

Winter 2020. This message is to members and supporters of Safer Farms and the Agricultural Leaders' Health and Safety Action Group. We hope you find this of interest and look forward to hearing from you. Also, feel free to forward it on to anyone who has an interest in improving safety on farm!

Safer Farms - this members' update includes:

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Clearly, we are living in uncertain times. There is no question that farmers are feeling the pressure from many directions. Having staff adds another level of responsibility, with many farms previously relying on staff from overseas. There are a number of industry initiatives aimed at attracting new people to the sector. It doesn't matter if they've arrived because they want a change or they've arrived out of sheer desperation - it's important that we all do our bit to make sure they choose to stay. Being good employers and showing people how they can have a rewarding career in our sector are a couple of things we need to get right.

We're excited about the future and about Agriculture's opportunity to help power NZ's recovery. We look forward to working with you, sharing ideas and resources as together we make farms safer places for everyone.

If this email was forwarded to you and you'd like us to email you directly, please contact me and I'll [include](#) your details on our contact list.



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The Agricultural Leaders' Health and Safety Action Group (ALHSAG) is a membership organisation that brings together farmers, CEOs and senior leaders from agribusiness, agricultural industry groups and government through a commitment to make farming safer by sharing information and practical solutions to health and safety issues on farm. Businesses across the supply chain are involved, recognising that the whole sector benefits from improved health and safety.

Plant A Seed For Safety – successful launch in NZ



On the 4th of May, Safer Farms launched The #PlantASeedForSafety Project in New Zealand in partnership with Australian founder, Alex Thomas.

With industry wide support and the backing and passion from a number of agricultural based organisations, the launch was a complete success - 28 New Zealand women have submitted their stories and the movement is still gaining momentum!

The #PlantASeedForSafety Project profiles women from all parts of rural industries and communities who are making positive and practical improvements to the health, safety and wellbeing of those around them.

It aims to raise the voices of rural women and the pivotal role they play on the farm, in the sector and in their communities as well as boost their confidence in their ability to influence change and inspire others.

The launch started with Safer Farms' own health and safety advocate, Harriet Bremner and her story about the importance of safety on the farm. Media organisations swooped in, with both Harriet and Alex featuring in interviews on Rural Today, [Sarah's Country](#), [The Country](#), and write ups in [Farmers Weekly](#), [Newshub](#) and more!

If someone has found a better, safer way of doing something on farm or in their business and community, then that's the story we need to be telling.

It's not about paperwork or BS, it's caring about people and making sure everyone gets home safe.

We believe women who are prepared to "plant a seed for safety" save lives. The project's motto is: 'save a life, listen to your wife' and that's why we think this will resonate well with farming families throughout NZ.

My own wife has been the driving force for safety improvements on farm for a long time. I kind of half listened for years, but now knowing what I know about 'illness, injury and fatality stats in agriculture, it turns out 'she' was right all along!

We'd like to say a big thank you to all of the organisations and their people who have supported this movement, driven sign ups and promoted #PlantASeedForSafety – we couldn't be doing this without your support!

Check out the website at www.plantaseedforsafety.com to read and submit your own stories and follow us on Facebook [@SaferFarmsNZ](#) and on Instagram [@safer_farms](#) to stay updated.



Moving from a quad to a side-by-side?

Honda Australia recently announced it's not going to sell quad bikes from 2021. It'll still sell two wheel motorbikes and side-by-sides, but not quad bikes.

This is due to the fact the company's not quite sure how to make them safe enough to meet Australia's safety regulations. Honda's not the first in Australia to do can the sale of quad – Polaris announced in March that it won't be selling quad bikes from 2021 either.

Make up your own mind – are the quad manufacturers right when they say ROPS don't make it safer for quad bike operators? Or would agreeing to install ROPS be admitting they know the quad bikes aren't safe in their current configuration?

Time will tell. What we are seeing is more farmers switching from quad bikes and replacing them with side-by-sides (SXS, sometimes known as LUVs or even UTVs). The reliability and costs of maintaining side-by-sides will play a big part in their future of them on farm.

It's important to note that people are still getting injured or being killed using side-by-sides on farm too. Reading the coroner's reports, these fatalities have been caused by operators not following the manufacturer's recommendations – usually not wearing seatbelts, or helmets. Sometimes they've even removed doors to make it easier to get in and out – when in fact these doors are fitted to keep limbs (mainly legs) inside the safety frame if things go wrong.

There can be good reasons for changing away from quad bikes, but if it's just to avoid wearing a helmet or installing a crush protection device on the quad bike - you're missing the point.

It's important to note that the manufacturer's websites always show operators wearing helmets and seatbelts, with doors in place.



We found a couple of farmers making the switch – or at least testing to see if side-by-sides have a future on their farms – it will be interesting to hear their feedback as they put them into action.



COVID 19 – Did NZ ‘flatten the curve’?

Clearly enough has been said about the potential effect of COVID-19 on our economy. So much economic activity was silenced during lockdown – fortunately our farms and food processors were able to continue albeit with a few modifications to prevent any spread of the virus amongst the workforce.

It was satisfying to see agriculture being classed as an essential service, with farmers and support industries taking the message on board to minimise the chance of COVID affecting people in their workplaces.

There are still many unknowns and ‘what-ifs’ but key messages remain:

- The other, ‘normal’ risks on farm are still there!
- Keep a record of who is coming and going (this applies on farm, at home and for employees).
- Disinfect surfaces and wash your hands like you’ve never washed them before (check this to see [how health professionals wash their hands](#)).



If it seems like we’re overreacting, we don’t have to look far to see the evidence of COVID related sickness and fatality rates to realise things could have been much worse.

I saw this quote early on, and found it helpful:

“Here’s the thing to understand about flattening the curve. It only works if we take necessary measures before they seem necessary. And if it works, people will think we over-reacted. We have to be willing to look like we over-reacted.”

We worked closely with Federated Farmers and a number of other industry organisations to produce the Agriculture and Farm Business Protocols – an excellent collaboration between the following organisations



New people on farm? Keeping everyone safe



“Experience is what you get – just after you need it”.

It brings up the age old question – how do you get the experience, just before you need it?

Despite a bump in the road with COVID related restrictions, the agricultural competency project ‘Good to Go’ is still progressing.

Safer Farms is leading the project on behalf of the agriculture sector and has industry wide support.

We held some workshops last year and WorkSafe has provided us with funding to pull together focus groups to discuss Good to Go.

Prior to Alert Level 4, we were planning to host the focus groups in person but that was changed to online meetings, to discuss what Good to Go could look like and gather farmer’s responses and views.

The focus groups - with farm owners and operators, supervisors, farm managers and employees from a range of farm types and farm sizes - have been held over the last couple of weeks

The participants discussed the language, tested the framework, provided their opinions and feedback and helped to figure out how Good to Go could work on farm. This is a vital step as input from farmers helps build and shape the project and makes sure that we’re getting it right for farmers.

Good to Go is not about training. It will recognise the good work people are already doing and help identify knowledge and behaviour gaps that could be addressed by on-the-job training, formal training, coaching or supervision.

We expect the final product will meet the needs of our sector and be a handy tool to make sure everyone on farm is Good to Go.

We’re excited to be working on this project with farmers and others in our sector who are committed to making farms safer places for everyone. We’ll send another update when we’re about to start field testing.

NEED TO TALK?

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**free call or text
any time**

RuralSupport

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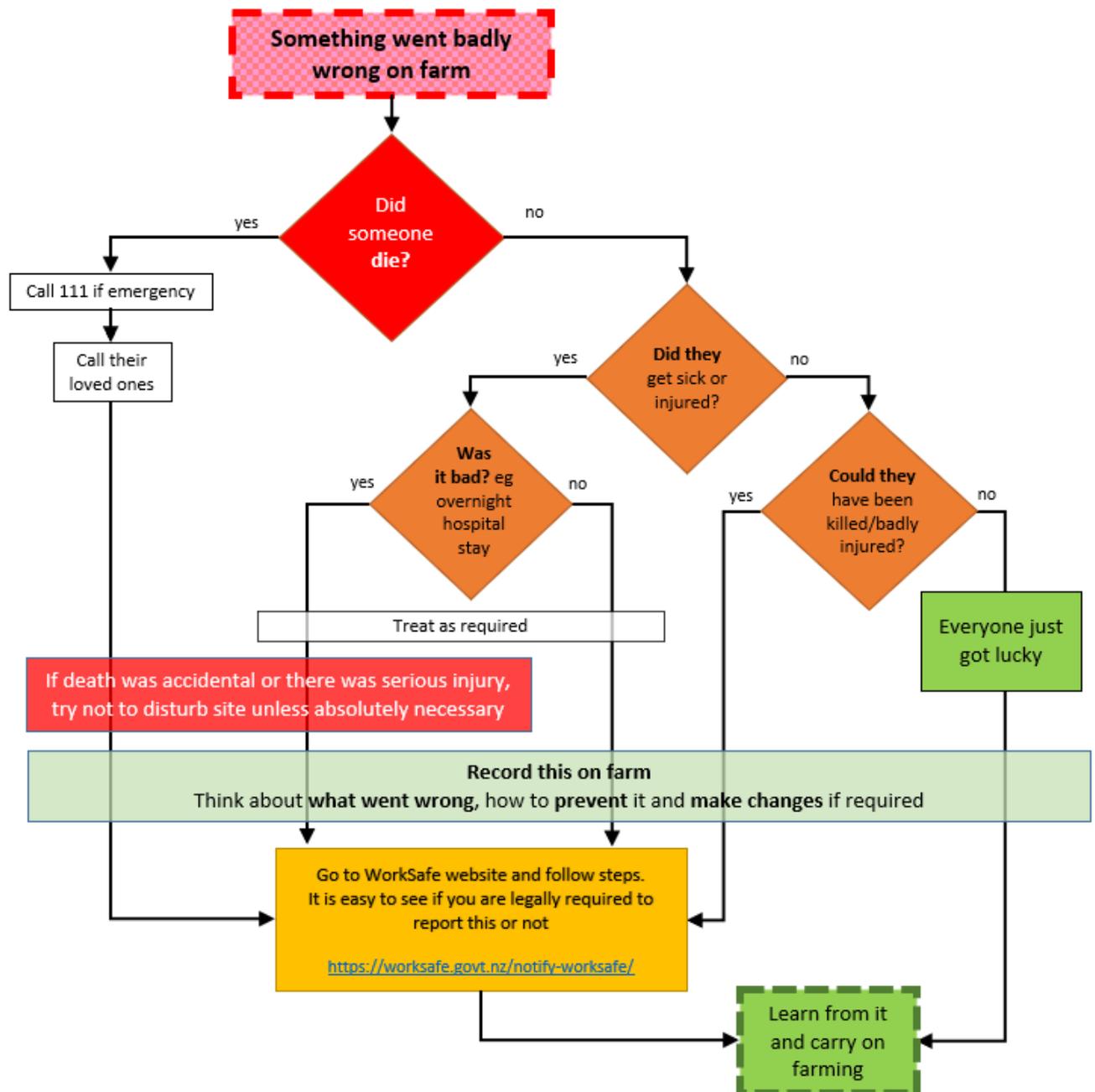
Supporting rural people
through tough times

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When do farmers have to report to WorkSafe?

If something goes wrong on farm, first thing is to make sure no-one else is in danger and things don't get worse.

If farmers are not sure if they need to notify WorkSafe, best thing to do is work through the steps outlined on WorkSafe's website and it's easy to see if notification is required or not. If not, simply leave the website at that point and no further action is required.



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Seen any sketchy behaviour on farm somewhere? Say something!

Farmers are a creative bunch – modifying tools and equipment to get the job done. Often these well intentioned ‘new uses’ can have unintended consequences, especially if people don’t ask the simple safety questions:

- What could go wrong?
- What am I doing about it? And is that enough?

Innovation is finding new ways to fix old problems, we just need to make sure we get it done safely.

Here’s a recent case when a crate was lifted on a loader to get to a ‘difficult to reach’ place. Tractor front end loaders are often used to get people high enough to unblock pivot nozzles or clear guttering etc – this recent prosecution sheds some light on the potential problem and what happens when things go wrong.

Worker injured after fall from man cage

A residential construction company was sentenced in the Auckland District Court recently after a worker fell more than three metres from a man cage attached to a tractor.

Workers were using a man cage to work at a height while building an agricultural shed.

New Vision Building and Construction Limited was ordered to pay the victim \$15,000 in reparation.

A training order was also ordered to ensure the director and workers undertake specified height safety training courses following the incident in Kerikeri in April 2018.



(related picture but not from this case)

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Seasonal reminders for farmers

Whether you're on farm or working with people who are, here's a few simple reminders especially for this time of the year. Whilst most farm work is carried out in daylight, winter and spring sees more work being carried out in the dark. Statistics show many injuries are happening early in the morning and late in the day when daylight is scarce.

Here's a few reminders to share if you get a chance:

Take your time – just slow down, rushing on the job can lead to mistakes and errors.

Plan ahead – prioritise so the tricky jobs are done during daylight.

Be personally visible – wear gear with reflective strips as an outer layer or hi-vis.

Make sure the site or machinery is visible – with cones, flashing lights, and temporary barriers.

Have good vision – invest in decent headlights for handsfree work, ideally with a lens that can adjust for close up or wider views and that can be worn with bike helmets.

Take extra care using machinery – ensure others are out of harm's way and make sure lights do not blind people.

Get talking – make sure everyone knows what is going on and what they are expected to do, especially around machinery.

Clean your vehicle lights and windows – a few minutes doing this can make a huge difference in visibility and ability to operate the vehicle safely.

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Farmstrong



Category: Injury prevention



Reducing stress and fatigue to avoid accidents

Managing stress and fatigue on the farm is challenging at the best of times, and for some the impact of COVID-19 will increase that challenge. ...



Note: New date



ALHSAG Members are entitled to **an extra \$100 discount***. To qualify, enter the **promotional code M8G88G** while booking online at primaryindustries.co.nz

**Discount will work on (1) registration at a time.*

The Summit brings farmers and producers from across the broad range of NZ's primary industries together with policy makers, regulators and other key sector stakeholders from the primary industries value chain, from Iwi through to research and science communities, technologists and agribusiness marketers. Come to hear world class, global and local experts delivering insights that will support and enable the sector to plan and prepare for its transition and adaptation to a sustainable future.

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