

This list can help you eliminate risks encountered on the farm and give you a head start on preventing accidents.

By Sue Weaver

According to the National Safety Council's 2008 edition of Injury Facts, agriculture is our nation's most dangerous industry, claiming about 28 deaths per 100,000 workers per annum.

Farms can be dangerous places, so it's our job to prevent accidents.

This brief checklist is a starting place; use it to eliminate some obvious risks, but please don't stop at that. For more detailed information, follow the links we've provided and maybe save the life of someone you love.

Tractors

Tractor accidents cause the highest number of farm fatalities, with tractor turnovers accounting for 44 percent of all adult deaths; yet according to the U.S. Department of Labor, the use of protective equipment such as rollover protective structures (ROPS), seat belts and guards could prevent up to 40 percent of all farm-machinery injuries.

- Is your tractor fitted with an ROPS and seat belts?
- Do you always wear a seatbelt?
- Are all guards functioning and firmly secured in place?
- Are the steps and operator's platform clear of slippery substances and other debris?
- Are lights and flashers operational, tires properly inflated and hydraulics free of leaks?
- Are a 20-pound ABC fire extinguisher and a fully equipped first-aid kit stowed in an easy-to-reach compartment on the tractor?
- Has everyone who operates your tractor been adequately trained? Are they physically and mentally fit to do so (meaning neither tired, stressed, nor under the influence of alcohol or drugs, prescription drugs included)?
- Do you shut down equipment, remove the key and wait for all moving parts to stop



before dismounting, no exceptions?

■ Do you keep bystanders, particularly children, away from your tractor and machinery?

■ Do you take extra precautions if you offer rides (especially to children) on your tractor or farm machinery? Falls from tractors, machinery, hayracks and pickup truck beds claim lives and cause serious injuries each year.

Read This

Safer Tractor Operations for Home and Acreage Owners
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE197>

Tractor Safety

www.wvu.edu/~exten/infos/pubs/safety/sa12-1

Livestock

One of every five farm-related injuries to children under age 20 is animal-related, the majority involving horses or cattle. Adults are often injured, too. It's important to maintain safe housing, hauling and handling facilities, and to understand how each species thinks in order to manage it safely.

■ Are stalls, pens and fences tall enough and secure enough to contain the animals kept there?

■ When entering areas containing intact males, such as bulls, stallions, boars, bucks or rams, do you always map out an escape route and never allow the animal to

come between you and that escape? Do your children know they should never interact with intact males, even seemingly friendly ones, without a capable adult present?

■ Does everyone know that females with new offspring, even if they're normally friendly, may attack to "protect" their young? Again, plan an escape route in case you need one.

■ Do you and others' younger children understand the importance of asking an adult to help them approach an animal they wish to interact with instead of doing it themselves?

■ Does everyone who handles your livestock realize the importance of wearing protective attire such as sturdy shoes with non-slip soles and gloves?

■ Are livestock medications kept in their original containers and used only by designated adults?

Read This

Livestock Handling Safety
<http://abe.sdstate.edu/sofy/LivestockHandlingSafety.pdf>

Livestock Safety (including links to species-specific resources)
www.ag.auburn.edu/~schmisp/safety

Kids on the Farm

An astounding number of children are killed or injured in farm-related accidents every year. According to National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health figures (read the report at www.cdc.gov/niosh/childag/docs/2001131.html), between 1982 and 1996, there were 2,174 farm deaths among children and youth under 20 years of age. In 2001 alone, 22,600 children were injured while living on, working on or visiting U.S. farms. Are your kids at risk?

■ Do you maintain a safe play area for children too young (under age 9) to participate in barn activities?

■ Do you supervise intermediate-age youngsters (about ages 10 to 14) and coach them in tasks appropriate for their ages and ability levels?

■ Do you actively teach children safety protocols and quiz them so you know they understand? If you don't, start now!

Read This

Children and Safety on the Farm (This is the best online reference we've found.)
<http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/FreePubs/pdfs/ub030.pdf>

Farm Safety and Kids (including links to species-specific resources)
www.ansci.umn.edu/dairy/dinews/10-2-safety.htm

Farm Safety 4 Just Kids (Be sure to have your children click on Fun 4 Kids.)
www.fs4jk.org

Emergency! Emergency!

Because farms are by nature often located far from EMTs and hospitals, it's important to know what to do when a farm-related injury occurs.

■ Are you trained in CPR and formal first-aid procedures? If possible, everyone in the family, even older kids, should know how to administer the basics.

■ Have you posted emergency phone numbers near landline phones in the house and barn, and programmed them into all cell phones?

■ Are there well-stocked first-aid kits in the house, barn, farm vehicles and on tractors?

■ Do your children know how to react in a farm emergency, such as what to do and whom to call?

Read This

Managing Farm Emergencies
www.btny.purdue.edu/Pubs/PPP/PPP-57.pdf

Farm Emergency and First Aid Kits
www.cdc.gov/NASD/docs/d001001-d001100/d001080/d001080.pdf

Preplanning for Farm Emergencies
www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000901-d001000/d000937/d000937.html

The Tip of the Iceberg

This is only a sampling of what you need to know to protect your family and visitors from farm-related accidents; for further information, peruse any of these fine resources.

Read This

MedLine Plus Farm Safety Links
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/farmhealthandsafety.html

National Ag Safety Database Online Videos
www.cdc.gov/nasd/menu/video/video2.html

National Safety Council Farm Safety Fact Sheets
www.nsc.org/resources/factsheets/index.aspx

Safety publication downloads at Penn State
www.agsafety.psu.edu/factsheets.html

The Farm Safety Handbook,
by Rick Kubik (Voyageur Press; 2006)