



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FARMERS WORK TO GET HEALTHY STRONG YIELDS, AND SHOULD DO THE SAME FOR THEIR BODIES

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA - May 10, 2018 – Paul Gregory, 60, is a farmer and president of Interlake Forage Seeds Ltd in Fisher Branch, Manitoba. He is also an avid ski and running marathoner who believes one must condition their body for farming just like for sport.

“Lower back pain is a part of long days in the cab of a tractor or truck. I really like stretching and doing some yoga in the off-hours, and even for a few minutes while fueling up” says Gregory. “With beekeeping and chucking seed bags, your wrists really get a work out so I try to stretch them between yards as well.”

Gregory also stresses the importance of hydrating.

“Always carry a water bottle. You can work when you’re hungry but it’s brutal when you’re thirsty.”

As a farmer it is not uncommon to spend hours in the tractor cab, but because the human body is designed to move, if you get out to fix or lift something after sitting for so long the risk of injury increases. While you want to take advantage of good weather to get the job done, your health must not take a back seat.

When stopping for meals, or if you get out to fix something take a few minutes to do the following:

- **For the back:** Stand with feet shoulder distance apart facing your tractor tire with your feet slightly back. Cross your arms and lean forward into the tire arching your back. Hold for 20 seconds then straighten up. Repeat 5 times.
- **For the legs:** Stand with one leg out in front, knee straight and toes pointing towards the sky. Slowly bend forward at waist until you feel a gentle stretch in the back of your leg. Hold for 20 seconds. Do the same to the other leg. Repeat 5 times each leg.

While sitting in the tractor:

- **For shoulders and neck:** Tuck your chin in, push your neck forward and shoulders back. Hold both for 10 seconds. Release, look up to the sky for 3 seconds, release again. Repeat 5 times.
- **For the hips and back:** Turn towards an arm rest, take a good grip – pull yourself towards the arm rest. Hold for 20 seconds then come back to centre. Do it on the other side. Repeat 5 times.

At minimum adults 18 to 64 should get 20 minutes of sweat-inducing physical activity each day to maintain normal health according to the Canadian guidelines. As daily physical labour decreases on farms because of modern automated farm equipment, farmers may not get the exercise they once did.

A 2015 collaborative study by Queens University and the University of Saskatchewan analyzed 2619 adult farmers and found that 65.1 percent were overweight or obese, which was clearly linked with the use of mechanized equipment for farm work. This finding was particularly apparent on farm operations that produce grain commodities.

It is important for you as a farmer to take care of yourself the same way you take care of your livelihood. Make sure you are exercising, resting, staying hydrated and taking healthy food out with you each day.

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