



Are Your Feet Tough Enough for Farm Work?

If you were to ask a group of farmers to remove their shoes and socks you might find a surprising number of bent, distorted, missing, or damaged toes and toenails. It is not a pretty sight. Each of these permanent impairments comes with a story that some of the owners might be willing to retell, if it hadn't occurred too recently. This might include the time when:

- a 1,500-pound horse or steer decided to take a break while standing on a farmer's foot and seemed in no hurry to move on
- an old rusty nail came through the bottom of a jogging shoe or rubber boot while demolishing an old farm building
- a wagon tongue that dropped only 14 inches from the drawbar onto the big toe on the left foot
- a 4' x 8' piece of plywood that slid off the side of the truck onto the top of both feet

In almost all industrial workplaces, appropriate safety footwear is required, and often supplied by the employer. This is simply not the case on most farms. Safety footwear provides skid resistant soles that are puncture proof and provides inserts of steel or composite that protects the toes from impact or being crushed by heaving falling objects.

This activity will demonstrate the value of wearing appropriate safety footwear when working on farms and ranches. It involves the use of an old retired shoe, such as a jogging shoe, a safety shoe, an uncooked hot dog, and large hammer.

Procedure:

1. Place the hot dog into the old shoe pushing it upwards towards the front.
2. Set the shoe on the floor or heavy work bench and hit the end of the shoe with a couple of heavy blows to simulate something heavy falling on it.
3. Pull out the hot dog and have the participants examine it for damage.
4. Repeat the demonstration with the safety shoe.
5. Ask the participants to identify which shoe they would want to be wearing when moving cattle or unloading cement blocks.

Materials Needed



Work shoe without toe protection



Work shoe with toe protection



Uncooked hog dogs (at least two)



Sledge hammer