

# MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (MSDs) FROM STRAWBERRY PICKING

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are one of the most common work related injuries and diseases in NSW and can have long-term, costly impacts for businesses and workers.

An MSD is an injury to, or disease of, the body's musculoskeletal system and includes sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments, tendons and joints. MSDs can result from gradual wear and tear and/or sudden damage to these parts of the body, and are commonly caused by hazardous manual tasks, striking or being struck by objects, including animals, slips, trips and falls.

In the agricultural sector, there are many tasks that expose a worker to a risk of injury from an MSD.

## WHAT IS A HAZARDOUS MANUAL TASK?

A hazardous manual task is a task requiring a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing involving one or more of the following:

- repetitive or sustained force
- high or sudden force
- repetitive movement
- sustained or awkward posture, or
- exposure to vibration.

These hazards directly stress the body and can lead to an injury.

## HAZARD – STRAWBERRY PICKING





# MSD RISKS

## STRAWBERRY PICKING

RISK	CAUSE
1. MSD associated with hazardous manual tasks (manual handling).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The worker being exposed to repetitive and/or forceful exertions while lifting / carrying full strawberry trays.</li> <li>The worker being exposed to repetitive, awkward and sustained postures to many different parts of the body ie a continuous cycle of twisting, reaching, bending over, standing up, squatting, kneeling and sitting.</li> <li>Prolonged, repetitive movement of the hands, fingers and wrist when picking the strawberries.</li> </ul>
2. Falls on the same level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers slipping, tripping and/or falling while navigating the strawberry bed furrows.</li> </ul>

## CONTROL MEASURES



**CONTROL MEASURE** – provide pickers with trolleys to transport their in-use strawberry trays

RISKS ADDRESSED	ISSUES STILL PRESENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers being exposed to repetitive and forceful exertions while lifting / carrying in-use strawberry trays while picking has been reduced.</li> </ul>	<p>Workers are still exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive, awkward and sustained postures ie a continuous cycle of twisting, reaching, bending over, standing up, squatting, kneeling and sitting.</li> <li>Prolonged, repetitive movement of the hands, fingers and wrist when picking the strawberries.</li> <li>Slipping, tripping and/or falling while navigating the strawberry bed furrows.</li> </ul>





**CONTROL MEASURE** – provide pickers with sit-on trolleys incorporating empty, in-use and full strawberry trays

RISKS ADDRESSED	ISSUES STILL PRESENTS
<p>Workers being exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive and forceful exertions while lifting / carrying in-use strawberry trays while picking <b>has been reduced.</b></li> <li>• Some repetitive, awkward and sustained postures ie the continuous cycle of reaching, standing up, squatting and kneeling <b>have been ELIMINATED.</b></li> <li>• Slipping, tripping and/or falling while navigating the strawberry bed furrows <b>has been reduced.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Workers are still exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some repetitive, awkward and sustained postures ie a continuous cycle of bending over, twisting and sitting.</li> <li>• Prolonged, repetitive movement of the hands, fingers and wrist when picking the strawberries.</li> </ul> <p>Another risk has been introduced - the prolonged need for the pickers' to keep their legs apart over the strawberry bed while picking and propelling the trolley.</p>



**CONTROL MEASURE** – provide pickers with ride-on trolleys incorporating empty, in-use and full strawberry trays.

RISKS ADDRESSED	ISSUES STILL PRESENTS
<p>Workers being exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive and forceful exertions while lifting / carrying in-use strawberry trays while picking <b>has been reduced.</b></li> <li>• The repetitive, awkward and sustained postures ie a continuous cycle of reaching, standing up, squatting and kneeling <b>have been ELIMINATED</b> and bending over has been reduced.</li> <li>• Slipping, tripping and/or falling while navigating the strawberry bed furrows <b>has been ELIMINATED.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Workers are still exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some repetitive, awkward and sustained postures ie a continuous cycle of twisting and sitting.</li> <li>• Prolonged, repetitive movement of the hands, fingers and wrist when picking the strawberries.</li> </ul>





**CONTROL MEASURE** – raise the strawberry beds on “tables” to approximately chest height and provide pickers with trolleys to transport their in-use strawberry punnets / trays

**Note:** By raising the strawberry beds on tables the picker’s posture is further improved as their feet are under the table – enabling the body to be closer to the strawberry bed.

RISKS ADDRESSED	ISSUES STILL PRESENTS
<p>Workers being exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive and forceful exertions while lifting / carrying in-use strawberry trays while picking <b>has been reduced</b>.</li> <li>• Some repetitive, awkward and sustained postures ie a continuous cycle of reaching, bending over, squatting, kneeling and sitting <b>have been ELIMINATED</b>.</li> <li>• Slipping, tripping and/or falling while navigating the strawberry bed aisles <b>have been reduced</b> as result of holding on and pushing the trolley.</li> </ul>	<p>Workers are still exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some repetitive, awkward and sustained postures ie a continuous cycle of twisting and standing.</li> <li>• Prolonged, repetitive movement of the hands, fingers and wrist when picking the strawberries</li> </ul>



**CONTROL MEASURE** – Automated strawberry picker

RISKS ADDRESSED	ISSUES STILL PRESENTS
<p>Workers being exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive and forceful exertions while lifting / carrying in-use strawberry trays while picking <b>has been reduced</b>.</li> <li>• Most repetitive, awkward and sustained postures ie a continuous cycle of twisting, over-reaching, bending over, standing up, squatting and kneeling <b>have been ELIMINATED</b>.</li> <li>• Slipping, tripping and/or falling while navigating the strawberry bed furrows <b>has been ELIMINATED</b>.</li> </ul>	<p>Workers are still exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained sitting.</li> <li>• Prolonged, repetitive movement of the hands, fingers and wrist when picking the strawberries from the conveyor and placing them into the punnet.</li> </ul>



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For further information on how to manage Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Hazards on farm, general farm safety, book an advisory visit or MSD Farm Morning Tea:

[www.safework.nsw.gov.au](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au)

Call 13 10 50

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