the President of the United States of America****A Proclamation**

President Franklin Roosevelt once called America's farmers and ranchers "the source from which the reservoirs of our nation's strength are constantly renewed." It was during his Administration, in the critical years of World War II, that Americans began to realize that thousands of agricultural workers and their families suffered disabling and fatal injuries each year in their work of producing food for our Nation and the world. The tragic statistics were so troubling that President Roosevelt, with the encouragement of his Secretary of Agriculture and the President of the National Safety Council, signed the initial proclamation for National Farm Safety Week in 1944.

We have achieved substantial progress in the decades since that first proclamation. Farm equipment manufacturers have engineered safety features into their machinery that have decreased the likelihood of severe injuries among operators. Chemical manufacturers have reformulated pest control products to reduce the potential for poisoning incidents. Personal protective equipment is now available to protect farm and ranch workers. And safety and health professionals have made great strides in the development and implementation of educational initiatives that raise awareness among agricultural workers of measures and equipment they can use to reduce on-the-job injuries and health risks.

But we cannot afford to become complacent. Children continue to be the most vulnerable members of farming and ranching families. Those who work with livestock and around farm machinery should be carefully supervised and should be assigned chores that are commensurate with their level of awareness, knowledge, and ability to perform the job safely. Older Americans working in agriculture also are at risk; farmers and ranchers often work well past retirement age in a determined effort to maintain the farming heritage of their families and to continue contributing to the vocation they love. Many of these older men and women have suffered work-related hearing impairment over the years, and many also have limited mobility due to previous injuries or arthritis. Their families and coworkers should be vigilant in overseeing the activities of these older workers to help ensure their safety as they carry out their daily responsibilities.

America's farmers and ranchers are the backbone of our economy and the lifeblood of our land, and their skill, effort, and determination provide food and fiber for our country and the world. Our farming and ranching families stand for the values that have kept America strong for more than 220 years—hard work, faith and family, perseverance and patience. We all have a vital interest in their success, and we can all play an important role in ensuring their continued well-being. As we observe this year's theme of "Protecting Agriculture in the Next Century," I urge all Americans to show their appreciation for the dedication and sacrifices of our Nation's farmers and ranchers by renewing our efforts to protect their safety and health. Together, we can ensure that the time-honored traditions of American farming and ranching will flourish in the new century.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 19 through September 25, 1999, as National Farm Safety and Health Week. I call upon government agencies, businesses, and professional associations that serve our agricultural sector to strengthen their efforts to promote safety and health programs among our Nation's farm and ranch workers. I ask agricultural workers to take advantage of the many diverse education and training programs and technical advancements that can help them avoid injury and illness. I also call upon our Nation to recognize Wednesday, September 22, 1999, as a day to focus on the risks facing young people on farms and ranches. Finally, I call upon the citizens of our Nation to reflect on the bounty we enjoy thanks to the labor and dedication of agricultural workers across our land.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "W" and "C".

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