

Fact Sheet

A farm can be an endless backyard full of exciting places for children to explore, however it can also be home to a number of hazards. As well as being a family home a farm is also a workplace and it can be difficult to separate the two.

The following tips will help you to keep you and your family safe on the farm:

- 1. Always** supervise children. Young children in particular are very curious and tend to change their behaviour without any warning. If there is more than one adult around, designate a supervisor to avoid any confusion.
- 2. Be aware** of potential dangers on the farm. This fact sheet will help you to identify what to look out for.
- 3. Make changes** around the farm to reduce or remove hazards.

Fun for all ages

Farm activities can vary greatly between younger and older children. Farm safety can also be different between age groups of children. Young children hold little understanding of instructions, rules, and danger. It is essential to take younger children out of a hazardous farm environment and allow them to play in a safe area on the property.

Older children are more likely to be exposed to hazards from being given unsuitable chores and tasks. It is important for older children to be only given small, age appropriate jobs on the farm. Safety precautions must be undertaken and protective gear worn at all times.

Safe play area

For families living on farms, a fenced play area away from water, machinery and other farm hazards is recommended for young children. A safe play area should be:

- Close to the home and clearly visible.
- Securely fenced with solid or vertical railing and no foot holes for children to climb.
- Within 1.2 to 1.5 metres high, with only a small or no space between the bottom of the fence and the ground below.

Water Safety

Farms can be home to many different bodies of water such as dams, tanks, creeks, rivers, pools and troughs. To prevent drowning on farms:

- Familiarise children with water from a young age.
- Make sure you are aware of dams or other bodies of water on or near your property.
- Securely fence swimming pools with a well maintained self-closing gate.
- Remove or secure ladders on tanks so that they are out of reach from children.
- Ensure all wells and troughs are fitted with lids or mesh.

It is important to remember that children can drown in only a few centimetres of water and should be supervised at all times around water.



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Quad bikes and motorcycles

Quad bikes and motorcycles are commonly used for the operation of farms. Although quad bikes are called 'all-terrain vehicles', they are not suited for all terrains and can be unstable on rough, steep, or uneven surfaces. For these reasons Kidsafe advises:

- Children under the age of 16 years do not operate or take the position of a passenger on a quad bike or motorcycle.
- Provide children with age appropriate bikes and safety gear. Teach children how to operate them safely and show them safe places to ride.

Farm machinery

- Farms are often home to dangerous vehicles, machinery and equipment such as tractors, harvesting equipment and drills.
- Make sure vehicles are locked and keys removed when not in use.
- Always supervise children closely around tractors and heavy machinery.
- Always hold children close around moving vehicles. Teach them to stand in view and out of the way.
- Never allow children to ride in the back of a Ute. Ensure they are restrained correctly according to their age and size.

Chemicals

- Store all farm chemicals in a lockable shed away from the family home and children's play areas.
- Keep chemicals in their original container, clearly labelled and out of reach of children.
- Undertake a course on safe handling of chemicals on farms.
- Keep the Poisons Information Centre number close to the phone in case of

an Emergency: **13 11 26** (Australia Wide, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Farm animal safety

Farms can be a great setting for children to interact with a variety of animals, however the unpredictable nature of animals can be dangerous. Horses are a common risk to children on farms, along with cows, chickens, and pigs.

- Always supervise children around farm animals.
- Ensure that animal pens and all stockyards are inaccessible to young children.
- Ensure that children are properly instructed and supervised when riding horses.
- Protective equipment such as a helmet and riding boots should be worn at all times.

First aid on the farm

Farms are often located in rural and regional areas and it can be difficult to reach medical assistance quickly. For this reason it is important to keep your first aid kit stocked and first aid training up to date.

For more information visit:

Farmsafe WA

www.farmsafewa.org

Royal Life Saving WA

www.royallifesavingwa.com.au/

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Poison Information
Centre

13 11 26