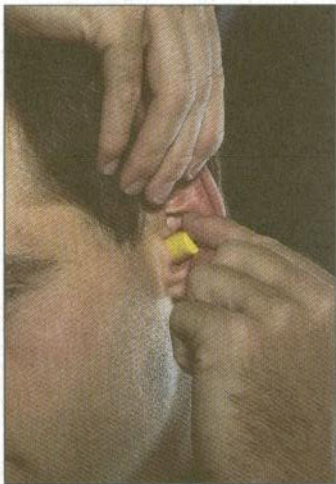


Noise is too loud when...

- Your ears ring after you are exposed to noise
- Speech and other sounds are muffled after you are exposed to noise
- While working, you have to shout to be heard by someone next to you

Noise-induced hearing loss is preventable.



"If you start young and get in the habit of wearing ear protection...it's not very difficult...and it's not inconvenient."

- Steve Kautzer, Age 26

Other ways to protect yourself

- Take a break from the noisy work every hour or two
- Have a yearly hearing test to check for hearing changes
- Have the tractor cab recaulked and all worn or missing weather stripping replaced

Protect yourself and your family

Tractors, elevators, chainsaws, combines, compressors, grinders, power tools, drills, blowers and dryers are only some of the noise-producing sources on the typical farm. Lengthy exposure to many of these noises can increase risk of hearing loss. Since your entire farm family is exposed to these sound sources, everyone has the potential to suffer permanent hearing loss from its effects.

"I wish I would've worn ear protection sooner...now I have a 30% hearing loss..."

- Dean Schmitz, Age 22
Farmer/furniture craftsman

NIOSH Grant #U07/CCU507126



National
Farm Medicine
Center

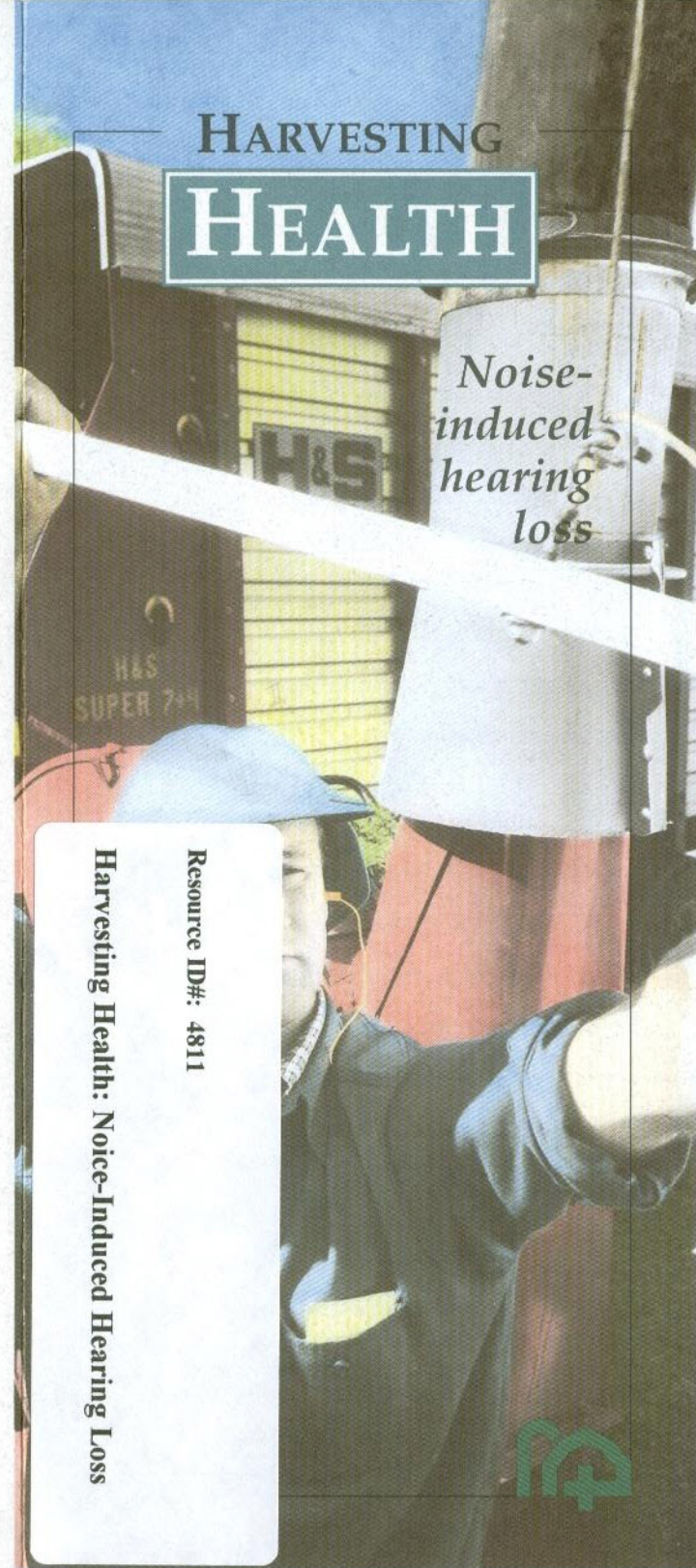
Marshfield Clinic
1000 North Oak Avenue
Marshfield, WI 54449
1-800-782-8581

HARVESTING HEALTH

Noise-induced
hearing
loss

Resource ID#: 4811

Harvesting Health: Noise-Induced Hearing Loss



When it comes to noise-induced hearing loss, don't believe everything you hear! Loss of hearing is very common among farmers...and the problem is getting worse.

Hearing loss is not just part of growing old. A National Farm Medicine Center study has found hearing loss in farmers as young as 17.

Loud noise is the most common cause of permanent hearing loss. Noise-induced hearing loss seldom results in total hearing loss or deafness, yet the damage cannot be repaired. You don't "get used to" loud noise; you lose your ability to hear it.

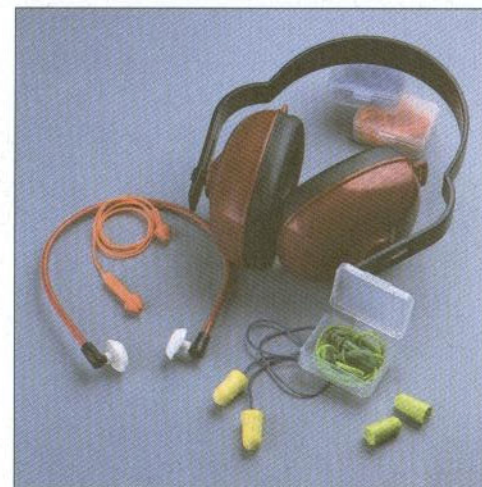
"I have to get real close to people and concentrate on what they're saying, otherwise I can't follow what they say..."

- Robert Scheel, Jr., Age 22
Former Farmer

Starting today . . .

- Wear earplugs or earmuffs
- Replace worn, loose or unbalanced machine parts to reduce vibration
- Keep machine parts well-lubricated to cut down on friction-generated noise
- Install a high quality muffler on all engine powered equipment
- If possible, isolate yourself from noise in an acoustically designed cab

A variety of earplugs and earmuffs are available.



Sound ratings and danger-zone of common farm noises

	Noise level (Decibel)	Common Sounds
Safe zone	0	• Lowest audible sound
	50	• Quiet empty barn, babbling trout stream, gentle breeze
	60	• Normal conversation
	70	• Chicken coop, farrowing area
The danger zone	85	• Tractor or combine idling, barn cleaner, conveyor, elevator: At this decibel level, noise may begin to affect your hearing if you're exposed to it for more than 8 hours per day.
	90	• Blower compressor, pneumatic wrench, chopping silage (no cab), full throttle lawn mower: As noise gets louder, the "safe" time decreases; damage can occur if you're exposed to it for more than 4 hours per day.
	100	• Tractor at 80% load, squealing sows, power tools, hand-held metal grinder: 1 hour of exposure per day is the limit at this decibel level.
	110	• Average walkman set above the halfway mark, full-throttle combine, 10-HP vane-axial barn fan: Anything over 15 minutes exposure per day can cause damage.
Even more dangerous...	120	• Thunderclap (near), sandblasting, bad muffler, old chain saw: The danger is immediate.
	140	• Gunshot, engine back-fire, dynamite blast, jet engine: Any length of exposure time is dangerous; and may actually cause ear pain.