

MAKE HEALTH AND SAFETY A PRIORITY, WHATEVER THE SEASON

This summer, you may have seen the Department of Labour's 'Grim Harvest' campaign, reminding you to take extra care during the hottest and busiest time of the year. As we move into winter, being serious about health and safety on the farm is just as important. Remember, if a situation looks or feels dodgy then **STOP. THINK** about your options and **DO** act in the safest way.



Did you know?

There are two peak times when fatal incidents are most likely to occur on farms, one is late morning (between 10.30am and 12.30pm), and the other is mid afternoon (between 2.30pm and 3.30pm).

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR THIS AUTUMN AND WINTER

- Fatigue can lead to a serious injury. Even though you're busy, take a moment to stop what you're doing. Have a drink of water, a bite to eat or a chat with work mates. Breaks do not need to be long; just a couple of minutes to refresh could make all the difference to both your safety and your productivity.
- Recent research by the Department of Labour highlights the importance of getting help within the first hour – the golden hour – of a serious incident or injury. Workplace deaths can be prevented when working in remote locations by:
 - ensuring workers are equipped with suitable mobile phones or radios
 - maintaining regular contact with colleagues or family
 - establishing procedures for when communications are not maintained.
- Make sure you drive to the conditions. Wet weather can cause access ways and tracks to be slippery and unpredictable. Mist and fog can reduce your visibility dramatically. Ensure tracks and access ways are well maintained and establish the safest routes to ride your tractor, ATV or farm bike and stay to them.
- High visibility clothing is even more important as the number of daylight hours reduces.
- After a hard day's work there will always be some sign of dehydration in your body and while a nice cold beer may seem like a great idea, the alcohol actually removes even more water from your body. Make sure you drink plenty of water both during the day and in the evening, so that you rehydrate and are set for the next day.
- As it gets colder, make sure you're still wearing adequate protective clothing. Don't wear a woolly hat instead of your helmet and make sure any gloves offer protection as well as warmth.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ON FARMS

Farms are unique environments where families work, live and play. This scenario is not repeated on such a large scale in any other industry or workplace. It raises unique challenges that other business operators don't have to consider.

Farm owners and operators should take time to look around the farm and identify the hazards, particularly those that pose the greatest risk to children. Get the kids involved, a sort of safety 'eye spy'.

Tips for child safety on farms:

- Walk around the farm with children and identify the hazards together.
- Adult supervision is the key, for young children it needs to be close and active.
- Lead by example. For example, always wear an approved helmet on an ATV.
- Think about whether it's practical to have safety fences around play areas, animal enclosures, work areas and water spots.
- Keep doors shut or locked so little ones can't get anywhere they're not supposed to.

- Remove keys from doors and vehicles, and never leave vehicles unattended with the motor running.
- Make sure it is safe to reverse farm vehicles. The best way to do this is to walk around the vehicle and ensure children are a safe distance away before starting the engine.
- Children do not ride on tractors, ATVs or on the back of utes.
- Ensure children wear high visibility clothing when out and about on the farm.
- Teach children to wash their hands after touching animals.
- Cover tanks and wells with child restraint covers or fill-in any that are unused.
- Spare tractor wheels should be tied to a wall or left lying flat so they can't topple over and crush a child.

Download our complete factsheet *Keeping Children Safe on Farms* at www.dol.govt.nz



Did you know?

40% of all agricultural workplace fatalities reported to the Department of Labour from 2000 to 2005 were caused by vehicle rollover.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Department of Labour has carried out extensive research into seasonal variations in Workplace fatalities. Some of the findings were:

- Work-related fatalities in autumn tend to occur more in the afternoon, from noon to sunset.
- Male workers aged between 35 and 44 are most likely to have a fatal workplace incident during the autumn.
- Independent of season, older workers aged 65 and above are at the most risk of a fatal workplace incident.
- The most at-risk industries are agriculture, construction, and transport and storage.
- 52% of work-related fatalities from 2000 to 2005 involved a vehicle off-road.
- Nearly 50% of work-related fatalities from 2000 to 2005 were directly due to one of three causes:
 - vehicle rollover
 - crush injuries
 - fall from height.
- The mid-north and the southern regions of New Zealand are most affected by seasonal variations.

ATV SAFETY

52% of work-related fatalities reported to the Department of Labour from 2000 to 2005 involved a vehicle "off-road". Of those incidents, the majority involved All Terrain Vehicles.

Common errors

- Speed – rushing and trying to do too much too quickly
- Driving too fast for the conditions e.g. steep, wet and rough ground
- Misjudging the ATV's capabilities and limitations
- Overconfidence, complacency and a lack of concentration
- Overloading, uneven loads and loads carried on slopes
- Turning too sharply
- Lack of knowledge, skill, ability and experience
- Maintenance and the use of correct tyres

Ways to protect yourself

- Wear an approved helmet
- Wear appropriate footwear
- Ensure that tracks and access ways are maintained
- Establish the safe routes and areas to ride an ATV
- ATVs are not designed to carry passengers
- Reduce your speed to a safe and appropriate level for the conditions
- Avoid steep terrain
- Complete a registered training course to increase the drivers knowledge, awareness and skill level

TEAM APPROACH TO HEALTH AND SAFETY REAPS BENEFITS



2008 Safeguard health and safety award winners Hayden and Rachael Finch are 50/50 sharemilkers on a 191-hectare dairy farm near Rakaia in Canterbury, milking 725 cows through a 40-bail rotary shed. They live on the farm with their two young children and employ three full-time staff.

Both Hayden and Rachael grew up on farms, so have always been aware of the hazards involved in farming. Their awareness of health and safety grew while they were both working in the gold mining industry in Western Australia. A series of major incidents, including a fatality, heightened their understanding of the importance of having good health and safety processes in place.

The couple see their business as a 'system', with all parts of the operation impacting on each other. They understand that staff who work safely and efficiently are going to improve the productivity of their farm. Staff who feel safe, valued and equipped with the right skills have the confidence and capability to be effective, efficient and productive.

It's a team approach

Health and safety, and hazard identification are standing items on the agenda of the regular meetings the couple hold with their staff around the kitchen table with tea and cake. Everyone is involved in the decision-making process, and staff are encouraged to come up with ideas on the best way forward.

It's about investing in your staff
This staff investment starts on the first day with a full induction programme and training. Staff are introduced to the various hazards as they go onto each new task, and a buddy system helps them gain confidence. Staff are also encouraged to do training courses.

By making their working hours more comparable to a 'town' job, with a 'six and two' roster (six days on/two days off), the Finches have found their roster attracts staff and helps them stay alert. They also noticed a huge improvement in staff productivity after they began sharing the evening meal with them. They found their staff were a lot more active and engaged.

It's about having clear policies and procedures

The Finch's hazard manual is a living document that is constantly reviewed as new machinery and chemicals come onto the farm. It sets out all the identified hazards and explains how they can be managed.

It's about having a positive, safe and healthy workplace culture

The Finches run their farm with their hearts and heads. The result is a positive, safe and healthy culture. They have witnessed the personal tragedies caused by poor health and safety, and because their farm is the family home as well as their business, health and safety is imperative. They are also aware of the business benefits from valuing staff and having good health and safety systems in place.

➤ THERE ARE SOME SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO WHILE WORKING: DRINK PLENTY OF WATER, TAKE BREAKS AND IF A SITUATION LOOKS OR FEELS DODGY THEN **STOP. THINK** ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS AND **DO** ACT IN THE SAFEST WAY.

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