

## BEST PRACTICES

# Shoes like tires

## Food firm's no-slip shoes take the bite out of injuries

ROSEVILLE, Minn.—Implementing a slip-resistant footwear program changed a Twin Cities-based food-processing organization's culture.

Slips, trips and falls are the third largest cause of workplace injuries and plague all types of employers. Agropur Inc., formerly Schroeder Milk, was no exception with more than a dozen slip-and-fall claims in 2008 and 2009.

However, Agropur found a way to eliminate slips and falls all together in just one year's time.

The organization focused its safety efforts on controlling slip hazards. It started by implementing a slip-resistant footwear program and ended up changing its culture.

"It was the perfect storm," said Kara Sime, director of Human Resources. "Our parent company wanted us to pick a focus area and make change. Slip-and-fall claims were the most expensive and seemed like a natural choice. This all came at the same time we were going through SQF certification." Safe Quality Food certification required the organization to implement a "captive" footwear and clothing program.

Agropur got buy-in from employees by giving employee testers a variety of slip-resistant shoes to try out for two weeks. The testers were asked for feedback on the best shoes for the job. Agropur ordered the selected shoes in a variety of sizes for all employees to try on and select from. Employees had a vested interest, Sime said.

"In addition to other engineering controls, the shoe program has worked great. We have had zero slip, trip and fall injuries since implementing. It has definitely been a good return on investment," she said. ♦

For specific questions about implementing a slip-resistant shoe program, or for more information about shoe types and discounts, contact your SFM loss prevention representative at (800) 937-1181.



### Not all shoes are created equal

A shoe's sole makes all the difference in traction and slip resistance.

Soles that are siped like tires are the most slip-resistant on wet interior floors. Each small slit, or sipe, in a rubber tread provides traction.

Soles with spikes work better on snow.

Wearing the right shoe in the wrong environment can result in even slipperier conditions.

Test a variety of shoes in a specific work area to find the most effective shoe for the job.