

# Emerging issues in fatigue and fatigue management in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

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Counselors

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*The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*



Photo source: Getty Images

**Why are “best practices” often incompatible with AgFF work?**



Crop agriculture



Forestry



Mariculture



Aquaculture



Seafood processing



Commercial fishing

# Agriculture, forestry, and fishing workers in the US



Livestock agriculture

# What is the current state of fatigue research in AgFF?



Photo sources: NIOSH, NOAA, Getty Images

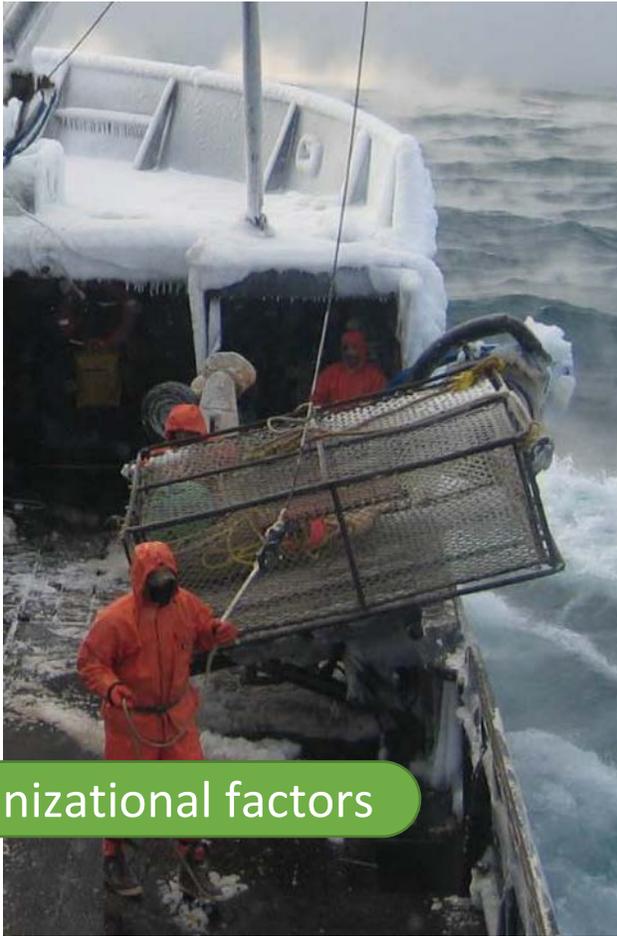
# Unique AgFF factors for work hours, sleep, and fatigue



Extended work hours



Economic and organizational factors



Environmental factors

Photo sources: Getty Images, NIOSH

# Unique AgFF factors for work hours, sleep, and fatigue



Photo sources: familyfarmers.org, State of Washington

# Long hours and sleep loss are engrained in the culture



**DECKHAND**

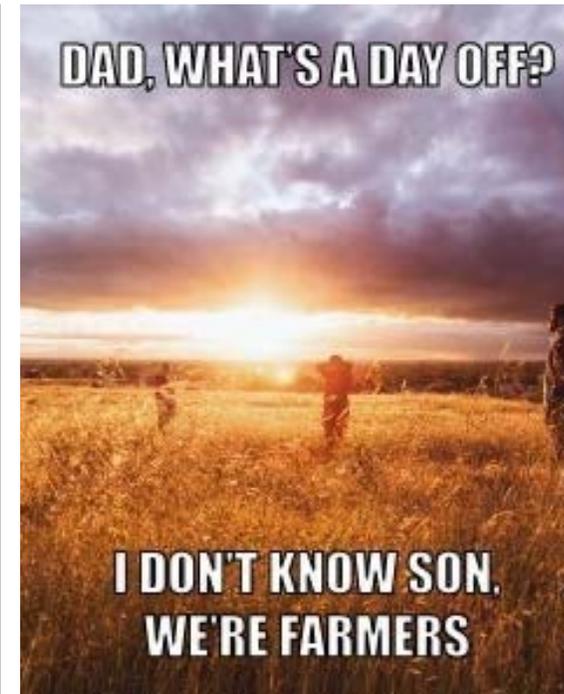
**Nutritional Facts**

Serving Size: 1 Excellent Professional\*

Amount Per Serving : One Great Job

Hard Working	1000%
Unrivaled Skill	500%
Passion	100%
Caring	300%
Sleep	0%
Caffeine	110%

\* Not A Significant Source Of Gratitude Received.  
\*\* Percent Daily Values Are Based on Your Unique Diet



# AgFF workers want to be safe...



Photo sources: NIOSH, Getty Images

# But there's often only one thing that can budge...

**How can we flip the script on fatigue?**

# We must change the way we talk and educate on fatigue.

- **Change the cultural norm** that fatigue is inevitable, a weakness, or even a personal/moral failing.
- **Find new words and measurements** for fatigue.
- **Teach the benefits of sleep**, not just the risks of going without it.

**SLEEP  
≠  
WEAK**



# NIOSH AgFF Program and Partners: Flipping the Script

- **NIOSH Strategic Plan:**
  - Healthy Work Design goal for AgFF
- **NIOSH Agriculture Centers**
  - FY2022 Renewal
- **NIOSH and US Coast Guard Fishing Safety Grants:**
  - Assessments of Sleep Deprivation and Associated Health and Cognitive Impacts in Commercial Fishermen



Photo source: Getty Images

# The ideal in AgFF fatigue intervention development

- Community-based development, consultation, evaluation
- Culturally competent and sympathetic
- Focuses on fatigue management, not sleep
- Works from a place of harm reduction, not best practices
- Easily implemented by individuals and small business



Photos source: Getty Images

# Summary

- AgFF workers face financial and regulatory pressures, several health disparities, an aging workforce, increased stress, and at the same time, work in unpredictable, harsh environments.
- Best practices (ideal sleep habits) are often unattainable: not culturally, not economically, not even realistically.
- AgFF workers want to be safe and realize the dangers of fatigue, but they do not yet have the tools and training to respond appropriately.
- Fatigue management solutions must help AgFF prepare for both acute fatigue incidents and persistent chronic fatigue in order to mitigate risk (harm reduction) while addressing the sector's unique challenges and diverse workspaces.

# Questions

- How to do we encourage behavioral change and improve our outreach in a culture that believes long work hours and fatigue as inevitable, or even a badge of honor, and where long work hours cannot be avoided due to the nature of the work?
- Given our limited resources, how can we support our NIOSH Agricultural Centers to do more do more in this area?



# Thank you!

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For more information, contact CDC  
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