



# Rural Firefighters Delivering Agriculture Safety and Health

## The Problem:

Agricultural workers are 8-10 times more likely to die on the job than the average U.S. worker, and this has been an enduring trend. Inadequate numbers of safety consultants exist to assist farmers in making their farms safer. However, has there been an untapped safety resource under our nose the whole time?

## Our Response:

Some farm. Some show up when you call 911. Some do both. But no matter who you are in rural life, you play a role in making it safer. Rural Firefighters Delivering Agriculture Safety & Health (RF-DASH) is bringing together farmers and first responders for a big job: reducing agricultural incidents throughout our rural

## The Impact:

Research has shown that fire and EMS are at the top of farmer's list when it comes to who they trust most when it comes to making changes on their farms and ranches. Since 2016, RF-DASH has equipped over 75 firefighters/EMS from 10 states and 5 provinces in Canada. Their impact does not end there as our trainers have gone on to educate many others. The wide acceptance and success among both the fire/EMS and agricultural communities has given the program renewed funding to continue supporting the programs efforts through 2027.

In late 2019, less than a week after attending an RF-DASH training in Wisconsin, Fire Chief Tim Carey responded to a farm incident involving a milk truck and tractor collision. Armed with his RF-DASH knowledge, Chief Carey delivered an excellent safety message to local news on preventing such an incident. "At this time of the year, everybody needs to slow down and be cautious of all of the farm tractors out there. For all of the farmers out there, make sure you put new SMV signs, reflectors, all of the flashing lights you can have because I don't want to come out to another one of these". His statement gained popularity throughout the local community and further signified that firefighters/EMS personnel are trusted safety resources.

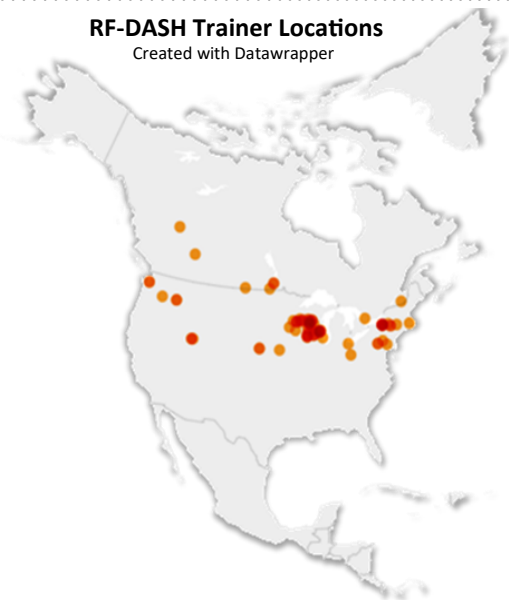
The Canadian Agriculture Safety Association (CASA) requested a team to train a group of firefighters, with a combination of 180 years of rural firefighting experience, within the RF-DASH program. The RF-DASH Canada program is now in development and they have conducted numerous trainings and farm visits throughout their communities.

The program is in the process of being trademarked in both the US and Canada. This will allow the RF-DASH program to be recognized at a national and international level as its reach continues to grow.

RF-DASH is working with representatives from FEMA, APHIS, and the National Response Teams to help rural communities prepare for agricultural hazards and bridge the gaps in current emergency

### RF-DASH Trainer Locations

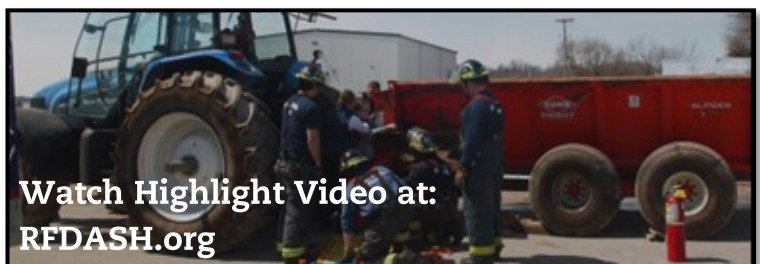
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preparedness planning.

The new official RF-DASH website ([www.RFDASH.org](http://www.RFDASH.org)) houses all of the programs resources and materials, news, and RF-DASH members involved within the program. A new training manual for the program has been developed to assist fire/EMS with training other's in their communities. In addition, more virtual learning is being developed.

Multiple media sources around the U.S. and Canada have highlighted RF-DASH including: [Progressive Dairy](#), [Daily Dispatch](#), [Western Producer](#), [Successful Farming](#), and more.



Watch Highlight Video at:  
[RFDASH.org](http://RFDASH.org)

## Classroom and hands-on training with easy to use, free tools:

RF-DASH uses a train-the-trainer approach, with curriculum that is in line with many National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, including NFPA 1300 on *Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan Development*. The program's curriculum and tools are **free** and **easy to use**:

### Module 1: Introduction to Agricultural Emergencies

First responders are trained and well practiced for emergencies that are of high frequency, low risk. However, farms/ranches pose as a low frequency, high risk emergency to many first responders. This introductory module introduces them to and discusses the causes of the most common agricultural emergencies, including strategies to expedite and improve responses to them.

### Module 2: Preplanning and Mapping farms with [FarmMapper.org](http://FarmMapper.org).

Responding to emergencies on agricultural sites can be as dangerous as working there, presenting unique hazards to rescue personnel. Responders need to have a planned response for the farms in their service area to reduce this risk. This module includes instructional use of Farm-MAPPER, a free, online, mobile-friendly tool, that gives fire departments the ability to pre-plan and map farms/ranches, expediting response times in the event of a emergency.

### Module 3: Farm Hazard Analysis with [Saferfarm.org](http://Saferfarm.org)

The goal of this module is to help with the identification of common hazards found on farms/ranches. Most individuals understand the need to identify farm hazards, however that is only one stage of the goal in managing hazards and risks. Saferfarm.org and the Farm Hazard Analysis Tool (FARM-HAT) provides everyone the ability to identify, evaluate, and correct hazards to reduce the risk of injury on agricultural operations.

### Module 4: Farm First Aid

Most farmers/ranchers and their families will not have any formal training in emergency response and first aid, and with the wide range of different hazards on farms, the probability of an incident is high. Knowing the correct response can improve a stressful situation and lead to better patient outcomes. This module aims to educate farm/ranch family members and employees how to manage a victim injured in a agricultural incident while emergency services are en route to the scene, as well as mitigating survivor's guilt.

### Module 5: Approaching the Farm Community

This module covers methods on how to reach out and approach the farming community to implement the RF-DASH program on their area's farm and ranch operations.

# Safer Farms Build Safer Communities



*"I think that's the plus of the program, taking rural firefighters and engaging them with that population. It's a small enough community that everyone knows each other. There's already a relationship there so—it's not a government agency or an insurance company or something threatening, it's someone who knows them and says, 'Dude, I care about you, Let's work together to make it better.'"*

**- RF-DASH Trainee**

Rural Firefighters Delivering Agriculture Safety and Health [www.rfdash.org](http://www.rfdash.org)