

Farming Near Power Lines Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Farming near power lines can present certain challenges and considerations. Power lines, especially high-voltage transmission lines, carry electricity at a high voltage and can generate electromagnetic fields (EMFs) around them. Farmers need to be aware of potential risks and best practices when farming near power lines.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

POTENTIAL DANGERS OF FARMING AROUND POWER LINES

- Power lines carry electricity at high voltages, and accidental contact with them or conducting farming activities too close to the lines can result in serious injury or even death.
- Large farm machinery, such as tractors or combine harvesters, can come into contact with power. This can lead to equipment damage, power outages, and, in the worst cases, injury or fatalities.
- Trees growing near power lines can pose a risk, as falling branches or trees can bring down the lines. This can interrupt the power supply and create dangerous situations for farm workers.
- Utility companies often establish easements around power lines, which restrict certain activities on the land. This limitation can impact how farmers utilize their property and may restrict building structures or planting certain crops.
- Power lines generate electromagnetic fields (EMFs), which extend a certain distance from the lines. Some studies have suggested possible links to certain health issues. Farm workers who spend significant time near power lines might be

exposed to higher EMF levels, raising concerns for long-term health impacts.

- There is limited evidence that EMFs can potentially influence plant growth and animal behavior. While the effects are generally considered minimal, certain crops or livestock might be more sensitive to EMFs.
- Installation and maintenance of power lines can lead to soil disturbance and compaction.
- Power lines can have a visual impact on the landscape, which might affect the aesthetics and potentially reduce the appeal of the farming area.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

MINIMIZE RISK BY USING PROPER TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

- When working near power lines, use non-metallic or insulated tools to reduce the risk of accidental contact.
- Attach height indicators to machinery for operators to maintain distance from overhead power lines.
- Use GPS and farm mapping software to accurately identify the location of power lines on your property. This information can help you plan your farm layout and avoid areas that are too close to the lines.
- Install GFCIs on electrical equipment to protect against electric shocks. GFCIs can quickly shut off power in the event of a ground fault, reducing the risk of injury to farm workers.
- Use low-profile equipment that can easily pass under power lines without the risk of contact.
- Place safety signs and markers around your farm to indicate the presence of power lines and to remind workers of safe distances.
- Implement remote sensing technologies, such as drones or satellite imagery, to monitor crop health and identify potential issues.
- Equip farm workers with proper safety training and establish safety protocols for working near power lines.
- If you have trees near power lines, invest in proper pruning

equipment that allows you to maintain a safe distance while trimming branches.

- Use two-way radios or other reliable communication devices to stay in contact with workers across the farm.
- Consider using EMF measuring devices to periodically check the electromagnetic field levels around your farm. This can provide insights into EMF exposure and potential impacts on crops and livestock.
- Maintain a good relationship with the local utility company and communicate with them regularly. They can guide safety protocols and any potential power interruptions.

BEST FARMING PRACTICES IN PROXIMITY TO POWER LINES

- Learn about the potential hazards of working near power lines and ensure that all farm workers are aware of the safety protocols. Train them on recognizing the location of power lines, understanding safe distances, and how to respond to emergencies.
- Respect the recommended safe distances provided by the utility company or local regulations. Establish clear boundaries and mark them with visual aids or flags to remind workers of the safe zone.
- When designing the layout of your farm, consider the locations of power lines. Avoid building permanent structures, such as barns or storage sheds, directly under or too close to the power lines.
- Consider planting crops that are less sensitive to electromagnetic fields (EMFs) if you have concerns.
- Inspect and trim trees regularly to prevent branches from growing too close to power lines. Falling branches can damage power lines or pose a safety risk.
- If possible, use smaller and lower-profile equipment to minimize the risk of accidental contact with power lines. Be cautious with raised implements, such as irrigation systems or tractor loaders.
- Establish open communication with the local utility companies responsible for the power lines. Inform them of your farming activities and inquire about any maintenance

schedules or potential power outages.

- If you are concerned about potential EMF exposure, monitor EMF levels periodically on your farm. This can provide you with data to make informed decisions about certain activities or crops.
- If you notice any damaged or downed power lines, maintain a safe distance, and immediately report the issue to the utility company. Prompt reporting can help prevent accidents and ensure timely repairs.
- Be aware of any easements or land use restrictions associated with power lines. Comply with these regulations to ensure the safety of your farm and neighboring properties.
- If you have specific concerns or face challenges related to farming near power lines, seek advice from experts.
- Keep yourself updated on the latest safety guidelines and research related to farming near power lines.

FINAL WORD

Preventing accidents when farming near power lines is not only essential for immediate safety but also contributes to the successful operation of your farm and fosters relationships with utility companies.