



THE A-Z OF FARM SAFETY

SAFework NSW



LET'S TALK SAFETY

YOUR DETAILS

Farm name

Family name

Who else lives here

Farm address and how to get there

Phone

Mobile

UHF channel

GPS location

Airstrip details

Nearest town

Directions

Gate description

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS AND SAFETY CHECKLIST: PAGES 30, 31



KEEP SAFE ON THE FARM

Work health and safety is everyone's business. Even if you are self-employed, you are legally responsible for the health and safety of yourself and everyone who works on the farm, including workers, family members, visitors, customers and volunteers.

The NSW agricultural sector is a crucial part of the NSW economy, with over 81,000 workers employed in Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry. Unfortunately for those who work in the sector, they are at greater risk of being killed or injured at work than most.

This is why it has been identified as a priority area of focus within the SafeWork NSW Work Health and Safety Roadmap for NSW 2022, which aims to significantly reduce serious injury and illness by 2022.

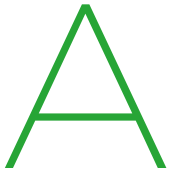
This A-Z guide (as part of the Agriculture Work Health and Safety Sector Plan) has been designed for farmers, by farmers, to assist in identifying the main elements of risk on a farm – and what you and your workers can do to make improvements.

KEEP IT IN A HANDY SPOT

Refer to it often and it will become a great resource for you and those who work on and visit your property for many years to come.

Disclaimer

This publication may contain information about the regulation and enforcement of work health and safety in NSW. It may include some of your obligations under some of the legislation that SafeWork NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation. Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website www.legislation.nsw.gov.au This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation. The A-Z of Farm Safety is published by The Farmer magazine, Medium Rare Content Agency (ABN 83 169 879 921), on behalf of NSW Farmers' Association and SafeWork NSW. All rights reserved. Printed by PMP Limited. SafeWork NSW, 92-100 Donnison Street, Gosford, NSW 2250 Locked Bag 2906, Lisarow, NSW 2252 | Customer Experience 13 10 50 | Website www.safework.nsw.gov.au | © Copyright SafeWork NSW 0519



ANIMALS

FARMERS WORK WITH ANIMALS EVERY DAY, SO BEING AWARE OF THE DISEASE AND INJURY RISKS IS VITAL

Close contact with farm animals can put workers at risk, not just from hazards associated with handling livestock, but also from 'zoonoses' –viral and bacterial diseases that can pass from animals to people.

SERIOUS NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

Q fever: Bacterial infection spread mainly from cattle, sheep, goats and kangaroos that can cause a severe flu-like illness. People are infected after inhaling the bacteria when in contact with infected animals, animal tissues or animal products.

Leptospirosis: Bacterial disease generally found in infected animal urine and animal tissues. Outbreaks are usually associated with exposure to floodwater contaminated with urine from infected animals.

Other notifiable diseases: Anthrax, avian influenza (bird flu), brucellosis, psittacosis (parrot fever), lyssavirus.

HOW TO MINIMISE DISEASE RISK

- Good personal hygiene.
- Protective clothing.
- Vaccinations.
- Maintain healthy animals.

INJURY FROM ANIMALS

Farmers are at risk of serious injury or even death when working with livestock. Contributing factors are poorly designed pens, unsafe animal handling practices, fractious animals and insufficient training. It's important to be aware of the risks and take appropriate measures to minimise the risk of injury.

177 Number of workers compensation claims for Q fever in NSW between 2002 and 2012

Hendra virus: Sporadic disease of horses and humans that causes serious illness. The virus passes from flying foxes to horses, and from horses to humans via blood, body fluids and tissues.

TIPS FOR SAFE HANDLING OF LIVESTOCK

1. Instruct staff in animal handling and closely supervise new/inexperienced workers.
2. Avoid working alone when loading/unloading stock.
3. Ensure latches, bolts and chains on gates are in good working order and keep yards and escape routes free of obstructions.
4. Ensure yard is well-designed to help smooth flow of animals.
5. Identify and manage difficult animals.



BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

APART FROM LEADING TO AN UNHAPPY WORKPLACE, INCIDENTS OF BULLYING OR VIOLENCE CAN HARM THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS

B



IN HARMONY

Worker welfare is the key to a happy workplace – and that means any incidents of bullying or violence need to be nipped in the bud.

BULLYING

Bullying involves repeated unreasonable actions targeted at one or a group of workers, which can be harmful to those who experience or witness it.

Examples include:

- Offensive language or comments.
- Unjustified criticism.
- Deliberately excluding someone from workplace activities.
- Withholding information that is needed for work.

It is important to respond quickly because the longer bullying continues, the harder it becomes to repair working relationships.

VIOLENCE

Work-related violence is any incident in which someone is verbally or physically abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. A key to prevention in most workplaces, including farms, is managing work-related stress.

In addition, withdrawing from a violent situation is always the best course of action. Physical assault, robbery, sexual assault and threats to harm someone should always be referred to NSW Police.

Farms can pose special risks for incidents of work-related violence, especially when people are:

- Working on their own or in remote areas.
- Working in unpredictable environments.
- Working at night, early in the morning and outside usual hours.



CONFINED SPACES

CONFINED SPACES SUCH AS SILOS, MILK VATS
AND WATER TANKS POSE SPECIAL DANGERS ON FARMS



There are many confined spaces on a farm where workers' safety might be compromised. Among these are:

- Grain/feed bins and silos.
- Auger and conveyor tunnels.
- Additive tanks.
- Fuel/fertiliser tanks.
- Water storage tanks.
- Well or scale pits.
- Milk, cheese, grape or wine vats.
- Sanitary collection systems.
- Crawl spaces and cellars.

SMALL... AND POTENTIALLY DEADLY

Confined spaces often have poor ventilation which allows hazardous atmospheres to quickly develop, and the risks posed by a lack of oxygen, explosions, floods or airborne contaminants can be fatal. Consider getting experts to work in confined spaces – they should have the gear to do the job safely. And remember, if someone needs help in a confined space, **do not go in after them.**



FATALITIES IN AUSTRALIA

59 Number of confined space fatalities in Australia between 2000 and 2012

Source: Journal of Health, Safety and Environment

IDENTIFY THE RISKS

If an area is designated as a confined space, there are specific laws that require you to:

- Assess the risks.
- Use a permit system.
- Erect signs and barricades.
- Communicate with and monitor those inside.
- Isolate services.
- Make sure the air is safe.
- Get rid of ignition sources.
- Have emergency procedures.
- Train your workers and keep records of the training.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

About working in confined spaces, see the code of practice for confined spaces or contact SafeWork NSW.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS DAMAGES NOT ONLY THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF WORKERS BUT ALSO SAFETY AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE



ALCOHOL

Effects on performance include impaired coordination, blurred vision and delayed reaction times – a recipe for disaster on a busy farm. Alcohol is broken down by the liver at around 0.015% per hour and nothing can speed this up – not black coffee, cold showers, exercise or vomiting.

DRUGS

The drug **ICE** in particular is devastating young lives in rural Australia. It is a form of methamphetamine that can cause rapid heartbeat, sweating, dizziness, restlessness, raised blood pressure, agitation, aggression and anxiety.

Other concerning drugs are:

Sedative hypnotics – used for anxiety and sleeplessness, but can cause drowsiness and impair coordination and reaction time. They include minor tranquillisers or benzodiazepines (Valium, Serepax) and barbiturates.

Speed – a methamphetamine that can cause restlessness, palpitations, headache, tremors, sleeplessness, paranoia and hallucinations.

Ecstasy (MDMA) – increases blood pressure, pulse and confidence, and causes sweating, nausea, anxiety and paranoia. High doses can lead to hallucinations, fits and vomiting.

Cannabis (marijuana) – can cause paranoia and lethargy.

PREVENTION/MANAGEMENT

Making workers aware of the risks to their own and others' health and safety on the farm is the key to encouraging an alcohol- and drug-free workplace. Early recognition of a problem is also vital so appropriate help and support can be offered.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Signs of alcohol and/or drug misuse include:

- 'Near-miss' incidents.
- Violence.
- Habitual lateness.
- Frequent absences.
- Neglect of personal grooming.
- Interpersonal problems.
- Poor coordination, poor concentration and/or visual disturbances.

HEALTHY CHOICES

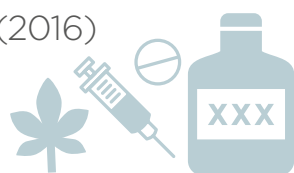
Farming can be thirsty work – but alcohol is a recipe for disaster.



1,808 Number of drug-induced deaths in Australia (2016)

6.7%

Percentage of total disease/injury burden in Australia caused by alcohol and illicit drug use (2011)



Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

E

ELECTRICAL

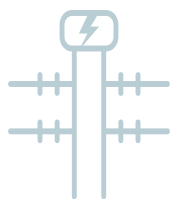
FARMERS WHO USE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT OR WORK NEAR ELECTRICITY ARE AT THE RISK OF ELECTRIC SHOCK, ARC FLASH BURNS AND OTHER INJURIES.

Over the past four years more than 2,000 people have received electric shocks in NSW workplaces. Six were permanently disabled and five died.

On farms, contact with overhead powerlines by harvesters, grain augers, field bins and irrigation equipment continues to be a problem, killing people and causing many serious injuries every year. And workshops, shearing sheds, pumps and generator facilities are often not fitted with safety switches.

'IF YOU DON'T KNOW, DON'T DIG'

When a live underground cable is struck by a machine or the point of a tool, it can cause hazardous fires, fumes or explosions resulting in serious injuries including burns, electric shock or death.



19 Number of deaths in the Australian farming sector between 2007 and 2016 from contact with electricity.

SHOCK TACTICS

Follow these guidelines to work safely with electricity:

- Be aware of overhead or underground powerlines.
- Maintain a safe distance from power lines. You do not need to touch the powerlines to create a significant hazard. Simply being close enough can cause electricity to arc to machinery.
- Get a competent person to regularly inspect and test electrical equipment.
- Disconnect unsafe electrical equipment.
- Restrict access to areas where energised equipment is being worked on.
- Install safety switches.



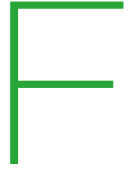
INSPECT AND TEST

Get a trained person to inspect and test electrical equipment, including safety switches, if:

- Power tools use a socket for electricity.
- You use tools where they are exposed to moisture, heat, dust, vibration or chemicals.
- Keep a record or tag the equipment with the name of the tester, date of testing, outcome of testing and date of next testing.

FALLS

TRAGICALLY, 30 PEOPLE DIED ON AUSTRALIAN FARMS
IN THE LAST DECADE AFTER FALLING FROM HEIGHTS,
BUT THERE ARE WAYS TO ENSURE SAFETY



Falls from silos, windmills, buildings and machinery during maintenance and harvest activities are among the main causes of death and injury on farms. But by recognising the common hazards that result in falls, and the action you can take to avoid them, the risk of death or injury can be prevented.

IDENTIFY THE RISKS

Many farm tasks involve working at a height. These might include anything from accessing machinery or buildings for repairs, maintenance, cleaning or loading products to working on mezzanines, elevated walkways, loading docks or the back of trucks. But no matter whether it's a routine task or a one-off job, careful planning is needed to control the risk of a fall.

SAFETY MEASURES

If you can, do the job from ground level. If you must work from a height, then barriers, guardrails or purpose-designed machinery – a cherry picker, for example – are safer options than fall-arrest harnesses or safety nets.

TALL ORDER

Working from a height is a common scenario for farm workers.

WHEN USING A PORTABLE LADDER, ENSURE THAT:

- It is in good condition.
- It is on firm, stable and level ground.
- It is secured at the top, bottom, or both, to prevent slipping.
- It is positioned so that the base is one metre away from the supporting structure for every four metres of height.
- You always have three points of contact – this means two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder at all times.
- Consider installing a ground-operated lid opener and sight glasses in silos to limit the need to climb them.



G

GUARDS

DON'T TAKE THEM OFF! SAFETY GUARDS ARE THERE FOR A REASON, AND THE BIGGEST RISK IS WHEN THEY ARE REMOVED

Each year, the limbs of many farm workers are crushed or amputated when caught in unguarded machinery. Injuries are commonly sustained when using unguarded power take-off (PTO) shafts, grain augers, pulleys and belts, exposed tractor and pump engine radiator fans, and alternator drive belts. Safety guards on machines and equipment are designed to prevent access to dangerous areas, and in particular moving parts.

GUARD AGAINST INJURY

PTO shafts – Always use guards on PTO drive shafts; check that guards spin freely before using PTO-powered machinery.

Grain augers – Never use a grain auger with the flight intake unguarded; ensure there is an emergency cut-off switch located near the flight and be aware of potential hazards such as overhead powerlines.

Tractors – Adequately guard radiator fans, water pumps and alternator drive belts; check that master guard protects PTO coupling.

Pumps and motors – Make sure all drive shafts, pulleys and belts are properly guarded; guards should completely enclose belts and pulleys; repair and replace damaged guards before restarting pumps.

BASIC RULES

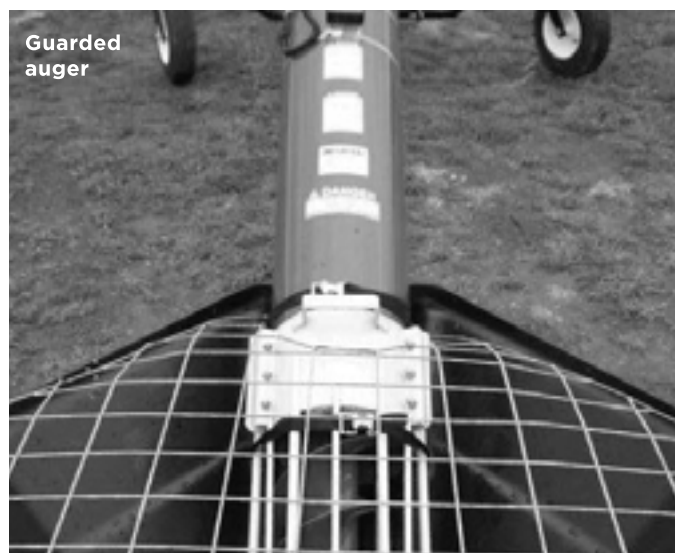
- 1 All machine guarding must be robust and securely mounted to resist impact or shock from operation.
- 2 If a guard has to be removed for maintenance and cleaning, ensure that the machine cannot be restarted until the guarding is replaced.
- 3 If the machine contains moving parts that could break or disintegrate, the guard must effectively contain any broken or ejected parts.



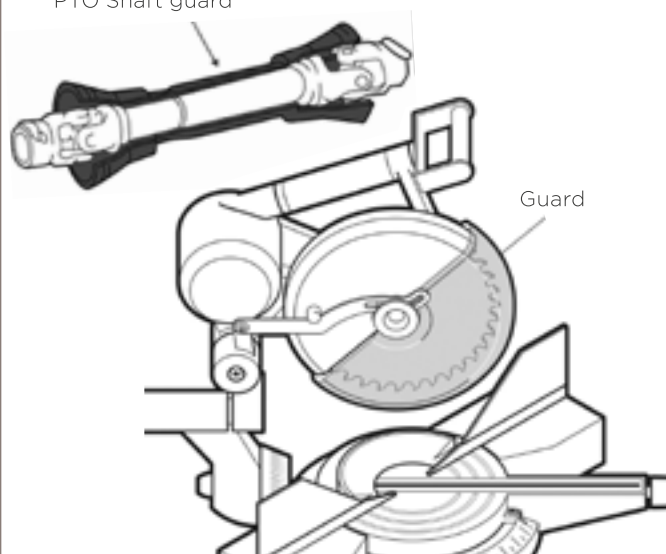
367 Number of NSW farm industry fatalities between 2001 and 2015

60 Estimated number of serious injuries involving grain augers each year in Australia

Sources: AgHealth Australia, Farmsafe Australia

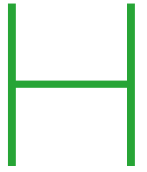


PTO Shaft guard



HELMETS

PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR IS ESSENTIAL WHEN RIDING QUAD BIKES, SIDE-BY-SIDE VEHICLES, MOTORBIKES AND HORSES



Around 30% of quad bike fatalities involve head injuries, while 40% of serious accidents involve a traumatic brain injury. But the risk of death can be reduced by as much as 40% if the rider is wearing a helmet.

Helmets are essential for any activity where there's a possibility of falling and hitting your head, including quad bike, side-by-side vehicle, motorbike and horse riding.

REBATES/TRAINING

Farm workers can get a rebate of up to \$90 for a compliant quad bike helmet. There is also a free regional and remote training program where attendees receive a helmet.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Visit safework.nsw.gov.au for information on rebates and free training.

HELMET STANDARDS

Helmets should comply with the following standards:

Quad bikes

AS/NZS 1698:2006 Protective helmets for vehicle users.

NZS 8600:2002 All-terrain vehicle helmets (for use on quad bikes with speeds not exceeding 30km/h).

UNECE22.05 Protective helmets and visors for drivers and passengers of motorbikes and mopeds.

Horse riders

Helmets should comply with **ARB HS 2012** and **AS3838**.



LIFESAVER

Wearing a helmet while riding a quad bike is a no-brainer.



INDUCTION, INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION

FARMS CAN BE DANGEROUS PLACES TO WORK, SO PROPER SAFETY TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL FOR ALL NEW WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS

Agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries to work in due to the combination of hazards. These include plant, chemicals, noise, dust, sun exposure, working with animals as well as the fact many in the industry work alone or in remote locations. Thus it is vital that farmers ensure all workers are properly instructed and trained to do their work safely.

Everyone who comes to work on the farm needs to be given relevant health and safety information about their jobs, the risks and how to control those risks.

Providing workers with information about farm safety during their induction before they start the job will help them understand how to do their work safely – and let them know that you take safety seriously.

IMPORTANT LESSON

All workers should get training in farm safety.

INDUCTION TOPICS NEED TO INCLUDE:

1. Rights and responsibilities

Everyone has a right to a safe workplace – and everyone has a role to play in keeping it safe. It's important that new workers understand what their rights and responsibilities are, as well as the rights and responsibilities of you, their employer.

2. Workplace hazards

Workers need to be aware of hazards so they can let you know if there are unsafe conditions that need to be fixed. It's important that you identify all hazards to workers – even if they seem obvious. Also, explain what systems or measures you've put in place to minimise the hazard.

3. Safe work procedures

On all farms there are tasks that require specific safe work procedures – for example, locking machinery and securing buildings – and workers should be given step-by-step training in these. Don't just tell them the steps or have them read the instructions, make sure they understand how to do the task safely.



JOINTS, KNEES AND BACK

BY ITS VERY NATURE, FARM WORK CAN TAKE ITS TOLL ON THE BODY. BUT AWARENESS ABOUT HAZARDOUS MANUAL TASKS CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURY



Farming is hard on the joints. From being jostled by sheep and cattle to lifting heavy sacks or sitting for hours on a tractor or harvester, it's not surprising that musculoskeletal disorders are common work-related injuries that can have long-term, costly impacts on a farm business and its workers.

HOW INJURIES HAPPEN

Injuries and disease affecting the musculoskeletal system include sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments, tendons and joints. Injuries can be caused by gradual wear and tear through repeated or continuous use of the same body parts, including static body positions, or sudden damage caused by strenuous activity, or unexpected movements such as when loads being handled move or change position.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

When workers perform manual tasks, there are certain factors that can put them at risk. But injuries can be prevented with the right equipment and strategies as well as awareness of the main dangers, listed below:

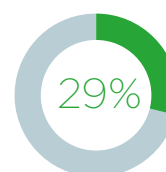
- Repetitive or sustained force
- High or sudden force.
- Repetitious movement.
- Sustained or awkward posture.

PHYSICAL CHALLENGE


A sustained or awkward posture is a common cause of workplace injuries.

FAST FACTS

 **17 WEEKS**
Average total time lost from joint injuries and illnesses

 **29%**
Percentage of workplace injuries caused by hazardous manual tasks

 **\$32,774**
Average workers compensation claim for musculoskeletal injury and disease

 **19,525**
Number of major musculoskeletal injury claims

Source: NSW workers compensation claims data, 2013/14 to 2015/16





KIDS ON FARMS

FARMS ARE EXCITING PLACES FOR CHILDREN AND IT'S VITAL TO KEEP THEM SAFE – NO MATTER WHETHER THEY LIVE ON THE PROPERTY OR ARE JUST VISITING

constant vigilance, active supervision and an awareness of the risks presented by everything from dams and grain silos to farm machinery, animals and chemicals will help keep them safe.

KIDS SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Have designated safe play areas for children.
- Make sure visitors with children are made aware of the danger areas and farm 'no-go' zones.
- Set good examples, as kids learn by observing your behaviours.
- Ensure kids wear seatbelts when riding in cars, trucks, side-by-side vehicles and utes.
- Ensure children wear helmets when riding horses and child-appropriate motorbikes – and don't let them operate or be carried as passengers on adult-size quad bikes.
- Prevent access to silos with a ladder lock-out system or by removing the bottom section of the ladder.
- Do not let children into stockyards.
- Keep chemicals such as fertilisers and pesticides in appropriate containers in a secure area.
- Lock workshops, chemical storage areas and machinery sheds.
- Remove keys from machinery and vehicles when not in use.
- Ensure electrical outlets are not within easy reach of children and ensure RCDs (residual current devices) are fitted.
- Always supervise around dams and water hazards.
- Fit tank wells with lids or strong mesh.
- Keep a first-aid kit close to hand and undertake first-aid and resuscitation training .
- Teach children about farm safety from an early age.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



About child safety on farms, go to farmsafe.org.au

OUT OF HARM'S WAY

Keep our future farmers safe and sound.



LEADERSHIP

ONE IN FIVE WORKER DEATHS OCCURS ON A FARM,
BUT STRONG LEADERSHIP CAN GO A LONG WAY TO
CREATING A SAFER WORK ENVIRONMENT



Good safety leadership is important and farm managers have a vital role to play when it comes to managing and encouraging workplace safety.

Not only can employers involve farm workers in discussions about health and safety, they can also lead by example – by wearing a helmet on quad bikes, taking unsafe machinery out of service until it can be repaired, or encouraging the reporting of safety issues. Communications around safety should be regular, easy to understand and any issues followed up.

TRAINING IS KEY

Farm managers have a duty to train workers to do the job safely and provide them with safe machinery, facilities and protective equipment.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

1. Consult with workers to ensure a good understanding of safety issues.
2. Identify and fix hazards before they become a problem.
3. Train and supervise workers, and empower them to address any safety issues.
4. Maintain a safe workplace by:
 - Regularly carrying out safety checks.
 - Maintaining tools and equipment.
 - Having a reporting process for all incidents.
 - Planning for emergencies.
 - Providing information that is easy for all to understand.
5. Keep records of any incidents/injuries, plant maintenance/inspection records and a list of any hazardous chemicals.
6. Monitor, review, improve... things change all the time.



MENTAL HEALTH

FARMERS FEED OUR NATION AND CARE FOR THEIR WORKERS AND FAMILIES BUT CAN SOMETIMES NEGLECT THEIR OWN WELLBEING

Mental health, according to the World Health Organization, is “a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”. However, when times get tough, things don’t necessarily feel so good.

HELP IS AT HAND

Farmers can experience high rates of stress and depression, sometimes triggered by living in remote rural locations. Realising that there is risk is the first part of the battle, but it’s important to remember that these are common conditions, not weaknesses, and with the right support and treatment, most people recover.

DEPRESSION – DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNS?

1. Change in sleep patterns.
2. Changes in appetite or weight.
3. Anger, irritability and anxiety.
4. Loss of interest in things you love.
5. Reduced pain tolerance (neck or back pain is common in depression).
6. Feelings of worthlessness, guilt.
7. Alcohol and drug abuse.
8. Reduced interest in sex.
9. Compulsive behaviour; addiction to gambling, social media or excessive spending.
10. Poor concentration and memory.

2.4M Number of Australians who received **Medicare-subsidised mental health-specific services** 2016/17

\$8.26 Million

Medicare expenditure on mental health per person in very remote areas

\$2.1billion

Amount NSW government is investing in mental health in 2018 Budget

Sources: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National Rural Health Alliance

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Lifeline: 13 11 14
Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511

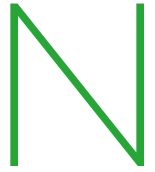


Rural Adversity Mental Health Program:
ramhp.com.au



NOISE

FROM TRACTORS TO SHEARING SHEDS, THE DIN CAN BE DEAFENING ON FARMS. BUT WE CAN ALL TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT OUR HEARING



Noise-induced hearing loss is the single greatest cause of permanent hearing loss in Australia – and also the most preventable. Over a recent four-year period, more than 10,000 workers were affected by noise-related injuries in NSW workplaces, including on farms. Laws designed to protect workers ban:

- A total (continuous) noise that exceeds 85dB when averaged over an eight-hour period. To give an example, a chainsaw produces noise levels of around 100-110dB.
- Noise exceeding a peak level of 140dB at any time during the day.



SOUND ADVICE

For the sake of worker's health, it's important to keep the volume down

STEPS TO CUT NOISE LEVELS

1. Quieter machinery

Buy the quietest plant and machinery for the job – and always ask the manufacturer/supplier for information about noise levels.

2. Alter work methods

Change the way you do the job – glue don't hammer, weld don't rivet, lower don't drop.

3. Volume control

Reduce noise levels at the source – fit silencers to exhausts, turn down the volume, change fan speeds.

4. Sound insulation

Isolate noise source with barriers, remote controls, sound-proof covers.

5. Respite

Reduce exposure – restrict access to noisy areas, provide quiet areas for rest breaks, limit time in noisy areas.

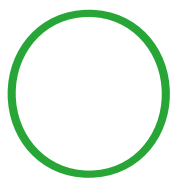
6. Ear protection

Use personal hearing protection, but only as a last resort.

NOISE DAMAGE NSW 2012 - 2015



10,352 workers injured
90% permanently disabled



OBSERVATION

NO TWO DAYS ARE THE SAME ON A FARM – AND THAT MEANS THE HAZARDS AND RISKS ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING. VIGILANCE IS THE KEY TO KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE



From working alone in remote locations to operating machinery, dealing with animals and chemical exposure, farming presents a range of risks that change all the time. Careful and regular observation of workers and potential hazards is needed to mitigate the risk of injury and illness.

USE YOUR EYES AND EARS

To maintain a safe working environment and achieve ongoing improvement in farm management practices, you need to be aware of the various risks and conduct constant reviews – and that means keeping your eyes and ears to the ground. Your observations should include:

- Regular walks around the farm with workers to identify hazards.
- Regular reviews of your safety management system and risk management process.
- Close supervision of new and inexperienced workers.

SAFE APPROACH

Constant vigilance and consultation with workers helps minimise the risks.

MENTAL HEALTH

Your observations should also include looking out for one another and noting significant changes in mood or behaviour. Check that those around you are doing OK and, if necessary, direct them to someone who can help.

THE ONES TO WATCH

There are potential hazards all over the farm, but the main ones to keep a regular eye on are those relating to:

- Quad bikes.
- Tractors, augers and related implements and attachments.
- Occupational diseases.
- Chemicals – pesticides, herbicides, fertilisers.
- Child safety.
- Working with animals.
- Extreme weather.
- Falling from heights.
- Slips and trips on the same level.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Lifeline: 13 11 14
Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

PASSENGERS

YOU CAN KEEP EVERYONE SAFE
BY FOLLOWING A FEW SIMPLE RULES

P

Many farm deaths and serious injuries occur when vehicles collide with an object or roll, causing passengers not wearing seatbelts to be thrown from the vehicle or crushed.

Many injuries and fatalities involve children riding as passengers on tractors, quad bikes, motorbikes and other farm machinery such as side-by-side vehicles, utes, trucks and trailers.

SIDE-BY-SIDES AND UTES

A safer alternative to quad bikes for carrying loads and passengers, SSVs and some utes have safety features that provide protection in the event of a rollover or collision. These include a wider wheelbase, rollbars, seats for passengers and seatbelts. But you must ensure that you:

- Prevent people from riding in the tray of utes and SSVs, even when feeding stock.
- Wear seatbelts (including all passengers).
- Wear helmets on SSVs (including all passengers).

QUAD BIKES

Always choose the right vehicle for the job.

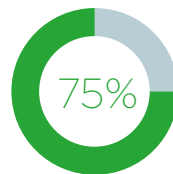
TRUCKS AND TRAILERS

Do not carry passengers in vehicle trays or on trailers.

TRACTORS

Only carry passengers if the tractor is designed to do so.

FAST FACTS



Percentage of agricultural fatalities in Australia that involved farm vehicles, between 2010 and 2014



15 Average number of on-farm quad bike fatalities each year

Sources: Farmsafe Australia, AgHealth Australia



EXTRA PROTECTION

Side-by-side vehicles are a safer option



QUAD BIKES

CHOOSE THE RIGHT VEHICLE FOR THE
JOB – IT MAY NOT BE A QUAD BIKE



The numbers are shocking. Over 70% of farmers in a SafeWork NSW focus group reported incidents. Being aware of your vehicle's limitations and how to operate it safely is paramount.

1. Choose wisely

The right vehicle is crucial, as is making sure any attachments are suitable for your quad bike. Check the Farm Vehicle Pre-purchase Checklist on the SafeWork NSW website.

2. Protect yourself

Wearing a helmet as well as appropriate footwear, clothing and personal protective equipment, is essential.

3. Take the training

Training will help keep you and your workers safe. Even for the most experienced users, training helps in managing the risks associated with quad bikes.

4. Operator protection

Consider fitting an operator protective device to your quad bike to prevent being crushed or asphyxiated in the event of a rollover.

5. Keep kids safe

Given they account for 20% of quad bike fatalities, never let kids ride or be passengers on adult-sized quad bikes.

6. Maintenance

Make a habit of inspecting the quad bike for any issues before riding. Ensure correct tyre pressure according to manufacturer instructions.

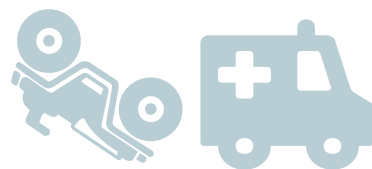
7. Drive carefully

Take extra care when riding in rough terrain and on steep slopes, and beware of hidden obstacles, especially if carrying cargo.

SAFETY FIRST

Consider riding a quad bike fitted with an operator protective device.

AUSTRALIAN TRAGEDIES



240 deaths from quad bikes have been reported across Australia since 2001, **AND...**

1,400 people land in hospital every year from quad bike accidents.

REMOTE AND ISOLATED WORK

FEW LOVE THE CROWDS OF THE CITIES, BUT BEING WAY OUT WEST OR WORKING ALONE AWAY FROM THE HOME Paddock carries special dangers

R

Being prepared is more important than ever when you're hours or many kilometres away from help.

Remote and isolated work applies to situations where you are unable to get immediate attention from rescue, medical or emergency services. This can also apply when you're working alone – as is often the case for farm workers.

Farmers should have an effective system for communicating with anyone working remotely and monitor them regularly by phone, radio or in person. It is also a good idea to have a check-in process, whereby workers contact 'home base' at a nominated time, as well as an emergency response plan for when workers fail to report in.

LONE RANGERS

Precautions need to be taken when working in far-flung places.

HOW TO KEEP SAFE

1. Let people know what you are doing, where you are going and when to expect you home.
2. Install a GPS device in your vehicle or get a personal locator beacon for your pocket to go with you.
3. Ensure you have an adequate emergency water supply and fully stocked first-aid kit.
4. Inform yourself about remote areas where you're likely to be working and ensure all workers know which radio channel is used for your farm. Add the farm radio channel to the 'Your Details' section at the beginning of this guide.
5. Have an emergency plan that all workers know before heading out.



S

STORAGE AND USE OF CHEMICALS

EXPOSURE TO CHEMICALS IS 100% PREVENTABLE. WITHOUT PROPER CONTROLS, THEY CAN CAUSE SERIOUS ILLNESS AS WELL AS POSE A RISK OF INJURY FROM FIRE/EXPLOSIONS



The farm sector uses a variety of chemicals that can cause health issues if not used safely. While the list of potentially hazardous products is long, covering everything from pesticides and herbicides to vertebrate poisons, the following are among those of most concern.

ORGANOPHOSPHATE PESTICIDES AND GLYPHOSATE

Without proper protection, these products can be absorbed by inhalation, through the skin, by ingestion and through the mucous membranes and eyes. Under Work Health and Safety regulations, health monitoring is required for anyone who regularly uses organophosphates.

BENZENE/EXHAUST FUMES

Exposure to exhaust is an emerging on-farm health risk. Switch to using safer engines and cleaner fuels e.g. low-emission technology, particulate filters, ultra-low-sulphur diesel, compressed natural gas or electricity.

RISK CONTROL

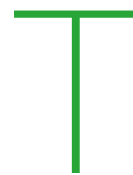
Protect yourself and others from exposure to agricultural chemicals.

TIPS TO STAY SAFE

- Substitute hazardous chemicals for safer alternatives.
- Read up-to-date safety data sheets and labels for information on how to store and handle chemicals safely.
- Stay in the loop about banned products.
- Wear protective gear.
- Consider other workers or family who might be at risk of exposure.
- Wash hands thoroughly after using chemicals.
- Ensure you have easy access to emergency information and safety equipment.
- If you are unsure about anything, talk to your employer or contact SafeWork NSW.
- See a doctor if you notice any health changes.

TALKING

FARMING IS NOT MEANT TO BE DONE ALONE - IT'S ALL ABOUT WORKING AS A TEAM, SO YOU NEED TO KEEP THE COMMUNICATION LINES OPEN



Never underestimate the simple act of talking to each other. A farm cannot be successful and safe without everyone being kept in the loop – and that means regular communication. It's not just about keeping up-to-date with the day-to-day issues, but also enjoying the rewards and enduring the hardships together. As the old saying goes, a problem shared is a problem halved. The benefits of talking to each other are many. Here are some of them:

1. Keeping everyone safe

Consultation with workers, contractors, visitors and family members is an important component in the management of hazards and risks. By drawing on the experience, knowledge and ideas of your workers, you are more likely to identify all hazards and choose effective control measures, and any changes to equipment should be discussed with them first. Workers should be encouraged to report any hazards and health and safety problems immediately so that risks can be managed before an incident occurs. Talking to everyone on the farm about safety rules, emergency contacts/procedures and any 'no go' areas also helps to keep you and them safe.

2. Improving production

Informing workers when work practices are updated can lead to a smoother production process and potentially boost product quality.

3. Sharing the load

Talking is also the healthiest way to get through the hard times. Don't let negative thoughts build up in your mind – for example, stress about drought or pressures to get production completed on time. Talk to your neighbours and share your thoughts with family, workers, or those that are there to help, be it your GP or other support groups.

SPEAK UP

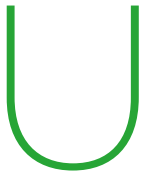
Talking through the challenges and solving problems together is what farming is all about.



Lifeline: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636





UPDATES

KEEP EVERYONE SAFE ON THE FARM BY MAKING SURE YOU KEEP ABREAST OF THE LATEST RULES, REGULATIONS AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS



KEEP UP

There's much to stay up-to-date with on a farm.



Under Work Health and Safety regulations, farmers need to ensure everyone on the farm is safe, and the best way to do this is by keeping up to date with the latest recommendations and developments affecting everything from machinery and safety equipment to digital technology.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Every week there are technology advances that make farming less strenuous and improve health and safety levels. From drones being used for soil management to online farm management tools to equipment with built-in safety controls and better guards, new technologies are constantly making farm machinery safer and easier to operate. As well as keeping up-to-date with the most recent advances, accidents can be prevented by following current regulations for safety equipment (such as guards, safe access platforms and ROPS on tractors).

RISK ASSESSMENT

Conduct regular risk assessments to identify hazards, assess risks of injury or harm arising from each identified hazard, and control risks through implementation of measures to eliminate or reduce them. First-aid knowledge and kits should also be up-to-date and accessible.

STAY ONE STEP AHEAD

When your business grows or changes, you need to update your insurance policies to ensure all workers are protected under workers compensation requirements. And keep yourself up-to-date by going to field days, reading industry magazines such as *The Farmer*, joining industry associations and visiting online resource sites such as safework.nsw.gov.au or calling SafeWork on **13 10 50**.

VACCINATION

IMPORTANT FOR THE HEALTH OF NOT JUST YOUR ANIMALS, BUT FOR YOU TOO, VACCINATIONS ARE AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO PROTECT AGAINST DISEASE



Animals are given vaccines for the same reason that humans are: to prevent disease.

Vaccinations keep individual animals, flocks, herds and people healthy and are often a more affordable option than paying for the treatment of sick animals. The veterinary community generally agrees that vaccinating livestock is preferable to relying on antibiotics after an animal becomes sick.

KEEPING WELL

Livestock such as sheep, chickens, cattle and pigs are vaccinated against diseases including rotavirus, E. coli, and pinkeye.

Farmers are more susceptible to some diseases as a result of working with animals (see box, right). As well as vaccinations received through the National Immunisation Program, boosters are advisable for diseases such as whooping cough and tetanus.



VITAL VACCINES

- **Influenza:** for poultry workers, especially during outbreaks of avian influenza, as well as those working with pigs.
- **Q fever:** anyone living or working with livestock should be vaccinated against this disease contracted largely from cattle, sheep and goats.
- Australia's National Immunisation Program offers protection against many diseases including **tetanus**, which is particularly relevant for outdoor workers. Check the Australian Immunisation Register to make sure your vaccinations are up-to-date.

FEAR NO ILL

Vaccinations reduce the risk of disease for all on the farm.



FAST FACT

In 1901, the first Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to Emil Adolf von Behring, who introduced serum from immune horses to cure and prevent diphtheria.

Today in Australia, snake antivenom is prepared from the plasma of horses that have been injected with snake venom.



WEATHER CONDITIONS

WORKING LONG HOURS IN THE SUN IS PART OF FARMING LIFE, SOME SIMPLE TIPS CAN KEEP WORKERS SAFE



Workers exposed to extreme heat may be at risk of heat stress. The human body gets rid of excess heat by sweating, so any factor that reduces the effectiveness of sweating makes it harder for the body to regulate temperature. Heat-related illness happens when the body can't cool down by sweating.

Those aged over 45 are at increased risk along with the overweight, and people with heart and lung conditions. Research has found younger workers can also be more susceptible to heat-related illness – possibly because of the combination of strenuous tasks with a lack of skills or experience and a reluctance to raise problems with supervisors.

FAST FACTS



49.7°C

Highest-ever temperature recorded in NSW at Menindee on 10 January 1939.

Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology

HOW TO BEAT THE HEAT

PLAN

Try to avoid working in the middle of the day. Aim for early in the morning and later in the afternoon when the levels of UV radiation from the sun, as well as hopefully the temperature, are lower.

SHADE

When possible, install canopies or awnings over work sites.

HYDRATION

Make sure workers have access to cool water – near each work area – and encourage frequent drinking.

REST

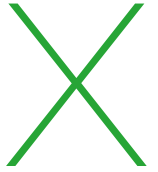
Take regular rest breaks, particularly when the work is very physical. The frequency and length of the break should be increased if the conditions become hotter and/or more humid – up to 30 minutes' break in a cooler area every hour – to help the body cool off.

DURING EXTREME HEAT

Arrange for more workers to do the job, pace the work to meet the conditions, reduce the length of shifts.

EXPERTS

DON'T DIY EVERYTHING - THERE ARE SOME JOBS THAT SHOULD ALWAYS BE DONE BY QUALIFIED TRADESPEOPLE, AND WITH GOOD REASON



While it can be tempting to roll up your sleeves and do the job yourself, particularly on a farm where there's machinery and equipment at your disposal, some tasks are definitely best left to the experts.

1. Electricity and gas

Almost any job around energised equipment could end in tragedy. Unlicensed/DIY electrical work is dangerous for whoever does the work as well as for the users or anyone else who subsequently comes into contact with the electrical or equipment. Always get a licensed electrical contractor to do any electrical work. And with gas, a dodgy fitting can cause fires or explosions so you should always get a licensed professional to install gas or LPG gas connections to make sure the work is not only safe but guaranteed.

2. Tree work

Tree trimming and removal is dangerous work. Every year many people are seriously injured or killed while lopping, pruning, thinning, felling or removing trees. Hence any major tree work should be carried out by appropriately trained and experienced workers.

3. Asbestos removal

Breathing in asbestos fibres can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. Removal of loose/friable asbestos or amounts of bonded asbestos sheeting greater than 10sqm must be done by a licensed person. A licensed asbestos removalist can be found through our [website](#) or by calling us on 13 10 50. Naturally occurring asbestos is also present in some areas of regional NSW. If your property falls within one of these areas you must manage the risks to prevent potential exposure.

4. Working in confined spaces

Get in an expert to clean or repair your tanks or silos - they have the right training and gear to do the job safely. For more information about the dangers of working in confined spaces, go to letter 'C' in this farm safety guide.

TALL ORDER

Tree work is a common cause of injury.





YOUNG WORKERS

EVERY FARM WORKER NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED TO WORK TO THEIR CAPACITY AND STAY SAFE – NONE MORE SO THAN THE YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED

FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Young employees can bring with them a new set of risks.



Young workers aged 15 to 24 make up a substantial proportion of the farm workforce. They can bring energy, new ideas and a fresh perspective. However, they are also at risk of workplace injury due to their lack of experience and maturity, and they may be less aware of Work Health and Safety (WHS) risks and responsibilities. They may also be:

- Developing their skills, competencies and physical capabilities.
- Unfamiliar with appropriate workplace behaviours.
- Reluctant to make requests, ask questions or speak out about problems.
- Overly keen to please and make a good impression.
- Over-confident in their capabilities.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You as their employer have the greatest influence on your young workers' attitude to WHS. Create safe and healthy environments for them by:

- Providing the right tools, training and supervision to complete their work safely.
- Educating them about their WHS rights and responsibilities.

- Empowering them to have the confidence to speak up about health and safety in the workplace.
- Fostering a positive workplace culture that engages young workers in WHS.

TIPS FOR YOUNG EMPLOYEES

- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety at work.
- Ensure you don't adversely affect the health and safety of others.
- Comply with any reasonable instructions given to you by your employer.
- Cooperate with any reasonable health and safety policies and procedures.



13,275

serious workers compensation claims were accepted in 2015-16 from young workers in Australia.

Source: Safe Work Australia

ZZZZZZZZZZZZ



It's important to read the signs and look after yourself, especially as fatigue can increase the risk of incidents due to a lack of alertness and slower reaction times. It can also affect your ability to make good decisions.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF FATIGUE?

Fatigue is about much more than simply needing a few hours' extra sleep or a caffeine fix. It's a condition that can cause a debilitating sense of constant exhaustion and a feeling of sluggishness that makes simple tasks feel like a struggle. It can also be the result of lifestyle and health factors that can be difficult to pinpoint.

Signs that you are fatigued and not just feeling drowsy may include headaches, aching muscles and joints, slow reflexes and feeling moody and irritable over an extended period.

DAILY STRUGGLE

Fatigue is an occupational hazard for farmers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

Fatigue is usually a sign of your body telling you to take a break. But getting precious time off can be difficult on a farm. At the very least, drink water, try to reduce caffeine and alcohol intake, focus on your sleeping and exercise habits and rest when you can.

If you know that you are eating well, exercising, sleeping properly, are not a big drinker or drug taker yet still feel exhausted, you should consider other possible causes and seek professional help.

FATIGUE CAN BE CAUSED BY

- Prolonged or intense mental or physical activity.
- Sleep loss or disruption of your internal body clock.
- Long hours of work.
- Short recovery times between shifts.
- Strenuous work.
- Long commute times.
- Depression and anxiety.
- Family demands.
- Medical conditions including glandular fever, flu, underactive thyroid and anaemia.



IMPORTANT EMERGENCY NUMBERS

FARM EMERGENCIES DIAL 000

State Emergency Service	13 25 00
My Electricity Provider	
My Gas Provider	
Poison Information Hotline	13 11 26
Dial Before You Dig	1100
Family GP	
Neighbours	
Police Assistance Line (non-emergencies)	13 14 44
Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline	1800 675 888
Local vet	
Lifeline	13 11 14
NSW Mental Health Line	1800 011 511
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Mensline Australia	1300 789 978
SafeWork NSW	13 10 50 safework.nsw.gov.au

REMINDER: REPORT ANY MAJOR INCIDENTS TO SAFEWORK NSW

SAFETY CHECKLIST

I have a First-Aid Kit

I have an Emergency Plan

I have a shared Emergency Plan with a neighbour

Location of First-Aid Kit

For information on First-Aid Kit contents, go to healthdirect.gov.au/first-aid-kits

Trained first-aider(s)

Name/number of neighbour who can help in emergency

Name of Insurer

Phone number of Insurer

FREE APP

The **Emergency+** app is developed by Australia's emergency services. It uses GPS in smartphones to help provide information to Triple Zero if you call. Download from the [App Store](#), [Google Play](#) or [Windows Phone Store](#).

USEFUL WEBSITES

safework.nsw.gov.au and search 'farming'

farmsafe.org.au

dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture

lfs.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management

13 10 50

www.safework.nsw.gov.au

