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What did you say? Preventing farmer hearing loss.

Have you ever noticed that many farmers have trouble hearing when in a room full of people or when there is background noise? Over 60% of farmers have hearing loss as part of their work.

Farming is a noisy industry, with a large number of activities undertaken involving exposure to noise levels which can cause permanent hearing loss.

Although not life-threatening, the impact of hearing loss is often forgotten. However, hearing loss still results in major health and social impacts on farmers and their families.

“Once your hearing is damaged, it cannot be repaired”, said Tony Hiscock, Chairman of Farmsafe WA Alliance.

Ways to reduce farm noise and hearing risks include eliminating the hazard, buying quiet machinery when replacing old machinery, regularly maintaining machines, insulating cabins, limit exposure to the noise or where Personal Hearing Protection (PHP).

How do you know when to use Personal Hearing Protection?

- If, when in noise, you have to raise your voice to be heard at a distance of 1 metre
- When the noise level is greater than 85dB (A) eg. Auger, angle grinder.

Choosing Personal Hearing Protection can depend on personal preference however some things to consider are:

- Comfort – unless they are comfortable, they will not be worn
- Compatibility – able to wear with other safety equipment (eg. Welding mask)
- Australian standards approved – look for the ‘tick stack’ symbol
- SLC Rating or Class – this will be on the device packaging

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