

**SAFE NOISE LEVELS  
ARE BELOW 85  
DECIBELS (dB)  
MANY FARM MACHINES  
EXCEED THIS BY**

Noise Levels in dB	2-3 TIMES... Type of Noise	Max Hours before Damage without Hearing Protection
60	normal conversation	
70	routine barn noise	
85	SAFE ZONE	
90	milkhouse vacuum pump	8 hrs.
95	many tractors	4hrs.
100	chainsaw	2 hrs.
110		1/2 hr.
115		1/4 hr.

**For information on ordering hearing protection call NYCAMH  
1-800-343-7527**



**NYCAMH**

The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health

One Atwell Road  
Cooperstown,  
New York 13326

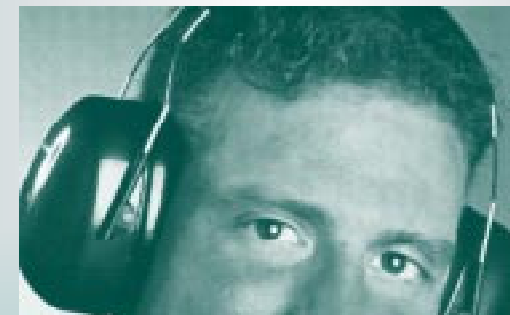
Phone: (607) 547-6023  
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Website <http://www.nycamh.org>  
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National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

**The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health**

**Hearing Loss in Farmers**



Causes

Warning Signs

Prevention

Protection



# Causes

## Hearing Loss In Farmers...

NYCAMH studies have found a great deal of hearing loss in farming, more than in other types of work. This is largely related to loud noise produced by various types of farm equipment such as tractors, blowers, chain saws, etc. Loud noise can also come from recreational activities such as ATV's, motorcycles, snowmobiles, loud music, firearms, etc.

## Hearing Loss Is Permanent...

Exposure to loud noise causes permanent damage to nerves in the inner ear. A single explosive noise can cause permanent damage, but more often hearing loss is caused by too much noise exposure over many years of work.

## Noise Is Too Loud If You Have To...

- Shout to be heard over the noise
- The noise hurts your ears
- The noise makes your ears ring
- You are slightly deaf for several hours after exposure to loud noise

## Warning Signs Can Include...

- Ringing or buzzing in the ears
- Can't understand voices of women and children
- Have to turn the volume on TV/radio higher

# General Rule

If you have to raise your voice to be understood by someone 3 feet away, surrounding noise is loud enough to damage your hearing. To prevent hearing loss wear hearing protection or move away from noise source.

## Hearing Protection

- Look for noise reduction rating (NRR) of 24 or greater.
- NRR is the amount of noise in decibels (dB) that the hearing protector blocks out. The higher the NRR, the better protection (except for individuals with a hearing loss).
- If you have a hearing loss, wearing hearing protection will save your remaining hearing. A lower NRR may be needed for you.
- Properly fit to reduce noise exposure. Insert or apply according to directions provided.
- You will hear normal conversation and your equipment. You may need a little time using the hearing protectors for this to occur.
- Wearing a portable radio or tape player with headset will not block out surrounding noise.

## Protect And Save Your Hearing By

- Reducing the noise exposure around you. If you can not move away from the noise source, some environmental measures may be useful. Repair loud mufflers, tighten loose chains and bolts, and enclose or isolate loud vacuum pumps and air compressors.
- Wearing hearing protection
- Having your hearing tested

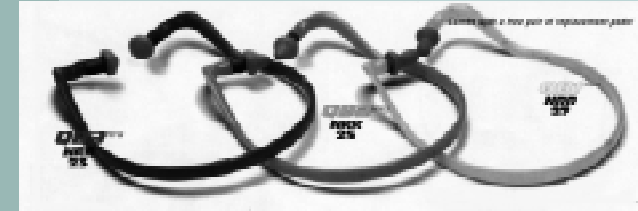
*Hearing protectors used during pesticide application can also prevent exposure to agri-chemicals.*

# Hearing Protectors

## Plugs



## Sound Bands



## Ear Muffs



**Hearing Protection decreases the intensity of sound that reaches the eardrum.**