

First and Last Name

Instructor

Course

Date

### Health Hazards and Safety Precautions in Berry Picking

Regardless of what one does as a career or what kind of job one has, there are always safety and health risks that are germane to that particular kind of work. For example, individuals who work on farms and in other rural areas are likely to get maimed with heavy equipment used to cultivate the earth or to dig trenches. These individuals are also out in the elements more than someone who works inside buildings, and so they have exposure to weather extremities, like the sun, wind, cold, and rain. In addition, they handle fertilizer and pesticides, and so skin exposure, as well as hand, eye, nose, and mouth contact pose dangers. People who work in rural areas, such as berry pickers, must be knowledgeable about pests, including mites and ticks, which are known to carry serious diseases. Part of that knowledge is what to do to limit the chances of being affected with those diseases.

First, to ensure protection of their health from pests, berry pickers should wear certain kinds of clothing that cover as much of their skin as possible. This includes long pants, shirts with long sleeves, knee-length socks, and knee-high boots. Furthermore, necks should be covered, shirts tucked into pants, and pants' legs tucked into boots. Next, berry pickers should check the areas in which they will be working for signs of deer ticks, utilizing fine-tipped tweezers to remove any they find. It is especially important to avoid ticks because they can transmit Lyme disease. As another precaution, pickers could apply insect repellent with 20 to 30 percent DEET to their skin and clothing. Ticks can be killed instantly with uses of repellents

such as Permethrin (Schrab, 2010). What is important in carrying out these procedures is that they are preventive measures in being bitten by ticks.

Another preventive measure that berry pickers might take to avoid ticks is to wear light-colored clothing. Ticks can be difficult to spot, and the contrast in light color with the ticks will help workers to notice them more quickly if they do attach themselves to the clothing. Each time a worker returns from the field, he or she should carefully inspect clothing and exposed skin for signs of ticks. This is especially true during the spring and summer months. One should pay special attention to rashes that appear circular like a bulls-eye. One must also be familiar with the symptoms associated with Lyme disease. These include fatigue, aching joints and muscles, headaches, and fever. If an individual has any of these symptoms after being in a rural area during recent months, that person should seek medical attention (Schrab, 2010). Lyme disease is a very serious illness.

Having procedures in place for addressing health and safety issues is crucial. An individual might be designated as being responsible for training workers in procedures and making certain that all employees adhere to those policies. An example of a policy would be that one team of workers picks the berries and a different team of workers completes the next step in handling the berries. That way, if the pickers have ticks on their clothing or embedded in their skin, they are less likely to transmit the infestation to other workers. These policies for safety should also be posted in a clear and concise manner; additionally, workers might be provided with printed copies of these policies so that they can review them as needed. Periodic refresher training sessions can also be conducted as a reminder to all employees as to what the procedures are and why they are in place. Moreover, a procedure might also be in place for workers to feel safe and confident in reporting possible issues or violation in following procedures (Schrab,

2010). Naturally, visitors of any kind, especially children, should be cleared with management and appropriate written permission attained as needed.

Works Cited

Schrab, G. (2010). *Use Personal Protection to Ward Off Insect-Borne Diseases*. Retrieved on September 18, 2014, from [http://ehstoday.com/images/ISEA\\_update-0710.pdf](http://ehstoday.com/images/ISEA_update-0710.pdf)