

# NIOSH ALERT

To prevent worker injury or death in manure pits, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has issued this Worker/Employer Summary Sheet for posting and distribution to workers:

## NIOSH ALERT

### WARNING!

#### Many farm workers die in manure pits!

**Do not enter a manure pit unless absolutely necessary! Prevent fatalities by taking the following precautions:**

1. Post hazard signs at all openings of all manure pits.
2. Provide powered, continuous, fresh-air ventilation with explosion-proof equipment before entering a manure pit.
3. Always test the atmosphere inside a manure pit before entering to ensure that the concentration of oxygen is adequate and that a toxic or explosive atmosphere does not exist.
4. Make sure that someone maintains constant contact from outside the pit and can lift you to safety with mechanical equipment (winch, hoist, or pulley) in case of emergency.
5. Always wear a harness or safety belt with a lifeline secured to the mechanical equipment outside the manure pit.
6. Do not enter the pit to attempt a rescue without proper respiratory protection (positive-pressure, self-contained breathing apparatus). Instead, call the fire department or rescue squad.
7. Fit all openings to manure pits with substantial metal grill covers to prevent falls or other accidental entries.

Source: Request for Assistance in Preventing Deaths of Farm Workers in *Manure Pits*. NIOSH ALERT: May 1990. DHHS(NIOSH) Publication No. 90-103. For the complete alert, visit [www.cdc.gov/niosh/90-103.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/90-103.html) , or call NIOSH at 1-800-35-NIOSH.

#### Further Information

Brian Aldrich, Dept. of Biological & Environmental Engineering, Cornell University  
607-255-1819 [bsa9@cornell.edu](mailto:bsa9@cornell.edu)

Eric Hallman, Agricultural Health & Safety Program, Cornell University, 607-255-5492,  
877-257-9777 (toll free), [emh14@cornell.edu](mailto:emh14@cornell.edu) <http://diaglab.vet.cornell.edu/aghealth/>



Confined Space



Gases in manure spreader tanks can reach hazardous levels

