

In Case of An EMERGENCY

An onboard first-aid kit is good insurance when problems arise.

By Kim Allen

When an emergency happens, how quickly you react to properly respond can make an important difference in the final outcome.

The good news is that you don't need to be a health-care professional to intervene effectively. By planning ahead and having a few basic medical-care supplies readily available, you can help reduce the severity of an injury's effects.

Start by stocking each tractor, combine and forage harvester with a basic first-aid kit.

While you can buy a commercially prepared kit at any drugstore, putting a kit together to suit the needs of potential farm injuries is an even better idea.

We started from scratch, buying a handy soft-side toiletries bag from a discount chain and buying representative products (see list

below) to meet many emergency needs on the farm. The type of bag that we selected is ideal because it zips to help keep out dust. We like the soft-side type because it's less rigid, allowing it to fit most anywhere, such as under or behind a tractor seat.

Our kit is stocked with a variety of basic first-aid essentials, varying from antiseptic wipes, alcohol pads and cotton balls to antibiotic ointment and adhesive bandages.

The kit also includes a small flashlight, disposable gloves, scissors, tweezers and a variety of medications varying from aspirin to ibuprofen. There's even a small emergency blanket that would come in handy in some cases.

You can put a kit together for about \$50. Ours, which is probably more complete than what may be needed in mar

about \$70, including \$25 for the empty toiletries bag. Most items came from the drug department of a popular chain discount store such as Wal-Mart, K-Mart or Target. We also found handy, and often less expensive, samples of needed items in the camping and outdoor departments at these stores.

Once you have a first-aid kit placed in the cab of your tractor, swather or combine, consider equipping each machine with a cell phone. With the economy plans now available from local cellular providers, it's no longer cost prohibitive to keep a cell phone onboard each machine for emergency use. If the emergency number in your area is not 911, post the appropriate number on the phone. ▲

FIRST-AID KIT Checkoff List

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic carrying case | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol wipes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First-aid manual | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrocortisone cream |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tweezers | <input type="checkbox"/> Antibacterial wipes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors | <input type="checkbox"/> Purell hand sanitizer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Band-aids of various sizes | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency blanket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof tape | <input type="checkbox"/> Saline eyewash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4- x 4-inch sterile gauze | <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2- x 2-inch sterile gauze | <input type="checkbox"/> Instant cold pack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ace bandage | <input type="checkbox"/> Benadryl tablets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steri-Strips of various sizes | <input type="checkbox"/> Advil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-itch gel | <input type="checkbox"/> Peroxide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neosporin/Bacitracin ointment | <input type="checkbox"/> Zip-lock bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Betadine antiseptic and swabs | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen |

