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Safety essentials when taking kids to visit a farm

Kids often find farms fascinating places to visit. Playing with animals and running around in the vast outdoors are just what many kids adore.

As fun as farms can be for kids, parents know they can be equally as dangerous, especially for kids visiting farms on vacation or school trips. Fortunately, there are many ways concerned parents can protect their farm-friendly kids without taking the fun out of their next visit.

PROTECTION FROM CHEMICALS

Kids must be protected from chemical exposure on the farm. Exposure can happen in a number of ways, be it inhaling or breathing chemicals into the lungs or contact between chemicals and the skin or eyes. Kids can even ingest chemicals by eating or swallowing something on the farm.

Protecting kids from chemicals, such as pesticides, on the farm requires that

parents educate children about caution or warning labels. Teach kids to stay away from items with caution labels. A "Caution" label is typically used to indicate hazardous items that can cause minor or moderate injury. "Warning" labels are often used to indicate items that cause more serious injuries and possibly death.

Another way parents can protect kids from chemical exposure is to be a good role model. When using chemicals, also be especially careful, wearing protective clothing and discarding containers and other materials properly. Make sure all containers are tightly closed and stored in locked cabinets that are out of reach of curious kids.

PROTECTION FROM ANIMALS

Animals present a major hazard to kids when kids visit the farm. Many kids love animals, and that love often takes precedence over safety. When kids are visiting a farm with livestock or other

animals, parents should emphasize the following points so kids can enjoy the animals without risking injury.

- Remain calm and move slowly and quietly when around animals.
- Avoid an animal's hind legs and approach larger animals at the shoulder.
- Steer clear of animals with newborns, no matter how cute and cuddly such animals might appear.
- Wear proper attire, including steel toed shoes. Kids should always wear helmets when riding animals.

Additional safety measures parents can take include keeping kids away from stallions, bulls, boars, and rams, and emphasizing the importance of having an accessible escape route whenever working with animals.

PROTECTION FROM GRAINS

A host of hazards exist on a typical farm, and grain

equipment is no exception. Though flowing grain might not excite kids who have never been around it, kids are often fascinated when they witness grain production on a farm for the first time. It's very easy for kids to get trapped in grain or swept away by flowing grain, the force of which is difficult to understand by those who have never seen grain production close up.

When visiting a farm, parents should ensure that all access doors to grain storage structures are locked before letting kids out of their sight. In addition, ask if it's possible to shut off power to grain-producing equipment. Keep kids away from grain wagons and do not permit them to enter grain storage areas. When taking kids to farms with heavy grain production, employ the buddy system and ensure each child has an adult with them at all times.

Farms are fun places for kids, but parents must be diligent and emphasize safety when visiting a farm with their children.

Though fun places to visit, farms pose many hazards to children. Parents must emphasize safety when visiting farms with kids in tow.





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Safety essentials when visiting a farm

The nursery rhyme does not state, "Old MacDonald had a farm and on this farm there was a bunch of dangerous things." But maybe it should?

Farmers perform an essential service, providing food and other products that consumers commonly take for granted. The inner workings of a farm are something to treat with respect. Most of the families who live and work on a farm understand the potential hazards of such an environment. However, individuals visiting a farm may be unaware of these dangers. Understanding farm safety helps keep everyone safe.

According to the organization Kids Health, the age groups at greatest risk for injury on farms are children ages 3 to 4 and teenagers ages 13 to 14. Most injuries can be prevented, though, with a little education and precautionary measures.

MACHINERY

There are many different forms of machinery on a farm to help keep it working efficiently. These items can pose serious safety risks. Although tractors are the type of farm equipment that causes the most injuries, some adults still think it is safe to allow children to ride along.

Injuries that may result from farm machinery include pinching of clothing or parts of the body, where a person may become trapped in the gears or components of equipment; cuts from equipment that shears crops; bruising or cuts from projectiles thrown by mowers or other field equipment; and crushing or trapping injuries from machinery that falls or tips over.

ANIMALS

Part of the excitement of visiting a farm is seeing and petting the animals. Although many animals may be docile and domesticated, they can still be unpredictable. Animals that are startled by yelling or loud noises also may become restless and dangerous.

Children should understand that animals may unintentionally cause injuries. It may be in a horse's defense mechanism to kick when it is scared. To avoid such injuries, never approach animals from behind. Also, when baby animals are present, a female may be protective of her brood and go on the defensive.

Another inadvertent injury that may occur is from bacteria or viruses from the animals. Animal feces may contain bacteria, and there may be other microorganisms on the animals themselves. It is a smart idea to always wash your hands after handling a farm animal to prevent the spread of disease.

Here are some other precautions that can be taken when visiting a farm.

- Don't allow children to wander around unsupervised.
- Rides on farm equipment should be discouraged.
- Before starting machinery, operators should locate children and other guests and clear them from the work area.
- Don't allow children near machinery.
- Children under the age of 16 should not be allowed to operate any farm vehicles.
- Watch for hand tools or other equipment, and keep children away from them.
- Do not touch animals unless a farm worker allows it. Then follow his or her instructions.
- Don't provoke farm animals or attempt to startle them.
- Supervise children around ponds, feeding troughs or manure lagoons. It only takes a few inches of water to pose a drowning risk.

Farms are interesting places to visit, especially for children. Safety should always be a priority when visiting a farm.

How to support local agriculture this fall

The global pandemic that has upended daily life has exacted a toll on many industries. Businesses have been asked to close or temporarily scale back operations, while organizers of recreational gatherings have been tasked with reevaluating the practicality and safety of annual events.

Throughout the United States and Canada, autumn fairs, exhibitions and activities provide revenue for many people. But due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, many of these annual events have been postponed, adversely affecting local agricultural industries as a result. Governments in certain places have responded to the cancellations and offered assistance to local farmers and agricultural industries. For example, the Province of Ontario is providing nearly \$1 million to assist organizations that had to cancel fall events due to the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to supporting such efforts, the general public can pitch in to help offset some of the financial losses accrued by local farms.

• Check for virtual events. Some fall fairs or livestock events have been moved to the digital realm. That means competitors who were entering livestock or even home crafts into competitions can still participate. Organizers may ask for videos or photos of entries and then a committee will vote on the winners. This is one way to keep entry fees and even cash prizes moving along.

• Support local farms or orchards. Fall is harvest

season in many areas, making this a popular time of year to visit nearby farms and to purchase fruits and vegetables directly from the source. Many farms have implemented safety protocols that align with COVID-19 health recommendations to safely welcome visitors. Things may look a little differently at orchards and farms, but smaller crowds and wearing masks should not compromise the fun of picking your own foods.

• Explore farm-to-table. Private individuals as well as restaurant owners can develop relationships with area agriculture producers to increase the availability of farm-to-table offerings. Restaurants can revamp menus to include a greater share of items sourced from nearby farms. Individuals also can rely on produce stands and farmers' markets to stock their pantries. Some farms may offer delivery and mail-order as well.

• Offer financial services. Financial advisors can help farmers who are struggling with finances work through their options. Institutions may be able to extend the terms of loan repayments, refinance loans, restructure debt, or get credit extensions. Lower interest rates have created some new opportunities farmers may not be aware of. Financial advisors can help farmers navigate an uncertain financial time.

Farmers and agricultural organizations are facing greater challenges as fall fairs and other events are being canceled. The public can support agriculture in different ways.

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The agricultural sector is among the most dangerous in terms of workplace injuries and fatalities. To help raise awareness during the busy fall harvest season, the third week of September is recognized as National Farm Safety and Health Week each year.



Agricultural & Rural Roadway Safety

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports transportation incidents as the most common cause of fatalities in private sector agriculture. To help reduce the risk of accidents, tractor and equipment operators should always observe speed limits, stay alert and follow these safety tips:

- Always wear your seatbelt, and avoid speeding.
- Make sure all farm vehicle lights and flashers are working properly.
- Turn on lights and flashers even during daylight hours, and avoiding night travel when possible.
- Remember to always use turn signals.
- Install wide mirrors in order to see traffic behind you.
- Stay mindful of farm equipment height to avoid power lines and other overhead dangers.
- The Iowa Department of Transportation recommends allowing a following distance of three seconds or more on paved rural roads, and six seconds or more on gravel roads.
- Use slow-moving vehicle (SMV) emblems on all equipment.
- Apply reflective tape on the widest points of equipment.
- Add red taillights to towed equipment.
- Look out for passing vehicles when making left turns.
- Avoid distractions, and avoid driving when fatigued.



For safety videos and more information about National Farm Safety & Health Week, visit necasag.org/nationalfarmsafetyandhealthweek



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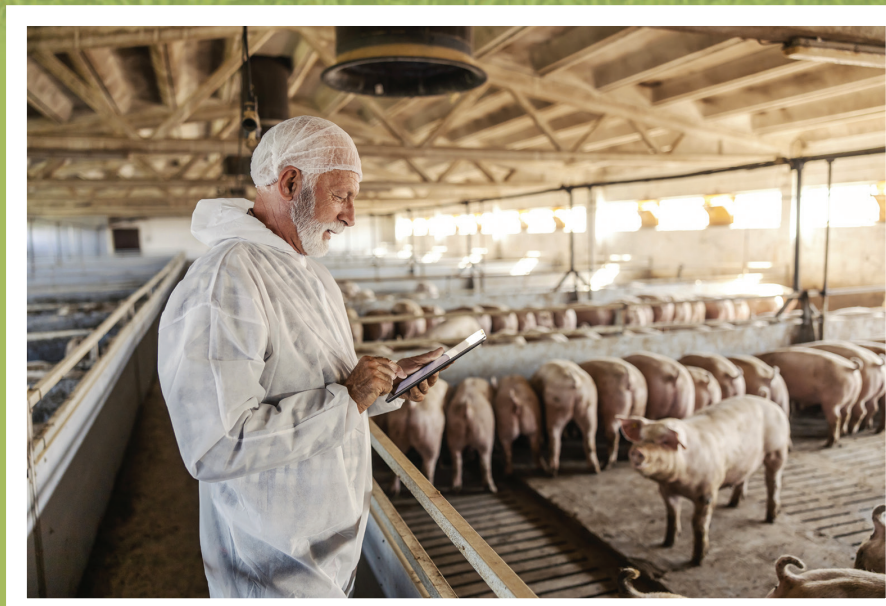
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Safety is essential on and off the field

National Farm Safety and Health Week, September 20–26

Everyone knows that accidents can be costly, not only in terms of time and money but in terms of health. One simple act of carelessness can lead to a debilitating injury or even worse, death. Don't let it happen at your farm or ranch. Take the steps necessary on and off the field to keep your workplace safe:

- Create a list of safety rules for every aspect of your business and take the time to enforce them.
- Use quality equipment, inspect it regularly and make all necessary repairs in a timely fashion.
- Look for quality products and use them as recommended by the manufacturers.
- Purchase the appropriate safety gear and require your employees to use it.
- Post appropriate caution signs on machinery and equipment.
- Insist that children stay out of the workplace and off equipment.
- Keep an eye on workers and allow any that are too tired, stressed or ill to work to go home.
- Have emergency plans in place, practice them often with your employees and stay informed!



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Facts and figures on farm safety

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, agriculture is among the most hazardous industries. Fatal and nonfatal injuries pose a significant threat to farmers, including the many young people who work on farms. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, in an effort to promote productive and safe workplaces, supports programs that conduct research on injuries associated with agriculture as well as pesticide exposure, pulmonary disease, musculoskeletal disorders, hearing loss, and stress. Studying the results of such research, compiled by NIOSH, may compel veteran and novice farmers to further emphasize safety measures and promote practices that can reduce risk for accidents on the farm.

Estimates indicate that there were roughly 2.1 million full-time workers employed in production agriculture in 2017 and between 1.4 and 2.1 million hired crop workers employed annually on crop farms in the United States.

An estimated 893,000 young people under 20 years of age resided on farms in 2014. More than half of those young people performed farm work, and an additional 266,000 youth were hired to work on farms in 2014.



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Each day, roughly 100 agricultural workers suffer injuries that cause them to miss time at work.

In 2014, 12,000 youth were injured on farms, and 4,000 of those youths could trace their injuries to farm work.

A rollover protection system, or ROPS, is a structure, similar to rollcages and rollbars in cars and trucks, intended to protect farm equipment operators from injuries caused by overturns or rollovers. NIOSH notes that an ROPS is the most effective way to prevent overturn deaths. Despite that, in 2014 only 62 percent of tractors used on farms in the U.S. were equipped with an ROPS.

In 2016, 417 farmers and farm workers died from work-related injuries. Tractor overturns and other transportation incidents were the leading cause of death for these farmers and farm workers.




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Disaster assistance resources for farmers

Natural disasters are often devastating, resulting in losses of life, livelihood and homes, among other effects. If it seems as though weather-related disasters have risen in frequency in recent decades, that's because they have. In fact, a 2021 report from the World Meteorological Organization indicated that the number of disasters has increased by a factor of five over the last half-century.

Weather-related disasters do not discriminate, and people from all walks of life and corners of the globe can be affected by such catastrophes. The agricultural sector is especially vulnerable to natural disasters, as farmers can lose their homes and their livelihoods in what feels like the blink of an eye. But farmers should know that various support programs are in place to provide assistance should they need it in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

notes that this program provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover. Assistance also is available when land planted specifically for grazing has been affected by drought or fire.

- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):** This provides benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather or by attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government.

- **Emergency Loan Program:** This program provides loans to producers as they seek to recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters. Loans also may be available after losses due to quarantine or by animal quarantine laws imposed in accordance with the Plant Protection Act.

- **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP):** This program helps farmers and ranchers repair damage



to farmlands caused by natural disasters. The program also helps put in place water conservation methods during severe drought.

- **Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP):** This program pays covered producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented

planting occur due to natural disasters. More information about cited programs in the U.S. can be found at fsa.usda.gov.

PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

- **Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):** The Farm Service Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Safety Search

Search for the farm and safety related words listed on the side.

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