



Avoid Harm on the Farm

Farm Safety

An Adult's Guide



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Farms are dangerous places for children

Keeping our children safe and sound has to be a priority for all of us and it is all the more important when it comes to looking after children who live on, play on or visit a farm. Being hit by, or run over by, farm machinery is the biggest single cause of children being killed on farms. Falling from tractors; drowning; being killed by animals or being hit by falling objects are the other main causes.



HOW SAFE IS A CHILD ON YOUR FARM?

Keep children away from moving vehicles

Over the years farm machines have got bigger and more powerful. The natural curiosity of children and their fascination for working machines tends to draw them towards busy work areas. But children can be hard to see and they are in great danger of being run over by moving machines - 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 visit the farm such as milk tankers or lorries delivering feed. Make sure your vehicles have good all-round visibility and keep children under 5 in a safe play area.





Children and tractors

Tractors are not designed to carry children. The law says that no child under 13 years old may drive or ride on tractors or any other self-propelled machine used in agriculture. Remember children are not safe in the cab of a tractor. Falling from tractors and then being run over is a common cause of fatal accidents to children.



Training

A child aged 13 or over can, with appropriate permission and supervision, drive a tractor on agricultural land provided they hold a nationally recognised certificate of competence in the safe driving and operation of tractors. The certificate of competence can be obtained by completing a relevant machinery course. Suitable training is available from CAFRE at Enniskillen, Loughry and Greenmount campuses. There is more information on the training and courses at the back of this booklet.

Children and quads

Quads are not toys. Many children have been involved in serious and fatal accidents caused by quads. Only properly trained people, within the age range recommended, (minimum usually age 16 years), should be allowed to operate it. They must wear the correct helmet and be adequately supervised. Passengers must never be carried on quad bikes.



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Falling objects

Heavy objects such as spare tractor wheels, old gates and old machinery can fall on children so care is needed to make them secure. Check that ladders have been stored safely where children cannot climb them. Stacks of hay or straw are not play areas and can collapse or catch fire, killing those under or on top of them.



Farm animals



Most people realise that bulls, boars and rams are dangerous but female animals with their young may also attack people as they try to protect their young. They see children and especially dogs as a threat to their new born. Children who come too close to a playful cow, sheep, pig or horse may be injured. Keep dogs away too.

Children should be kept out of yards and pens where potentially dangerous animals are kept. Gates and fences should be built so that they cannot be climbed easily.





Infectious diseases

Even apparently healthy livestock can carry disease which may be passed on to humans - particularly children. After touching animals or their surroundings, hands must be well washed with soap and warm water, especially before eating food.



Harmful substances



Lock away all harmful, poisonous substances. Children must not be allowed to pick up spray containers or touch drums containing chemicals used in the dairy. Animal medicines, dosing guns and syringes must also be put away in a safe place.



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Slurry tanks and lagoons

Children will get into places which are apparently inaccessible. Make sure slurry pits and lagoons are securely fenced and sheep dippers are 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. Keep children away from livestock buildings when slurry is being mixed.



A safe play area



If young children live on, play on, or visit a working farm yard 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 securely fenced with upright fencing to prevent children climbing out. It should also be close to home to allow them to be easily supervised.





Safe tractor driving 13-15 year olds

By law any child between the ages of 13 and 15 years of age who wants to drive a tractor engaged in agricultural activities, on private land in Northern Ireland must successfully complete a Lantra certified course or a similar course.

Course location:

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise, CAFRE, Enniskillen, Loughry and Greenmount campuses.

Course duration:

4 days - usually arranged in summer holidays.

For more information go to:

Web: www.lantra.co.uk/awards/la-landing-page

Web: www.cafre.ac.uk

Email: enquiries@cafre.ac.uk



For more information contact:

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This publication and others are available on the HSENI website



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How safe is your farm? – check it out!

- Do you have a safe and secure play area for young children?
- Do you prevent children from playing in or around farm yards and livestock?
- Do you prevent all children under 13 years from riding on tractors and farm machinery?
- Do you restrict the use of the quad and provide suitable safety equipment?
- Do you secure all heavy wheels, gates, heavy equipment and stacked materials to prevent them from toppling over?
- Is your slurry lagoon securely fenced to prevent children from gaining access and do you make sure tank covers are always in place?
- Do you keep track of where family members are playing or working and when they are expected back?
- Do you make sure everyone washes their hands before eating and drinking?

