February: Cancer prevention

Trenerry, C., Fletcher, C., Wilson, C., & Gunn, K. (2022). "She'll Be Right, Mate": A Mixed Methods Analysis of Skin Cancer Prevention Practices among Australian Farmers-An At-Risk Group. International journal of environmental research and public health, 19(5), 2940. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19052940

This study examined Australian farmers' engagement with skin cancer prevention behaviours and explored what made it hard for them to be 'SunSmart' (barriers), and what could be done to make prevention easier (facilitators). In total, 498 farmers (83.1% male, 22-89 years, 50.8% grain, sheep, or cattle farmers) participated. The least frequently performed SunSmart behaviours (reported as never practiced during summer) were using SPF 30+ sunscreen (16.6%), wearing protective sunglasses (10.5%), and wearing protective clothing (8.6%). Greater engagement (i.e., higher scores on scale from Never to Always) with SunSmart behaviours was explained by gender (female), educational attainment (trade or technical college certificate vs. high school), personal skin cancer history, and skin sun sensitivity. Barriers reported by farmers related to personal preferences (e.g., short-sleeved rather than long-sleeved clothing), comfort, and perceived impracticality of sun protection. Farmers' solutions included making protective clothing and sunscreen more appropriate for farm work (e.g., by making clothing more breathable). A personal health scare was the most reported motivation for skin cancer prevention. Findings highlight the need for increased access to sun-protective clothing and sunscreen that is suitable for wearing when working on farms, complemented by culturally appropriate health education messaging, to encourage more farmers to perform SunSmart behaviours.

Carley, A., & Stratman, E. (2015). Skin cancer beliefs, knowledge, and prevention practices: a comparison of farmers and nonfarmers in a midwestern population. Journal of agromedicine, 20(2), 85–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/1059924X.2015.1010059

Farmers have substantial sun exposure and increased skin cancer risk but poor sun protection practices. There are few studies regarding the underlying factors that contribute to inadequate skin cancer prevention practices in the farming population, and minimal data to guide skin cancer awareness and educational interventions for this population. The purpose of this study was to assess skin cancer knowledge, sun protection behaviors and barriers, health care information sources, and the impact of skin cancer screening among midwestern farmers and nonfarmers. Individuals attending a free skin cancer screening during 2011 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days were surveyed for self-reported sun protection use, extent of sun exposure, and skin cancer and sun protection beliefs and knowledge. A total of 476 individuals participated in the study, including 194 farmers. Although farmers identified sun protection benefits, few reported optimal practices, with only 23% of farmers reporting sunscreen use always or frequently when out in the sun for 15 minutes or more. Common barriers to sun protection included discomfort with wearing long pants and long shirts, forgetfulness with sunscreen use, and inconvenience with wearing wide-brimmed hats. Higher

knowledge scores in farmers were associated with better sun protection. Farmers utilized different sources of health care information compared with nonfarmers, including farm magazines and newspapers, radio, and farm organizations. Providers should consider the unique characteristics of the farming population to provide skin cancer prevention education that is tailored to the needs of this population, such as reminders for sunscreen use and resources for sun-protective hats that do not interfere with work. Among individuals without prior history of skin cancer, 34% of farmers and 22% of nonfarmers (P = .0127) were referred for additional evaluation due to identification of a concerning lesion at the screening event. Thus, farmers may preferentially benefit from skin cancer screening events, and this population should be targeted for additional screening events in the future. This study identifies unique characteristics of the farming population that can assist providers in caring for this population and guide the future development of skin cancer awareness, prevention, and screening initiatives to benefit farmers.

Watanabe-Galloway, S., Ratnapradipa, K., Hymel, E., High, R., & Farazi, P. A. (2023). Predictors of cancer risky and preventive behaviors among the Nebraska farmers population. The Journal of rural health : official journal of the American Rural Health Association and the National Rural Health Care Association, 39(2), 392–401. https://doi.org/10.1111/jrh.12731

Purpose: Previous studies on cancer risk among agricultural producers have focused on occupational exposures, with only a few studies examining behavioral factors. The aim of this study was to understand cancer risky and preventative behaviors among the large farming population in Nebraska.

Methods: A statewide cross-sectional study of farmers in Nebraska aged 19 and older was conducted in 2019 (n = 782). Multivariable logistic regression was used to examine factors associated with being up to date on cancer screening and with cancer risky and preventive behaviors.
Findings: The 93.68% of the Nebraska farmers population do not meet the daily recommended consumption of fruits and vegetables, and 70.14% reported regular alcohol consumption. The proportion of adults up to date on cancer screening was 79.57% for breast, 67.55% for cervical, 85.54% for colorectal, and 46.05% for skin cancers. Compared to women, men had a higher odds of heavy alcohol consumption (aOR 2.96, 95% CI 1.94-4.56) and ever smoking 100 or more cigarettes (aOR 1.66, 95% CI 1.03-2.73). The odds of being current with skin cancer screening was higher among those with higher incomes (aOR 1.77, 95% CI 1.06-3.01). Compared to men aged 50-64, the odds of being current with prostate cancer screening was higher among men aged 65-74 (aOR: 2.65, 95% CI 1.10-7.31) and 75 and older (aOR: 7.73, 95% CI 2.03-51.73).

Conclusions: Disparities in cancer screening and risk and preventive behaviors exist among farmers in Nebraska. The study highlights a need for continuing efforts to improve preventive cancer behaviors targeted to the farming population.