

First Aid/CPR Training: Improving Farm Safety for H2A Workers on Tobacco Farms

Abstract

Tobacco is one of the top commodities grown in Tennessee, with a value of close to 100 million dollars. Each year, due to the exposure to nicotine from handling tobacco, and the extensive heat, there have been numerous cases of farm emergencies reported that are caused by nicotine poisoning or dehydration. GAP Connections Certification Program standards recommend tobacco growers have a staff member (or grower) certified in First Aid/CPR training. However, there are limited resources available for the producers and their workers.

The team members of this pilot project identified the need for making the First Aid/CPR training available both in English and Spanish, to help tobacco growers manage human risk to meet the farm safety standards of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). This project will provide the opportunity for the producers and their farm labor to learn the skills needed to give immediate care to a suddenly-injured co-worker.

Throughout six months, the program was planned, revised, conducted, and evaluated. A total of 41 tobacco farms, 74 farm operators including 34 Hispanic workers (46%) from five counties in Middle and West Tennessee participated, with 43 (58%) certified in CPR/First Aid. 40 non-contact electronic thermometers were awarded to assist producers with monitoring farm workers' temperatures during the pandemic.

Program Objectives

- Tobacco H2A workers and producers will increase their knowledge of farm safety.
- Tobacco H2A workers and producers will gain the skills to respond appropriately to first aid emergencies.
- Tobacco H2A workers and producers will be certified in First Aid/CPR training.
- Tobacco H2A workers and producers will implement techniques learned to respond appropriately to first aid emergencies.

Program Activities

- Collaborated with project partner GAP Connections, the program was promoted through emails to Robertson, Cheatham, Montgomery, Dickson, Stewart, and Henry county tobacco producers, around 200 farms were reached.
- Printed flyers and follow-up surveys were also distributed to tobacco farms by county extension agents through farm visits. Marketing materials, online registration forms,

and evaluation surveys were made available both in English and Spanish to accommodate all participants.

- Bi-weekly reminders were sent out to registrants by email to encourage completion.
- Leveraged additional financial resources from the University of Tennessee Extension Western and Central Region of \$2,700, and received a \$500 donation from project partner GAP Connections. These funds were used to purchase 40 non-contact electronic thermometers to assist with monitoring farm workers' temperatures during the pandemic. These thermometers were set to be given to the first 40 farms that completed the program, to encourage participation and completion of the program.
- Follow-up farm visits were conducted by county agents to distribute thermometers and collect feedbacks and impact results.

Teaching Method

- The pilot project was designed to be a one-day workshop to be conducted in Springfield, Tennessee. Trainers would be brought in to conduct the training in English and Spanish simultaneously. Due to Covid-19, this First Aid/CPR training was modified from in-person to online format. ProTraining.com training platform was selected to provide the First Aid/CPR training in both languages.
- Farm visits were conducted by county agents to monitor training progress and answer any questions.

Results

- A total of 41 tobacco farms, 74 farm operators including 34 Hispanic workers (46%) from 5 counties in Middle and West TN participated, with 43 (58%) certified in CPR/First Aid. See Table 1 below.

County	# Farms Participated	# Total Registrants	# Spanish Workers	# CPR/First Aid Certified
ROBERTSON	21	36	13	18
CHEATHAM	12	25	17	17
MONTGOMERY	3	5	2	3
DICKSON	2	3	0	2
HENRY	3	5	2	3
TOTAL	41	74	34	43

- 40 non-contact electronic thermometers were awarded to the first 40 farms that completed the program through follow-up farm visits.

Impact Statement

'I was able to calmly react to the situation when one worker had a heat stroke during harvest, brought him back to consciousness by implementing the first aid techniques I learned from the training.'

'I used the thermometer to monitor workers' temperatures every day before work. Nobody got sick or needed quarantine during Covid. That saved me at least \$100 per day. If 5 of my workers were out for two weeks, that's about \$8,400 saved.'

- Evaluation results: A total of 41 end-of-workshop and follow-up evaluations were collected. Out of the 41 respondents, all (100%) including 3 Hispanic workers increased their knowledge of farm safety; 41 participants (100%) gained the skills to respond appropriately to first aid emergencies; 21 farms (51%) utilized the thermometers provided to monitor workers' temperatures; 20 farms (49%) implemented the techniques learned to respond appropriately to first aid emergencies.
- 43 participants (58%) with 16 Hispanic workers completed and passed the training, and were certified in CPR/First Aid.
- 26 farms (63%) gained extra Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) credits from the project partner GAP Connections, to renew their GAP certifications that were required by tobacco companies.
- Many producers expressed they appreciated our effort of making the CPR training available to the Hispanic workers. One producer indicated the training was very helpful, which equipped his workers with skills to respond appropriately in different scenarios, and he expressed his interest to enroll workers for the training every year.
- The program was awarded with \$3,941 by USDA/NIFA. Another \$3,200 was leveraged to provide the non-contact electronic thermometers to the 40 farms.

Method of Evaluation

- Printed end-of-workshop surveys were provided to participants by county agents through individual farm visits after each completion of the training. A total of 12 written responses were collected.
- Questionpro online survey tool was also used to collect end-of-workshop evaluations. A total of 8 responses were collected.
- Both online and written evaluations were provided both in English and Spanish.
- Follow-up phone surveys were conducted at the end of September 2020, three months after the starting date of the training. Survey results were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet. A total of 21 responses were collected.