



MSU-ES Dawg Tracks

Safety Tips: Child Safety on Farms

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How many times have we heard that the country is a great place to raise kids? This is true, but there are some downsides to raising kids in the country as well.

You see kids unattended around farm equipment, unattended small kids on four-wheelers and in the areas where farm work is being done. Again most are unattended.

An interesting fact came out of the information as I was looking for facts on children in the farm areas: Children between the ages of 5 to 14 years who spend the same amount of time in work areas as their older brothers and sisters are 2 to 5 times more likely to be involved in an accident, be it injured or killed. Following are some interesting facts concerning kids on farms:

- Injuries are a leading cause of childhood death in the U.S.
- Farm machinery causes 85 percent of all machinery-related deaths to children.
- Nearly all childhood farm-related injuries and deaths can be prevented.
- The main sources of childhood farm-related injuries and deaths can be prevented.

The farm is a dangerous place for children because they play where they work. It is hard for them to separate play from work. This is where the hazards begin. They don't readily recognize the farm hazards. They must be taught how to recognize farm dangers and how to avoid them:

- Animal behavior
- The weight and force of grain
- The harmful gases released by manure and silage.
- Electricity
- Chemicals and pesticides
- Riding and playing on equipment.

Parents and grandparents should use precautionary safety measures to prevent accidents. They can set and enforce safe limits and be good role models for children by promoting farm safety.

Following are some key steps to farm safety:

- Children should not be extras riders on equipment.
- Children should not play with idle equipment.
- Equipment that might fall, such as front end loaders, should be left with the bucket in the down position.
- When equipment is parked, it should be locked and the keys removed from the ignition.
- A tractor with PTO should be in neutral when not in use.
- Check and know where children are when starting up equipment and especially when backing up.
- Machinery should be kept in good repair, particularly shields, ROPS and seatbelts.
- Children should not be allowed to operate equipment until they go through and complete safety training.
- All ATV riders should always wear a helmet.
- Fences should be placed around manure pits and farm ponds.
- Fixed ladders should be kept out of reach of kids.
- Portable ladders should be kept away from grain wagons, bins and silos.
- Electrical boxes should be kept locked.
- Chemicals and pesticides should be kept in a locked area.
- Warning decals recognizable by kids should be placed on grain bins, wagons, silos, barns, and trucks.
- All equipment used on roads should have working lights, reflectors and a slow-moving vehicle sign.