

Reading 1

The Risks of Farming

1 People with this job are more than five times more likely to die from an on-the-job injury than the typical worker. What is this risky career? Farming. Most of us perceive farming as a very safe, simple job. In reality, there are serious risks that are caused by the environment as well as by chemicals and machinery. According to a recent survey, farming is one of the ten most dangerous jobs in the United States.

2 Many of us would enjoy working outdoors, but both hot and cold weather conditions can create risks. Some people have a tolerance for the heat, but they can still suffer because of the sun. Frequent exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer. Farmers in the United States are three times more likely to get skin cancer than the average American. Cold weather causes other challenges. If you're the kind of person who enjoys the outdoors, think about being outside in freezing weather to care for your animals. That might be fine for some people, but the majority of us would probably be much happier working inside, away from the cold.

3 More risks are created by chemicals and machinery. Many farmers work with some very dangerous chemicals, but **they** may have little training in how to use them safely. They may not take the necessary precautions to keep chemicals away from their skin or clothes. The poisons can even get into the water supply that farmers and their animals drink. Unfortunately, using these chemicals is essential for farming. Also, farmers use a great deal of equipment, such as tractors and chainsaws. This machinery can cause a variety of injuries or even death.

4 Certain types of people can accept the level of risk that comes with being a farmer. They enjoy the farming lifestyle so much that they choose to take the chance of injury. But most of us are content to have someone else do the dangerous work that gets food on our tables.

Reading 2

The Lost Settlers

1 In 1587, a group of 115 English settlers – men, women and children – sailed from Britain to set up the first English colony in the New World, on Roanoke Island off what is now North Carolina. Two years later, a second expedition set off from Britain to join them. However, when they arrived, they found the settlement deserted. There were no indications of where the settlers had gone, nor any sign of a struggle, but just one word mysteriously scratched on a tree: "Croatoan". This was the name of a nearby island where the Indians were known to be friendly, but a trip to the island showed that the settlers had never arrived there. One theory is that they travelled inland, up to the hills and settled there. No one knows why they might have done this, but fifty years later, when European explorers arrived in Tennessee, the Indians told them that there was a group of pale people living in the hills already, people who wore clothes and had long beards.

2 No one ever found this mysterious community. But in a remote and neglected corner of the territory, high up in northeastern Tennessee, there still live some curious people called Melungeons, who have been there for as long as anyone can remember. The Melungeons have most of the characteristics of Europeans – blue eyes, fair hair, lanky¹ build – but a dark, almost Negroid skin coloring that is distinctly non-European. They have English family names, but no one, has any idea of where they come from or what their early history might have been. They are as much of a mystery as the lost settlers of Roanoke Island. Indeed, it has been suggested that they may be the lost settlers of Roanoke.

Glossary:

1Lanky: tall and thin and often moving awkwardly as a result.