

FARM SAFETY

By Eileen Franko

The New York State Department of Labor's Onsite Consultation Program will come to your farm to assist in identifying and correcting hazards

New York Department of Labor Onsite Consultation Program

Established in 1975 to assist small private sector employers in their efforts to provide a safe and healthy workplace for their employees, the On-Site Consultation Bureau conducts more than 1,000 site visits every year.

Each visit is the result of employers being proactive in safety and health and the NYS Department of Labor program offers correction assistance on potential violations resulting from an Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) inspection.

Our expertise is available to help New York dairy farmers address safety and health issues before they become a problem. We provide safety professionals and industrial hygienists based on the need of the employer.

Our consultants have received training at the OSHA Training Institute covering the same dairy farm "points of emphasis" as OSHA inspectors.

This consultation service is valuable to farms facing possible OSHA inspections. OSHA adopted a Local Emphasis Program for Dairy Farm Operations on October 1, 2013, which will increase OSHA inspections of New York dairy farms with 11 employees or more.

The State On-Site Consultation Bureau is available to dairy farmers and all businesses who wish to eliminate hazards at their workplace prior to an OSHA inspection or at any time.

The reduction in hazards increases employee morale, productivity and may decrease Workers' Compensation costs. It may also save a farm thousands of dollars in potential OSHA fines for observed hazards during an OSHA inspection.

Following a request from a farmer, an on-site consultation inspector surveys the workplace, identifies hazards and provides recommendations to abate the hazards.

The scope of the visit is determined by the farmer but may include manure pits, horizontal silage,

confined spaces, tractors, powered take off devices, electrical, noise levels and working around animals in agricultural settings.

Farmers and their employees may also receive free safety training based on the hazards observed during the consultation visit. The Bureau can also help farmers develop written programs required for their specific workplace.

Upon the completion of the consultation, the consultant reviews all hazards observed and offers possible recommendations to correct each hazard in a written report.

The employer may follow the recommendations or devise their own method for eliminating a hazard. The employer is not required to inform OSHA of our services but is exempt from a programmed OSHA inspection while the consultation is in progress.

The consultation services are free. The results of the consultation are not provided to OSHA except in the rare event that an employer refuses to correct a serious hazard identified by the consultant.

The On-Site Consultation Bureau receives many repeat requests from employers who were pleased with the services we provided.

Points of contact include offices in:

Buffalo (716) 847-7166

Syracuse (315) 479-3205

Albany (518) 457-2810

Additional information on the New York State On-Site Consultation Bureau and contact information can be found at: http://www.labor.ny.gov/workerprotection/safetyhealth/DOSH_ONSITE_CONSULTATION.shtm. □

FYI

■ Eileen Franko, DrPH, is Director of the Division of Safety and Health at the New York State Department of Labor. Her phone number is (518)457.1519.