



## 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'.



### The hazards children face

- All **animals** can be unpredictable, especially if startled or protecting their young. Children can also be infected by a number of animal diseases such as leptosporis, ringworm and diarrhoea.
- Children lack the judgement, body weight and strength to operate full sized farm vehicles like **ATVs**.
- Children need to understand why **tractors** can be so dangerous. Younger children are most likely to be injured while playing on or near tractors. Older children are most likely to be injured as passengers or while carrying out farm tasks.
- All farm **machinery** has the potential to cause harm and should only be operated by adults. Guards could have perforations small enough for children's hands to get through. Workshops need to be kept locked and all machinery should have appropriate safety guards.
- Farms need to have a map of all the **water** hazards on the property – rivers creeks, troughs, dips, tanks, dams and ponds. Water also poses the risk of burns, especially in the dairy shed where hot water is used at scalding temperatures.
- It is the responsibility of adults to ensure all dangerous **chemicals** used on the farm are stored safely, out of the reach of children.
- **Road safety** on private roads as well as public roads is vital. It is important to have children in car seats and seat belts when in cars, utes and trucks.

### Tips on managing farm hazards

- 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.
- Older children should not ride farm bikes until they can place both feet firmly on the ground on either side when seated on the bike. They should also be taught the dangers of speeding and uneven ground.
- If children are riding a smaller model farm bike they should be properly equipped with an approved helmet and closed in shoes. An adult should always supervise.
- Make sure children know what to do in an emergency. What to do, where to go and who to call. Teach children basic first aid.
- Make it a rule for older children to always say where they are going.

Children do listen, understand, remember and apply rules over time. But things change - seasonal work, new hazards, environmental changes, getting older, having friends over - farm safety needs to be constantly reviewed and updated.

