The Little Book of Farm Safety

Second Edition

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Contents

Foreword
from Stephanie Berkeley, Manager, Farm Safety Foundation

Thank you for picking up Our Little Book of Farm Safety.

As many of you know, the Farm Safety Foundation was set up in 2014 by leading rural insurer NFU Mutual to preserve and protect the physical and mental wellbeing of the next generation of farmers. Through our education programme, research and annual **Farm Safety Week** and **Mind Your Head** campaigns we are hoping to equip the farmers of tomorrow with the skills and knowledge to live well and farm well.

Ten years have passed by so quickly and we are proud of what we have achieved but there is so much more to be done to address the massive challenge we have in the industry. Attitudes and behaviours around farm safety may be changing but the pace of change is slow – too slow for all those we have lost in farm accidents and too slow for the thousands more who are suffering long term ill-health or serious injuries every year in the industry.

At a recent agricultural show, I was approached by a farmer who had read The Little Book of

Minding Your Head. His comments were *"that made sense and made me see how I can help myself and others but what about farm safety? Do you have a little book about that?"*

This started me thinking... and researching... and writing.

If we can offer an easy-to-read and useful guide to mental health, why can't we do the same for farm safety?

I always say shoes on a carpet should never tell boots on the ground what to do and that's not what this little book is about. The Little Book of Farm Safety is here to help you.

We know you're not fans of the phrase *"Farmers must..."* and we will try not to use it but we will remind you of important legal obligations so you can go about your daily tasks safely.

It's **your** health, **your** safety and, ultimately, **your** choice whether you take this guidance and apply it to your own farm. If we are to improve our safety record we all need to do our bit.

The world of farming is changing

Agriculture has always been great at dealing with challenges and change. Huge strides are being made to improve the way we farm and our impact. Every day, farmers deal with challenges around sustainability, traceability, productivity; soil health, conservation, pollution control, biodiversity, efficiency, carbon reduction etc.

However, there is one BIG challenge that needs to be addressed in the industry and, this one is a matter of life and death.

Safety is not a sexy topic. The words Health and Safety can cue an eyeroll or a long-winded justification that farming isn't like other sectors and safety isn't something farmers and farm workers have the time or money to prioritise.

But, for a workforce that accounts for 1% of the working population, the industry has the poorest safety record of ANY occupation in the UK – 20% of all workplace fatal injuries – 21 times higher than the GB industry average.

Every day, farmers make hundreds of risk assessments and hundreds of decisions, any one of which could be life-changing or life-ending.

You can choose to value your safety, and the safety of those around you, or you can choose to take unnecessary risks.

This is maybe the biggest change the industry faces – the change in our attitude – and this is the most personal one.

Only when we change our attitude to farm safety, will we see a change in the numbers of people losing their lives or their limbs on our farms.

Isn't that a change worth making?

WORK AT HEIGHT

On average, four people die falling from a height every year in farming. Those who survive can suffer broken bones or worse. These falls can happen from roofs, lofts, ladders, vehicles, bale stacks, and unsuitable access equipment, such as buckets. These accidents and injuries cause pain and can cost your farm time and money.

Most fall injuries can be avoided by:

- Avoiding work at height where you can; and if not
- Use work equipment or measures to prevent falls; and if not
- Use work equipment that minimises the distance and consequences of a fall

THINK...

- PLAN the job in advance
- Make sure staff are trained, competent and follow safe practices
- If you need to raise people above the ground, e.g., for building maintenance, use properly designed work platforms rather than a ladder
- Never use grain buckets, pallets, or other makeshift equipment. Serious injuries and death have resulted from buckets tipping accidentally
- Non-integrated working platforms (man cages) should not be used where more suitable work equipment is available, and in any case only for occasional work that cannot be planned in advance – like when a lightbulb goes out in a shed and needs fixing immediately to allow the farm to carry on running
- For planned or regular work at height, use a fully integrated and properly constructed working platform
- Some equipment will also need a thorough examination under LOLER

- Don’t overreach when you’re on a ladder or stepladder
- Don’t use ladders or stepladders to do work that includes heavy or strenuous tasks. Only use them to do work that’s quick and light
- Always make sure ladders have level/firm footings and do not lean them against a fragile surface
- Wherever possible, make sure that all fragile materials (e.g., 2 m or closer to the people at risk) are securely covered; or provide full edge protection (top rail, intermediate guard rail or equivalent and toe board) around or along the fragile material to prevent access
- Never walk on fragile materials such as roof lights or glass and remember roof lights and glass may have been painted over
- Take account of weather conditions – light, ice, wind, and rain
- Display a permanent warning sign at the approach to any fragile roof
- Roof ladders or crawling boards must span at least three purlins. They should be at least 600 mm wide and more when the work requires it

- It may seem obvious but jumping down from a farm vehicle is bad for your knees so take your time climbing down from the cab and use the provided steps and handholds rather than the steering wheel

Remember

Think about the importance of maintaining your equipment and make sure there are no defects in the equipment you use and inspect it regularly. Think about getting a fresh set of eyes on the farm or take specialised advice.

Falls often occur because no precautions are taken, or the equipment employed is defective, not appropriate, or used incorrectly. Often people about to do a job believe it will 'only take a few minutes'. They take the risk in the hope that simply being careful will be enough. It rarely is.

WORKING WITH BALES - LOADING TRAILERS AND STACKING

Bales can pose risks when they are being transported on the road or stacked at the farm so it is good to be aware of these risks to ensure that farm workers and other road users stay safe.

Accidents can happen when working with bales and include:

- Falling from bale stacks
- Falling from vehicles and machinery used to transport or stack bales
- Being struck by falling bales
- Electrocution from contact with overhead electricity power lines (OHPLs)
- Trips and falls from loose bale string

As well as accidents, there are additional health problems associated with handling and stacking bales such as:

- Lifting and carrying (manual handling injuries – bad backs, pulled muscles and strains); and
- Exposure to dust (respiratory diseases and infections)

Loading bales can be safer when:

- Workers have been trained
- Equipment is safe, maintained, and suitable for transporting
- Trailer floors are in good condition and end racks, or hay ladders are used
- Loads are built to bind themselves
- Sound bales are used for all edges
- Full loads are secured before moving
- Trailers are not overloaded, in either height or weight, or overhanging the trailer edge

- Suitable ladders are available for access to the load
- Sheets, nets, or straps are inspected for defects before lifting them into position
- Only the strap is thrown across the trailer. Keep the buckle in your hand

A falling bale can kill, so keep people clear when loading.

Anyone involved in bale stacking work, including casual workers, should:

- Know how to stack bales safely or be supervised by someone with this knowledge
- Be properly trained in how to use any machinery and equipment safely
- Be medically and physically fit for the work

Stacking bales on the farm

- Wear appropriate PPE – dust masks / gloves
- Provide signs to warn people to keep clear of bale stacks (risk of falling bales, fire etc)
- Select a location away from any potential fire hazards and sources of ignition
- Assess the risks from working at height when stacking and de-stacking bales and use the right equipment to do the job safely
- Build stacks on firm, dry, level, freely draining ground, which should be open and well ventilated, away from OHPLs
- Make sure that bales are 'tied in', i.e., stacked so that lower supporting bales are stabilised by overlapping and interlocking upper bales in alternating layers
- Use stones or crushed rock on the ground beneath a stack to make it level, which may also help trap water and stop it going into the stack

- Stack round bales in a pyramid shape and on their sides rather than end on
- Always keep children off the farm and away from bale stacking or moving operations

Monitor bale stacks

- Keep a close eye on the construction of the stack to make sure it's stable during and after stacking
- Make sure that there are no loose strings which could cause a trip hazard
- Stacks of big square bales can be more stable than those of small conventional bales, but big bales can cause fatal and serious injuries if they fall on to a person due their weight
- Check stacks after severe weather or if you suspect children might have been at them

TRANSPORT

Tractors

Accidents involving tractors and other farm vehicles cause many serious injuries and deaths every year however there are many minor injuries and near misses we never hear about. Simple, but essential, safety measures would have prevented most of them.

The most simple of which is making sure that any, and every, person operating a tractor, maintaining a tractor, or training someone else to operate a tractor is competent to do so. This means they have the knowledge, training, and experience to carry out the task safely and successfully.

Trailers

The law (PUWER 98 regulations) says that all work equipment is required to be properly maintained which means that agricultural trailers should be in a roadworthy condition, maintained and in good working order, with records of maintenance held by the owner.

Tractors and trailers used on or off the road need to stop safely within a reasonable distance under all conditions.

- If trailer brakes are not correctly adjusted (not doing their share of the braking) the tractor braking system can be subject to excessive wear
- Safe towing requires the use of a large enough tractor and selecting the most suitable gear to stop the combination within a safe distance
- Always ensure the failsafe trailer braking system is in place and fully connected

Trailer brakes

- Always ensure trailer brakes are disengaged before driving to avoid wear and damage
- Properly maintain and adjust braking systems for tractor-trailer combinations to ensure efficiency and safety. Testing on the move may be necessary after maintenance but this must be done in a safe manner

- Keep hydraulic and air brake couplings maintained, clean and avoid contamination
- Make sure linkages are properly lubricated, operate freely, and keep them maintained
- Check the parking brake works properly – they are prone to seizing if neglected
- After use, clean mud and contamination from brakes (including parking brakes). Make sure the cleaning method does not lead to deterioration of the brakes (rusting caused by pressure washing)
- All maintenance and inspections must be carried out in accordance with the machinery manual – visit **www.tillypass.co.uk** to learn more
- Some older brake linings may contain asbestos. Take appropriate precautions to avoid breathing dust and when disposing of waste material
- Make sure operators are familiar with the operation of air brake systems (if fitted) so they know how to attach and detach trailers safely

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs), quad bikes and side-by-side utility vehicles

ATVs such as quad bikes and side-by-side utility vehicles are designed to cope with a wide variety of off-road conditions, but if not used properly, they can quickly become unstable.

Many deaths from quad bike accidents in the UK are caused by head injuries. Helmets would have prevented most, if not all, of these deaths.

So, use your head and wear a suitable helmet when riding a quad bike.

The long seat on a quad bike allows the operator to shift their body weight backwards and forwards for different slope conditions, something known as 'active' riding. It is **not** for carrying passengers!

The main causes of serious or fatal injuries include:

- Being thrown off during an overturn or after losing control
- Collisions with trees, other vehicles etc
- Being trapped/asphyxiated under an overturned machine
- Pedestrians being struck or run over by ATVs

Sit-astride ATVs

- Take the time to get trained – Check out the European ATV Safety Institute EASI **www.quadsafety.org**
- **Always wear head protection**
- Always use safe start & **SAFE STOP**
- Check the age of anyone using an ATV – manufacturers have minimum age recommendations and so does the law! For adult sized ATVs used in farming, the manufacturers instructions usually prohibit anyone under **16** from using the ATV
- Don't drive too fast
- Never carry a passenger
- Make sure any loads are balanced and not over the safe limit, and
- Take extra care when driving near banks, ditches, and slopes

Side-by-side ATVs

- Again, take the time to get trained
- Always select a machine fitted with a Roll Over Protective Structure (ROPS)
- Always use safe start & **SAFE STOP**
- Both driver and passenger should wear lap belts/seat restraints to prevent them being thrown out in the event of an accident or overturn
- Think about head protection, even in a side-by-side with a ROPS
- Don't drive too fast and take extra care when driving near banks, ditches, and slopes
- Don't overload the cargo bed

rural roads

NFU Mutual recently launched a Code for Countryside Roads - a guide on the safe and respectful use of rural roads supported by the farming unions of all four nations, the British Horse Society, Older Drivers Forum, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), and, of course, us.

According to NFU Mutual's latest analysis of Department for Transport figures, there were 70% more deaths on Britain's rural roads in 2023 than there were on urban roads.

Collisions on rural roads are also around **four times** more likely to result in a fatality so, for farmers and farm workers the advice is clear and that is to RESPECT RURAL ROADS.

Countryside roads have unique and diverse hazards which are often entirely different to those on urban roads and require a specific set of skills and awareness.

Common hazards include:

- Higher speed limits
- Changing speed limits
- Blind corners, junctions or field entrances
- High speed corners and junctions
- Narrow carriageways and single lanes with no hard shoulders
- Poor road condition
- Overgrown verges
- Undulating roads
- Limited/no road lighting or road markings
- Ice, compacted snow and fog on ungritted roads
- Mud and debris on the road
- Agricultural vehicles
- Livestock and wild animals
- Vulnerable road users (e.g. people walking, cycling, riding horses or carriages, or people riding motorcycles)
- Parked and stationary vehicles at passing points.

The content of the Code aims to educate anyone using rural roads to be aware and respect others, to plan journeys, watch your speed and to be patient when horses, ramblers, cyclists and even farmers are sharing the road.

For those operating agricultural vehicles and machinery the message is to work responsibly.

- Prior to venturing onto the road, check that all lights, indicators and rotating beacons are working. While beacons on agricultural vehicles are only a legal requirement to be lit on dual carriageways, they can be useful aids to increasing the visibility of agricultural vehicles on other roads.
- Check and maintain braking systems.
- Ensure mirrors and windows are clean and wipers and washers are operating so you have clear visibility of your surroundings.
- Plan your route to avoid busier periods where possible. When travelling in unfamiliar locations, plan your route in advance and make sure that you're aware of any weight, height or width restrictions that could apply.
- When moving 'oversized' agricultural vehicles, such as combine harvesters, ensure you comply with the legal requirements for movements of any vehicles three metres wide and over.

- Make sure that you have a fully charged mobile phone available to be used when your vehicle is parked, to call for the emergency services if you are involved in any incidents or come across these when on rural roads.
- Be aware that mounted and trailed implements will swing out when turning and could cause injury or damage to other road users or their property. Trailers with various axle configurations will swing out in different ways when making tight turns and allowances need to be made for this.
- When you become aware of traffic building up behind you, pull over when safe and legal to do so, to allow faster vehicles to safely pass you.
- When pulling into fields or farm entrances, use your indicators in good time, so that other road users are aware of your intentions.
- Take particular care when turning right, in case other vehicles are attempting to overtake you at that point.

To download the Code for Countryside Roads or learn more about NFU Mutual's rural road safety work visit **www.nfumutual.co.uk**

MACHINERY

Many serious injuries on farms involve farm machinery, often during maintenance or unblocking. Some happen because a machine has been used for a job for which it is unsuitable; others because guards have not been provided or have been left off.

Power Take Off (PTO) shafts have been involved in many fatal injuries, often with machines used while stationary, such as for slurry handling or feed milling and mixing.

Accidents have happened where operators have tried to clear blockages, tried to correct faults, or work on a machine with the engine still running or the power engaged so remember:

- Use safe start & **SAFE STOP** procedures when required
  - **Handbrake on**
  - **Controls in neutral**
  - **Switch off engine (or turn off power)**
  - **Remove key (or lock-off the power supply)**
- Ensure all parts of the PTO guard are in place – check they are properly chained, lubricated, and free from defects
- Do a quick check and report or repair any damage immediately
- Never use a machine with a damaged PTO guard
- Take extra care when using a PTO driven machine in a stationary position e.g. a slurry tanker
- Ensure the tractor is stationary, chocked or that there is a mechanical connection between the tractor and a stationary PTO-driven machine to ensure the tractor or the machine can't move, causing the PTO shaft to separate

Before working with any machinery, carry out a basic check to make sure that it is in good working order and safe to use. The exact requirements will vary according to the machine, but some basic checks could include the following:

- Mechanical defects – pay particular attention to things like brakes, wheels, and tyres
- Check that stopping devices are working correctly – emergency stop button
- Controls should be clearly marked to show what they do
- Hitching and attachment points – for mounted, semi-mounted or trailed machinery, check that it has been safely attached to the towing vehicle such as a tractor. Pay attention to the condition of drawbar/pick-up hitch, and hitch rings, pins, clips etc
- For self-propelled machines, make sure mirrors are clean and properly adjusted. Check any other reversing aids are also working.

THINK...

- Only use the machinery and equipment that you are trained to operate
- (I'm going to keep repeating it but...) always use safe start & **SAFE STOP**
- Make sure the machine is the right one for the job (a bale spike shouldn't be used to lift anything other than bales, telescopic handler with a grain bucket should NOT be used to lift a person for work at a height)
- Know how to clear blockages safely
- Check all guards are fitted and working correctly
- Do a quick check of equipment and fix any defects before each use or report it to your manager
- If you are working under booms or trailers please ensure that the load is properly secured by purpose designed props/scotch mechanisms etc.

- Also do a quick check of the area around the machines – is it clean, tidy, and free from obstruction and people?
- Check that electrical machinery is isolated and locked-off if safeguards are removed
- Wear any PPE that is provided.

Farm machines can have several power sources – mechanical, hydraulic, and electrical (a potato harvester with hydraulic-driven components, PTO-driven parts, and electrical controls for some systems).

All power sources must be isolated during **SAFE STOP**. Usually, stopping the tractor and removing the key does this – but this may not be the case with fixed machinery where it may be necessary to isolate the power supply.

DELIVERIES

Both farmers and their suppliers share the responsibility of making sure farm staff and delivery drivers are safe whenever anything is delivered to a farm, such as animal feeds, hay, straw, livestock, material, fuels, and general goods.

Many accidents could be prevented if there was better communication and cooperation between those involved. Some delivery drivers may be familiar with the premises, especially where regular collections or deliveries are made. However, not all drivers will know the farm layout and may be more at risk of having an accident.

Clear signage at the entrance to the farm can help and let them know where to park and unload safely or make them aware of specific hazards such as overhead power lines (OHPLs), public rights of way on the farm, children etc.

THINK ABOUT...

- Restrictions on the type, or size of vehicle the farm can safely handle
- Restrictions on when goods should be delivered or collected
- The best approach routes to the farm
- Where visiting vehicles should park on arrival and who they should report to
- Bio-security arrangements
- Equipment available to unload the delivery, such as a telehandler
- Where the driver should be during the unloading process
- Overhead power lines (OHPLs) – are there warning signs displayed and are they a safe distance for tipping, loading, and unloading tasks?

- Are ladders, steps, floors (particularly lofts and catwalks) safe?
- Are children in the area? Are they kept away from delivery tasks and vehicles?
- Are all working areas clear?
- Is machinery/equipment properly guarded and regularly inspected
- Are the surfaces around delivery areas free from clutter and waste?

Maybe also think about investing in some ‘fisheye’ mirrors for any blind spots or setting and displaying a speed limit.

LIVESTOCK

Handling cattle and livestock always involves risks: the risk of being hurt physically by an animal that is frightened or has been startled and the risk of being hurt due to poorly thought-out handling facilities, the misuse of equipment or failing to maintain them.

Many farmers never stop to consider why animals behave as they do and, more importantly, what this behaviour could mean to their personal safety. Animal-handling practices are often inherited from watching others and from personal experiences growing up on the farm. Too often, this results in unsafe livestock handling and restraint practices.

Although most animal incidents are not fatal, many men, women and children are injured every year due to risk-taking. Broken bones, crushed and mashed limbs, work absences and medical expenses are some of the results of livestock-related accidents so really give some thought to improving your livestock handling systems and making them safer and more efficient.

Handling Facilities

- Ensure there are proper handling facilities, including well-maintained and designed holding pens and race, and a crush that is in good working order. Makeshift gates and hurdles are not enough
- Getting in with the animal – especially in a pen or confined space – should always be a last resort. It would be better to plan facilities that keep people and animals apart from each other
- If you do have to enter the area, plan your escape route before just in case an animal suddenly charges you.

Bulls

Take extra precautions when handling bulls:

- All bulls should be kept in a purpose-made bull pen. Ensure external doors and gates are locked or otherwise secured to prevent unauthorised access. Catches should be stock proof
- With a properly designed bull pen the farmer should be able to feed and water from outside the pen

- Where possible, include an outside area for the bull to go in, to allow bedding up or cleaning
- Display safety signs at the entrance to any building where the bull is kept
- Arrange your race, crush and loading areas so that no one ever needs to be in them with the animals
- Keep yard or farm perimeter gates closed when loading bulls to contain an escaped animal within the yard or farm.

The Race

- Can animals readily enter the race, which should have a funnel end, and is there enough room in the collecting pen for them to feed into the funnel easily? A circular collecting pen allows staff to stand safely behind a forcing gate as they move animals into the race, and keeps the animals moving

- Can animals see clearly to the crush and beyond, so they will readily move along the race, which may be curved, but should not include tight turns. Animals will be more prepared to move towards a light area than into the dark
- Are the sides of the race high enough to prevent animals from jumping over them and are they properly secured to the ground and to each other? Sheeting the sides helps to keep cattle moving by reducing visual disturbances such as shadows and shields them from other animals
- Can you lead the animal in the race while it waits its turn in the crush. Hinged or sliding doors are suitable but be sure they are operated from the working side of the race, so the operator does not have to reach across it to close the gate. No one should work on an animal in the crush with an unsecured animal waiting in the race behind.

The Crush

- Does the crush have a self-locking front gate and yoke to allow the animal's head to be firmly held? Additional head bars will prevent the animal tossing its head up and injuring people
- Does it have a rump rail, chain, or bar to minimise forward and backward movement of the animal? Make sure this is always used
- Is it secured to the ground or, if mobile, to a vehicle?
- Is it positioned to allow you to work safely around it, without the risk of contact with other animals, and have good natural or artificial lighting?
- Do the gates etc. open smoothly with the minimum of effort and noise?

- Is the crush floor slip-resistant, made of sound hardwood bolted into place (nails are not suitable), metal chequer-plate, or with a rubber mat over the base? Working around the crush will be easier if it is under cover with a workbench nearby (for documents, vet meds, instruments etc). Specialised tasks, such as belly or foot trimming, require a purpose-designed crush with adequate restraint and enough room to work safely.

Before you start...

- Make sure only those authorised and experienced with cattle, or those undergoing supervised training are allowed to enter the barns/pens/parlour and handle the cattle – especially if this involves working with bulls
- Where possible, ensure there are two people present, especially if you are trying to separate an animal from the rest of the herd or handling bulls and use the right equipment – halter/ropes/bull poles
- Consider the risk to older workers or if the worker has reduced agility – they may not be able to move out of the way quickly when necessary
- Children under the age of 13 should not be allowed to enter cattle housing or handle cattle. Older children should only be allowed to carry out low risk tasks on the farm. This will involve very limited tasks with cattle.

SLURRY

Slurry gas is a mixture of gases – the most dangerous gas is hydrogen sulphide which is extremely poisonous. At a low concentration, hydrogen sulphide gives off a smell of rotten eggs however, at higher concentrations you cannot smell it, a fatal exposure can happen extremely quickly and without warning making it harder to breathe and you will quickly become confused and collapse.

At certain concentrations ONE BREATH CAN KILL.

Storage

- Ensure fences are properly erected and maintained and that any access points for people or equipment such as suction pipes should be protected to the same standard as the remainder of the fence or wall
- Ensure gates are securely locked and use chains and padlocks or other locking mechanisms
- Avoid stacking materials against any fence, wall, or above-ground storage tank and remove all ladders that give access to storage tanks when they are not in use

- If you scrape manure over a ramp into a lagoon or pit, your ramp will normally need a barrier to stop tractors or other machines going over the edge

Mixing

- Take all animals out of the building before starting to mix slurry
- If possible, mix on a windy day
- Open all doors and windows so buildings are well ventilated
- Use outside mixing points. Don't use indoor mixing points unless very strict controls are in place
- If slats are removed, cover exposed openings of the tank beside the pump/mixer to stop anything falling in

Start the pump/mixer and immediately leave the building, then **KEEP OUT** of the building for as long as possible – or for at least **30 minutes** or longer after the stirring stops.


Danger
Deep slurry
pit

Poisonous gases are released in large volumes very soon after mixing starts and, in a confined space, can build up to dangerous levels very quickly.

Keep away from openings, buildings and tanks for a minimum of **30 minutes** after slurry stirring stops.

- DO NOT enter buildings above slurry storage during mixing. This is a specialist work, and any work inside the actual slurry systems themselves is specialist confined space work and should only be carried out by a competent contractor with the correct equipment and training. Because of high gas concentrations, DO NOT stand over any mixing point inside or outside of the building when the mixer is running
- DO NOT stand close to the pump/exhaust of a tanker when it is being filled
- Have tanks emptied before the slurry gets up to within 300mm of the slats.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The rise in the number of people visiting the countryside has grown over the past few years and, unfortunately, farming activities can pose risks to you, your workers and any contractors or visitors including dog walkers, cyclists and hikers.

Public safety should be a part of your overall health and safety policy.

If you have people passing through your land, you have to minimise any risk of injury to them. Legally, farmers have to consider the health and safety of members of the public using public rights of way through their fields.

TOP TIPS

You can help the general public understand their responsibilities:

- Don't put dairy bulls into fields that have public right of way running through them
- Where possible, keep cattle – especially cows with calves – out of fields with public rights of way running through them. Try to put cattle in fields without public rights of way wherever you can
- If cattle, especially cows with calves, do need to be put into fields with public rights of way, consider putting in permanent or temporary fencing to segregate cattle from public rights of way
- Any livestock that is known, or suspected, to be aggressive shouldn't be allowed to roam freely where the public has access – you could be liable for any resulting harm
- Monitor any cattle in fields with public rights of way at least on a daily basis. It might be worth recording this

- If cattle are in field with no segregation, make sure that feeding points and water encourage the herd away from the route of the path
- Display signs at all entrances to fields with public rights of way that contain cows with calves or cows or beef bulls
- Keep paths clear. Signs that give information on animals in the field should be up to date and in good order. This helps people stick to the right routes and access points
- Encourage people to respect your wishes by giving clear, polite guidance where needed
- Point out any man-made or natural hazards on your land
- Where there is public access through a fence or hedge, create a gap if you can – or use an accessible gate or a stile

- As long as electric fencing is properly installed and warning signs are displayed, they can be a reasonable solution when segregating cattle from people. Non-electrified fencing may result in fewer concerns/ comments from members of the public.

Educate yourself on what rights, if any, apply to your land.

HSE have two useful guides –
'Cattle and public access in England and Wales' and **'Cattle and public access in Scotland: Advice for farmers, landowners and other livestock keepers'** that outline the ways you should keep people safe as they use public rights of way across your land.

OVERHEAD POWER LINES (OHPLS)

Accidental contact with live overhead power lines kills people and causes many serious injuries every year. People are also harmed when a person or object gets too close to a line and a flashover occurs.

Work involving high vehicles or long equipment is particularly high risk, such as; combines, sprayer booms, telehandlers, tipper vehicles, ladders, irrigation pipes, polytunnels.

Remember

- Select your machinery and equipment carefully so it can't come into contact with OHPLs
- Plan your work so it avoids high risk areas and uses alternative access routes that don't pass under OHPLs
- Overhead lines can be difficult to see, particularly at night, or when hidden by trees
- Take special care when felling or lopping trees
- Plan carefully when erecting, dismantling and moving equipment such as ladders, scaffolding or agricultural polytunnels

- Always carry long objects in a horizontal position
- Plan storage areas carefully, never stack anything directly under/near OHPLs
- If you're considering opening up farmland to the public (e.g. for camping), ensure your safety risk assessment includes OHPLs
- Keep an eye out for children and visitors on your land
- Ask your distribution network operator (DNO) to supply the routes of overhead power lines and voltages running across your land or near its boundaries, mark these on your farm map/plans and communicate to anyone working in the vicinity – use warning signs to remind people
- If the presence of an OHPL is a problem, contact your DNO to see if they can re-route it, put cables underground or isolate the power
- Always carry a mobile phone with you in case you need to call the Emergency Services.

If any part of a vehicle you are operating touches an OHPL;

If the vehicle is still operable:

- Stay in the cab. Using the controls in the cab, lower any raised parts in contact with the line or try to drive the machine clear, if you can
- Warn others to stay clear
- **Call 105 This free-to-call number is available to customers in England, Scotland and Wales and automatically directs callers to their local electricity network operator so they can check the line and confirm when the power is off.**

If the vehicle is not operable or there is a risk that movement will break or drag down the line:

- Stay in the cab
- Warn others to stay clear
- **Call 105** to disconnect the supply. The operator will confirm when the power is off so you can be rescued by the Emergency Services.

If it is not possible to drive clear and there is a risk of fire or other immediate hazard:

- Jump well clear so that no simultaneous contact is made between you, the vehicle, and the ground (DO NOT touch the vehicle)
- Try to land with your feet as close together as possible
- If you have to get out, do not step out of the vehicle. JUMP CLEAR and take **leaping strides** so that one foot is off the ground at all times until you're at least 5 metres away
- Stay well clear of the vehicle and warn others to stay clear

- **Call 105** to disconnect supply and report to Management. The operator will confirm when the power is off so you can be rescued.

TOP TIP

Sometimes grid coordinates and postcodes aren't available or accurate enough to specify a precise location. This is especially important for rural areas. This makes it hard to find places and prevents people from describing exactly where help is needed in an emergency.

For accurate location services download **what3words**.

The app has divided the globe into 57 trillion 3m x 3m squares, giving each square a unique combination of three words: a **what3words** address. The app is used by over 85 percent of UK emergency services, as well as breakdown providers such as the AA.

GRAINS

Grain silos are considered as a confined space and can be dangerous due to the high risk of engulfment, a lack of breathable air, and the mechanical hazards of sweep augers. If possible, please do try to avoid entering these spaces. If the hazard is unavoidable e.g., for essential maintenance, then do your risk assessment and make sure you address the risks identified to make the job safer – this may mean bringing in a competent contractor.

Although the grain may seem solid, anyone stepping onto it risks being engulfed as the grain cannot support an average person's weight. People have also slipped and fallen to their death while checking grain temperature. These incidents may be rare but they have a high risk of death. The suction-like action and weight prevents victims from resurfacing and makes rescue even more difficult.

As well as risk assessing the task, a good idea may be to create and rehearse a rescue plan in case an emergency happens to prevent rescuers from being overcome – do not rely on the emergency services as they could arrive too late! Again this may involve bringing in a competent contractor to help create the rescue plan.

Hazards include:

- **Falls from height/slips and trips** – ladders and stair access to equipment present a high injury risk – on average four people die every year in farming falling from height. Added to this are slip/trip risks from obstructions and uneven floors
- **Harvest machinery** – screw conveyors, rotary valves, rollers, mixers can all cause serious injury if operators don't follow safety procedures
- **Transporting grain** – when moving around the site
- **Hazardous substances** – such as chlorine, hydrochloric acid, sulphur dioxide. Tight controls and high awareness of how to handle, store and dispose of hazardous substances is vital

- **Noise** – can cause temporary or permanent hearing loss for work
- **Grain dust** – if not properly controlled, processes can generate a lot of dust. This is easily inhaled by workers, who are then vulnerable to asthma, rhinitis (runny/stuffy nose), conjunctivitis (watery or prickly eyes) and other irritant effects.

THINK...

- Good housekeeping and regular maintenance of access equipment (such as ladders) and staff training can reduce the risks considerably
- Hazards with machinery usually occur during maintenance, cleaning or when refilling the silos. Do a risk assessment to identify the risks and controls before anyone goes near machinery
- Consider creating a site-specific traffic management plan
- Heavy sacks should be mechanically lifted/handled wherever possible. Keep manual handling to a minimum

- Try to reduce noise exposure by reducing shift lengths and modifying the plant, machinery, and working environment. Ear protectors are a last resort and probably the least effective measure
- Good ventilation can prevent excess generation of dust
- Try to regularly monitor dust levels and maintain associated machinery and equipment
- Keep a careful eye on any workers exposed to dust hazards.

SILAGE CLAMPS

A significant issue with silage pits is the chance of slips, trips and falls from height. Think about how you gain access to the top of the silage clamp, maybe to remove plastic sheeting and tyres, and what work you do close to the edge. A fall off the open edge of the clamp can often be more than 3 metres and you may land on concrete.

There are several types of silage clamps and options can include; hillside pits, above ground bunkers, in ground pits or trenches and stack and bale silage. The most common is the traditional narrow concrete block style bunker, which is easy to build, and doesn't take up too much space.

The disadvantage with vertical wall clamps is safety as there is little space for people working on top of the clamp and vertical drops for people and vehicles of more than 3 metres. The concrete blocks should have guide rails along the edge; these are not safety barriers, but guide rails giving an idea of where the edge is if you're in a vehicle cab filling and rolling the clamp.

Hazards include:

- Vehicles overturning or falling from the edge when consolidating the clamp
- Falling from the edge of the clamp when retrieving tyres or adjusting sheeting
- Collisions with people or objects
- Cuts from wires protruding from tyres that hold down the sheeting
- Respiratory illness – or even death – from inhalation of trapped gases such as nitrogen dioxide and carbon dioxide; (climate change, extreme weather conditions and changes to nitrogen use in grass can result in increased risk of nitrogen dioxide. Being heavier than air it usually settles on the floor of the pit, seeping out of the clamp)
- Asphyxiation due to lack of oxygen
- Burns to the skin because of contact with silage additives and/or nitric acid from the consolidation process.

THINK...

- Before you operate a consolidating vehicle/tractor, are you experienced and familiar with the controls?
- Has the vehicle/equipment used for silage consolidation been serviced and maintained; only use a tractor that has doors and an approved safety cab or Roll Over Protective Structure (RoPS)
- Seatbelts – make sure that seatbelts are maintained and worn while in the cab
- Use low-clearance, wide front-end tractors equipped with well-lugged tyres to maintain traction
- Add weights to the front and back of tractors to improve stability as necessary
- Ensure that sight rails are in place and visible on every clamp wall side when consolidating the clamp
- Take extra care when working near OHPLs – know the height of the power lines on any routes you take, the clamp and the equipment you are using before you start and allow enough clearance to avoid flashover

(you may not need to touch the power line to be hurt) – see OHPL section. Always carry a mobile phone with you in case you need to call the Emergency Services

- Check clamp walls prior to filling to ensure they are properly supported
- Seal the clamp as soon as consolidation is complete
- Take care when driving up and down the pile to prevent rollback
- Take care to prevent falls when on top of the clamp and removing sheeting by keeping clear of the edge (at least 1 metre distance)
- Use a hook or pole where possible to stay back from the edge of the face when removing tyres or plastic sheeting
- Use a suitable mobile working platform for sheeting and un-sheeting where possible
- Ensure that if you need to use a ladder to access the clamp, it is suitable and adequately secured.

For indoor clamps remember:

- Ensure as much air as possible is removed during consolidation
- Ensure the clamp is sheeted correctly to reduce the amount of gas escaping into the building
- Restrict access to the clamp during the first 72 hours as this is when nitrogen dioxide is produced. After this, the levels of the gas reduce, but trapped gas can remain present under the sheeting
- Ensure the clamp/building is well-ventilated
- Report any mist or orange coloured material around the edge of the clamp and leave the area immediately – this may indicate the formation of nitric acid which can burn the skin
- Wear gloves for un-sheeting to protect against contact with silage additives, rat urine and faeces
- Wash all surfaces exposed to silage additives
- Wash hands thoroughly before eating, drinking, touching your face or smoking
- Thoroughly wash all cuts/scratches with soap and water and cover with a waterproof dressing

FARM FIRES

Dust, hot moving parts, electrical wiring and a tank full of diesel provide the perfect ingredients for a major fire. Farm fires can put lives at risk, spread into crops and threaten surrounding buildings.

Fires need three ingredients present

- **Heat** – a source of ignition, e.g., faulty or misused electrical equipment, smoking, naked flames, etc
- **Fuel** – something that will burn, e.g., straw/hay, plastic wrapping, wood, chemicals, dry waste, packaging materials, etc
- **Oxygen** – found in the atmosphere, e.g., natural airflow through doors and windows from air-conditioning systems.

If any **one** of these is missing, a fire cannot start.

It is important that steps are taken to avoid the **three coming together** so the chance of a fire starting is minimised.

The biggest farm-based fire risks are:

- Fire caused by people (arson)
- Hay fires
- Fires involving hazardous materials and fuel
- Farm vehicles and machinery
- Fires caused by sparks (welding, grinding or other hot works)
- Electrical faults causing fires.

To reduce the risk of a fire:

Secure flammable substances

- Ensure flammable substances are securely stored away. This can include fuel stores, fertilisers, hay/straw bales and chemicals
- Bales can be a target for arson; try to keep them away from any areas of public access. If this is not possible, use fencing to prohibit public access to the bales

- Keep flammable substances and sources of ignition in separate storage units, and at least 10 metres away from livestock. Lithium powered equipment and machines should also be taken into consideration, as these can be self-igniting.

Have a fire emergency procedure plan

- Put together a fire emergency procedure plan, make every worker aware of it and keep it in a clearly marked place
- The plan can include details of the responsible person(s) on the farm, muster points, evacuation routes for people and livestock, locations of flammable substances and potential sources of ignition, and locations of fire extinguishers and water sources.

Check electrical equipment

- Make sure electrical systems and equipment are fit for purpose and in appropriate working order and

encourage staff to visually check equipment before use

- In the event of a fire, contact the emergency services immediately – have your What3Words location to hand
- Prepare to evacuate livestock and ensure that you can assist the fire service.

Preventing Combine Fires

- Fit a suppression system that is compliant with Special Certification Rule 199 (SPCR 199, or P-mark 199), Australian Standard (AS 5062-2016) and Factory Mutual (FM 5970) to contain, extinguish and prevent fire
- You can use a mobile compressor (or a fixed one if fitted to the combine) to regularly blow away debris from the machine, but only do so if the exit pressure is reduced (as a guide 30psi/2.1 bar is effective at cleaning)
- Regularly clean out dust and chaff from hot spots and check the machine over when you're finishing use for the day

- Switch off engines and ensure moving parts have stopped before clearing blockages or carrying out maintenance
- Always stop to investigate hot-running engines or bearings
- Make sure drivers are aware of the locations and heights of power lines and check that you will safely pass under wires
- Keep a fire extinguisher on the combine – and ensure it is regularly maintained
- Keep a bowser filled with water on hand, and be prepared to create a fire break in the event of a crop fire

- Stay in touch with ALL workers regularly – especially those working on their own and keep your mobile phone with you at all times – don't leave it in the tractor or pick-up cab
- Download and use **what3words** to help emergency services find your exact location
- Remind staff to stay hydrated, take breaks and monitor levels of tiredness, stress and mental health.

Most importantly, do not take personal risks. Never attempt to tackle a fire unless it is safe to do so!

PRE-HARVEST CHECKS

Harvest time can be one of the most busy and dangerous periods of the farming year and it is essential to consider what *could* go wrong to enable safer working for everyone.

Make a point of doing a special induction for harvest staff, who may be pushing themselves hard in terms of effort and working hours. Farmers who take on staff to help them over the harvest period should also make sure they are given a good health and safety briefing before they start work.

In the event of something happening on the farm, a safety induction will give some protection to the farmer as the Health and Safety Executive will ask questions about the procedures in place to ensure worker safety.

THINK...

- Check tractors, trailers, combines, balers, and other harvest equipment, making sure they are safe, roadworthy and that maintenance schedules are up to date
- Train staff, especially temporary staff, to ensure they are aware of all safety hazards, emergency procedures and company and highway rules, especially in relation to harvest risks
- Share detailed field and yard plans with staff and contractors, showing the risks and land features such as location of OHPLs, steep gradients, public rights of way, obscured field entrances, ditches etc
- Remind staff to follow **SAFE STOP** before leaving cabs, ensuring parts have stopped before clearing blockages or carrying out maintenance, and to always wear seat belts, whether on highways or in fields/yards
- Carry out daily vehicle/machinery safety checks, regularly clean out dust and chaff from hot spots e.g., in combines and balers

- Make sure ladders and platforms are in good condition and a safe system of work is in operation for all work at height and other higher risk tasks
- Stay in touch with ALL workers regularly – especially those working on their own and keep your mobile phone with you at all times – don't leave it in the tractor or pick-up cab
- Keep an eye on the welfare of the team. Remind staff to stay hydrated, take breaks and monitor levels of tiredness, stress and mental health.

Abnormal Loads – usually, police must be notified at least 24 hours before vehicles more than 3 metres wide and/or with a speed limit of 40mph or less are taken on the road, or when they are travelling distances greater than five miles. You can apply for an annual dispensation but it must be done BEFORE you travel and the document should be kept in the vehicle at all times.

During Harvest

- Regularly clean out dust and chaff from hot spots in combines and balers
- Switch off engines and ensure parts have stopped before clearing blockages or carrying out maintenance
- Always stop and investigate hot-running engines or bearings
- Make sure drivers are aware of the locations and heights of power lines and check that the machinery will safely pass under wires and restrictions
- In very dry conditions, keep a sprayer filled with water on hand attached to a tractor to lay a fire break in the event of a crop fire
- Instruct drivers to keep to safe speeds in the grain yard
- Check signs are in place to help lorry drivers go to the right place
- Clean dust regularly from grain dryers – and ensure that all staff running the dryer are fully trained and know what to do if fire breaks out.

CHILD SAFETY ON FARMS

Farms can be wonderful places for children to grow up. They are a great source of learning where organised visits can inform and inspire children from all backgrounds to learn about where their food comes from and how the industry is vital to everyday life.

However, the sad fact is that farms are the only workplace where children continue to lose their lives, in what is always a horrific tragedy for families and heart-breaking for their communities.

Farms and farmyards are not playgrounds. They are hazardous.

Some of those hazards include:

Moving vehicles

The natural curiosity of children and their fascination for tractors, trailers and all kinds of farm vehicles tends to attract them towards busy work areas. But children can be hard to see, and they are in real danger of being run over by moving vehicles – especially at busy times, such as during silage making, grain harvesting and slurry spreading.

They also need to be kept away from other vehicles which may be visiting or making deliveries to the farm.

Tractors

Tractors are not designed to carry children and, in fact, it is illegal for a child under 13 to drive or ride on all agricultural machines including tractors, combines, sprayers, telehandlers and ATVs. (Prevention of Accidents to Children in Agriculture Regulations 1998). Or The Agriculture (Safety of Children and Young Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

Don't be fooled into thinking that children are safe in the cab of a tractor – they are not. Falling from a tractor and then being run over is a common cause of fatal accidents.

Training – children aged 13 and over can, with appropriate permission and supervision, drive an appropriate tractor on agricultural land provided they hold a nationally recognised certificate of competence in the safe driving and operation of tractors.

Any work by over 13s using agricultural vehicles should be allowed only when the young person has been risk assessed and has undergone properly structured training.

They should also be limited to using certain vehicles and only be allowed to carry out low risk work under proper supervision.

Please remember that, when asking children over 13 to participate in any work on the farm, you still need to consider and comply with the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Quads and All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

Farm quad bikes are not toys. Too many children have been involved in serious and fatal accidents caused by All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and quad bikes.

Only properly trained people, (usually over 16 years old), should be allowed to operate ATVs. They must wear the correct PPE including a helmet, the machine must be in full working condition, and they must be adequately supervised.

Passengers must never be carried on quad bikes.

Falls and Falling Objects

The best way of protecting children from falls and falling objects is to keep them away from the farm unless they are closely supervised by someone not involved in farm work.

Heavy objects such as spare tractor wheels, old gates and old machinery can fall on people including children so store them flat and secure. Put ladders away after use.

Livestock

Most people realise that bulls and rams are dangerous but female animals with their young can be even more so. Children who come close to a playful cow, sheep, pig, or horse can be seriously injured. So keep them away during calving and busy times.

Infectious Diseases

Even apparently healthy livestock can carry diseases which can be passed on to humans – children are more vulnerable to the effects of these illnesses.

If children are in contact with animals, their bedding, or areas where there is slurry, dung, manure, always make sure they wash their hands with soap, change dirty clothing and clean their shoes/boots.

Harmful Substances

It may appear obvious, but you must lock away all harmful or poisonous substances. Chemicals, pesticides, fertilisers, medicines, dosing guns and syringes must be put away in a safe secure place and people – including children – should not have access.

Slurry

Children will always try to get into places that are inaccessible.

Fence off slurry tanks/pits/lagoons. Keep pits securely covered when not in use. Make sure tank covers are always in place and, if slats are removed, cover exposed areas of the tank beside the pump/mixer to stop anything falling in. Remove any ladders or store them out of reach.

Slurry gases can kill. Never put yourself in danger when mixing slurry and keep everyone away.

Safe Play Area

If young children live on or visit a working farm it is essential that an area is set aside to allow them to play safely and to protect them from the many dangers.

It should be a secure area with upright fencing to prevent children climbing out. It should also be close to the home or farmhouse so they can be easily supervised.

Use signage to let people know that there may be children in the vicinity.

Farms are busy working areas, full of serious hazards, so KEEP CHILDREN SAFE.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH IN AGRICULTURE

An 'occupational risk' is the chance of having a certain work-related injury or ill health.

These can include:

Noise and Vibration

Hearing loss caused by work is preventable but once it has gone it won't come back.

Exposure to high noise levels on farms can cause permanent damage to your hearing and you may not even be aware that its happening until it is too late – leading to tinnitus (ringing in the ears) or deafness.

Farms are noisy! Animals, tractors, ventilation systems and other machinery have high levels of noise so farmers can be particularly vulnerable to hearing loss.

Noise injury occurs when thousands of tiny hair cells in the inner ear (cochlear), are damaged through excessive noise. These hair cells are needed to receive sound vibrations before transmitting them to the brain. Once they are damaged or destroyed, these hair cells are not

replaced. Unfortunately, the process of hearing loss is painless, progressive and permanent – but thankfully it is also preventable.

THINK...

- Choose quiet machines or processes when selecting production methods or new machines
- Get the supplier to specify noise levels at the operators' positions
- Enclose noisy machines or processes with sound-insulating panels or put them in separate rooms
- Fit silencers on exhaust systems
- Reduce the need to work in intensive animal housing at feeding times by changing the feeding regime, putting controls etc. on the outside or in a protected area, or doing other jobs when the animals are fed.

NOTE – Hearing protection should be the last resort to control noise exposure. Whether you use ear defenders, plugs, or inserts, you will only get the protection if they are in good condition, the right size and worn properly.

To be effective, wear hearing protection all the time in noisy places. If you leave it off for even short periods, the amount of protection will be limited, and your hearing can still get damaged.

Vibration

Repeated or prolonged use of vibrating tools such as chainsaws, brush cutters or grinders can lead to hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS), a group of diseases including vibration white finger, nerve, muscle, or joint damage.

Warning signs for these include:

- Tingling or numbness in the fingers
- Fingers turning white in cold or damp conditions, followed by throbbing and flushing.

Whole-body vibration (WBV) is the vibration and shock you feel when you sit or stand on a vehicle or machine travelling over rough ground or along a track, or the vibration when you work near powerful machinery such as milling machinery.

THINK...

- Sounds obvious but use the right machine for the job, e.g. chainsaws designed for low vibration, with heated handles or with anti-vibration mounts, tractors with suspended axles or chassis for transport work
- Maintain equipment correctly, e.g., anti-vibration mountings on chainsaws
- Start with warm hands, keep them warm, and take regular breaks
- Make full use of the tractor seat position and suspension adjustments
- Keep traffic routes as smooth as possible and free of bumps and ruts

- Travel at an appropriate speed for the ground conditions and choose the right course
- Avoid high levels of vibration and/or prolonged exposure for older workers, those with existing back problems, young people, and pregnant women.

Manual Handling

Manual handling includes lifting, carrying, putting down, pushing, pulling, moving, or supporting a load by hand or using other bodily force.

It's not just the weight of the load that can cause injury: it's the size, shape, grip, the way you carry it, where you're carrying it, and how often you have to do the task.

Many farm workers suffer from a variety of 'musculoskeletal disorders' (MSDs) because of poor manual handling techniques, or through other tasks which involve repetitive movements, excessive force, unusual postures, or just from badly organised or rushed working.

These can include:

- Muscle injuries
- Sprains or strains
- Back pain
- Sciatica
- Hernias
- Arthritis, or swelling of the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, and shoulder ('work-related upper limb disorders' or WRULDs).

Sometimes these are temporary but sometimes they are not and people may not fully recover which affects their ability to continue working in the future.

THINK...

Plan your handling tasks properly and, if possible, eliminate manual handling completely:

- Train staff in manual handling
- Change to smaller, lighter unit sizes, e.g., use feed blocks or feed bags weighing 25 kg or less to make lifting and carrying easier
- Mechanise the task. A move to big bales, or fertiliser in big bags, eliminates manual handling because they are so large or heavy they can only be moved by machine
- Introduce feed-handling systems incorporating bulk storage bins and distribution pipes to eliminate the handling of feed compounds
- For animals, use properly designed cattle races and crushes or sheep turnover crates to reduce the risks during animal handling and husbandry tasks.

Zoonoses

Zoonoses are diseases that are passed from animals to humans. Micro-organisms such as; bacteria, fungi, parasites, and viruses can cause illness by infecting the body when they are breathed in, swallowed, or when they penetrate the skin through small cuts or grazes.

THINK...

- Make sure your COSHH assessment takes zoonoses into account
- Minimise the risk of infection by keeping stock healthy
- Vaccinate where appropriate, e.g., against enzootic abortion of ewes
- Avoid contaminating animal drinking water and ask your vet to check stock health regularly
- Try to avoid or reduce contact with animals
- Wear suitable PPE when handling animals, especially if they are sick, and gloves and a waterproof apron if handling potentially infected material such as products of birth or muck or sewage

- Make sure you have good personal hygiene. Wash and dry your hands before eating, drinking, or touching your face
- Immediately wash and dry all cuts and grazes and cover with a waterproof dressing
- Control rats and other vermin that can spread disease.

Stress

Did you know that the law requires employers to prevent work-related stress and support good mental health at work? This includes farming.

Work-related stress is a major cause of occupational ill health in farming, and it can mean severe physical and psychological conditions for farm workers. It can also lead to poor productivity, high staff turnover and increases in accidents in the industry with the poorest safety record of any occupation in the UK.

Many workers feel stress when they can't cope with the pressures of farming.

Stress is something that many farmers face at some point and is an important contributor to mental ill health. For example, they can get stressed if they feel they don't have the skills or time to meet tight deadlines. It can also come from many sources such as weather, financial issues, international trade agreements, politics, rural crime and rural isolation.

We all know that stress affects people differently – what stresses one person may not affect another. Factors like skills and experience, age or disability may all affect whether someone can cope.

TOP TIPS

Talk About It: Talk to friends, family and workmates. You can also join farming forums and Facebook groups to chat to other farmers. They may have useful advice or experience and be able to provide support.

Take A Break: It's difficult to relax while on a farm as there is always plenty to do. Try to schedule regular

breaks where you actually leave the farm for a period of time (anything from a few hours to a weekend away). A short time away can help you come back with a fresh perspective.

Look After Yourself: Stress can take a physical toll so it's important that you eat a heathy diet, do some physical exercise (other than farming) and try to get a good night's sleep. Making time to take care of yourself will help you stay strong in the face of stress.

Relax: There are a variety of ways in which you can relax – you might like to read a book, go for a walk or watch your favourite TV show. Try to find time to relax each day, even if it's just for 15 minutes.

For more information on stress and mental wellbeing in farming, check out The Little Book of Minding Your Head.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Farm Safety Foundation (Yellow Wellies)
www.yellowwwellies.org

Our website contains information and advice around key farming tasks, all written in basic English. This includes advice pages covering many of the topics in this book as well as some very handy FREE downloadable resources that farmers can use to make their workplace safer. This includes a Farm Emergency Plan, Farm Safety Checklist and the new digital Build Your Own Health & Safety Policy. And for those who are concerned about stress and poor mental health, the website also hosts The Little Book of Minding Your Head.

Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/new.htm

The HSE website offers a wealth of information whether you are new to the industry or not. They want to make it easy to make your farm safe, healthy and legal with lots of guides on:

- Getting started in health and safety
- Assessing the risks in agriculture
- The main safety hazards in agriculture

- The main causes of ill health in agriculture
- Storing (or intending to handle or store) 150 tonnes or more of ammonium nitrate.

Health & Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI)
www.hseni.gov.uk/topic/agriculture

The HSENI website hosts a wealth of information both for farmers parents and teachers in rural primary schools who are based in Northern Ireland. The website also contains all the background and news from the Northern Ireland Farm Safety Partnership with resources covering a multitude of topics including using telehandlers in agriculture, employing children and young people, employing agricultural contractors and workshop safety.

National Farmers Union
www.nfuonline.com/hot-topics/farm-safety/

The NFU website has advice and resources for members on a wide range of topics to help stay safe on farm. This is also the home of the England Farm Safety Partnership website.

NFU Cymru
www.nfu-cymru.org.uk

NFU Scotland
www.nfus.org.uk

NFU Farming Union Wales
www.fuw.org.uk

Ulster Farmers Union
www.ufuni.org

The Union has been working with HSENI (see above) and is a member of the NI Farm Safety Partnership, which aims to increase awareness of farm safety and to reduce work related fatalities and injuries on farms, and at every opportunity they remind farmers to stay farm safe. The UFU actively encourages farmers to take part in the FarmSafe awareness workshops, which are delivered across NI. Farmers can also access an online farm safety tool to help them keep farm safe.

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