

# FARM SAFETY FOUNDATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS



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# **WE LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES...**

**DESTRUCTIVE STORMS, FLOODING AND NOW CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)... 2020 IS PROVING TO BE A YEAR WE CAN'T WAIT TO FORGET... AND IT'S ONLY MARCH!**

If ever there was a time to look out for each other, that time is NOW.

Now the Government has taken the decision to close schools, many parents of young children may have no choice but have them on, or around, the farm more. Your children may also be called upon to help you if family, friends or neighbours are older, vulnerable or have contracted coronavirus COVID-19 themselves.

## **SO WHAT DO YOU DO? HOW CAN YOU ENSURE YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY ON THE FARM?**

Here at the Farm Safety Foundation (or Yellow Wellies as you may know us) we know these are challenging times but we're here to help. We have worked closely with HSENI to prepare a few safety reminders for you and your family to ensure you give yourself the best chance of staying safe, working well and making sure your children will return to school happy and safely when the time comes.

First, let's talk about the reason they have closed the schools. Schools do not just close and send pupils home without a good reason. And, with the increased threat of the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) our Government realises that this is no joke... and so should you!

We're all about working safely, whether on the farm or in the community and, given the highly contagious nature of this virus, each and every one of us has a responsibility to work together to reduce this threat to humanity.

So, until we get this sorted just stay put and keep your family safe. Don't travel. Cancel that family get together, birthday party or day out.

**We know this is going to be tough but these are special times. Don't take risks.**

**It's just not safe and it's just not worth it.**

**Your children can still have their fun in a few months time when this whole situation is (hopefully) over.**

**In the meantime, please read these quick tips, stay safe and farm safe.**

# FARMS CAN BE DANGEROUS

**We know that farms can be wonderful places for children to grow up, where independence and responsibility are fostered and family relationships are strengthened.**

They are also a fantastic 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.

But we also know that farms and farmyards are not playgrounds.

They can be dangerous places for everyone, not just children, and children are put at great risk of injury when playing, visiting or helping out around the farm.

Being hit by, or run over by, farm machinery or visiting vehicles is the biggest single cause of children being killed on farms.

Falling from tractors and ATVs; drowning; being crushed or attacked by animals or being hit by falling objects are the other main causes.

- Children should not be allowed in the farm work place (and for young children they should enjoy outdoor space in a secure fenced area).
- Any access to the work area by children under 16, for example for education, or knowledge experience, should be planned and fully supervised by an adult not engaged in any work activity.
- Children under the age of 13 years are not allowed to drive or ride on any agricultural machine.

**ON A BUSY FARM, AND IF PROPER SUPERVISION IS NOT POSSIBLE, THE BEST WAY TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE ON A FARM IS TO KEEP THEM AWAY.**



# MOVING VEHICLES

**The world of agriculture has changed since we were children and we all need to keep up. 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 farm transport.**

Over the years, farm machines have got bigger and more powerful.

The natural curiosity of children and their fascination for tractors, telehandlers and other agricultural vehicles 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.

## CHILDREN AND TRACTORS

### **TRACTORS ARE NOT DESIGNED TO CARRY CHILDREN**

The law states that no child under 13 years old may drive or ride on tractors or any other self-propelled machine used in agriculture.

Don't be fooled into thinking that children are safe in the cab of a tractor either – they are not. It is actually illegal to carry children under 13 in the cab of an agricultural vehicle and hugely unsafe. Falling from tractors 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. If you have teenagers, and they really want to help, this is well worth researching.

## CHILDREN AND QUAD BIKES

### **QUADS ARE NOT TOYS**

Many children have been involved in serious and fatal accidents caused by quad bikes. Only properly trained people, within the age range recommended, (minimum 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 used as light agricultural vehicles.



# FALLING OBJECTS

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

Heavy objects such as spare or old 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 great places for hide and seek – they are NOT play areas and can collapse or catch fire, killing those under or on top of them.

Grain intake pits and grain bins are also a No-Go Zone!

# FARM ANIMALS

**Most people appreciate that bulls, boars and rams are dangerous but female animals with their young are just as dangerous and may also attack people as they try to protect their young.**

They see children, and especially dogs, as a threat to their newborn.

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.

Ensure you have the time to fully supervise children when they are visiting the farm to see the animals. At busy times - such as right now when calving and lambing are taking place - be honest... you will not be able to fully supervise your children so just keep them away.



# SLURRY TANKS AND LAGOONS

**Children by their nature are inquisitive and will always try to get into places which are apparently inaccessible so 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 are very poisonous. Never put yourself in danger when mixing slurry, keep everyone away.

## Infectious Diseases

**Even apparently healthy livestock can carry disease which may be passed on to humans - particularly children.**

You've heard it enough times recently but after touching animals or their surroundings, hands must be well washed with soap and warm water, especially before eating food.

## Harmful Substances

**It may appear obvious but take a look around your sheds, stores and barns and make sure you lock away any harmful, poisonous substances.**

Chemicals, pesticides, fertilisers, veterinary medicines, dosing guns and syringes must be put away in a safe secure place and people, especially children, shouldn't have access.

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# USEFUL NUMBERS

**999 EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**112 EU EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**105 UK POWER NETWORKS**

**03000 111 999 FARMING HELP**

**0300 111 4166 RSABI**

**0800 138 1678 RURAL SUPPORT NI**



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