

Safety Tip – Children on Farms

Some of the most nightmarish farm accidents involve children. Here is one example:
http://www.progressiveag.org/images/pdf_documents/just%20say%20no.pdf

Of the leading sources of fatal injuries to youth on U.S. farms, 23% involve machinery (includes tractors), 19% involve motor vehicles (includes ATVs), and 16% are due to drowning. Most fatalities occur to youth 16-19 years old, and *most are preventable*.

Of nonfatal injuries, 31% occur to children under 10 years old. *Most are preventable*. Two-thirds of injured children are not working when the injury occurs. Only 30% of farm households with children younger than eight years have enclosed, fenced off play areas.

As they grow, all children go through a series of developmental stages. The physical changes are obvious, but the changes in mental and emotional development are sometimes harder to recognize. It is important to recognize these changes when trying to improve safety and prevent accidents to children on farms.

Here are some tips for improving farm safety for children:

#1 NEVER let young children near a tractor. “It’s easier to bury a tradition than a child” (<http://www.childagsafety.org/media.htm>).

#2 Make sure 14-17 year old children who would operate tractors first take tractor safety training put on by Cooperative Extension or High School Agricultural teachers.

#3 Know where children are before starting machinery and farm vehicles.

#4 Keep small children away from large animals, especially those that have recently given birth.

#5 Do not leave children unsupervised around farm ponds or manure pits.

#6 Read the Farm Safety Tip on ATV Safety (available for download at http://www.ipmnet.org/Tim/Farm_Safety/Farm_Safety-Main_Page.html) and enroll children in an ATV rider course.

#7 Tailor farm jobs for children to their developmental stage (see links below).

#8 Create safe play areas for younger children (see link below).

#9 Consider organizing or participating in a Farm Safety Day Camp or an Agriculture Safety Day (see links below).

For an article and chart of development stages, risks common to different age levels, and appropriate protective measures, see:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/youthdevelopment/DA6068.html>

For a resource to assist parents in assigning farm jobs to their children, see:

<http://www.nagcat.org/nagcat/pages/default.aspx>

For information on creating safe play areas on farms, see:

<http://www.nasdonline.org/docs/d001601-d001700/d001602/d001602.html>

For information on Farm Safety Day Camps, see:

<http://www.fs4jk.org/camp.html>

For information on Agriculture Safety Days, see:

<http://www.progressiveaq.org/>