

What a good farm looks like



This guide helps you and other farmers understand common risks to health and safety on your farm.

By following this guide, you will know what you can do to control common risks. You'll be more likely to comply with the law and understand what a good farm looks like. This will help prevent accidents and ill health on your farm.

HSE inspectors look at the topics covered in this guide when they visit your farm to check that risks are being controlled in these areas.

Vehicles and machines

Driver behaviour

- Our operators have received training on every vehicle they use
- Before they get out or off a vehicle they follow the simple **safe stop** routine:
 - **Handbrake** on
 - Gears in **neutral**
 - Engine **switched off** and the key **removed**
- We follow the **safe stop** routine if someone approaches our vehicle
- Our drivers always turn uphill when working across a slope and descend straight down the gentlest gradient
- We keep our doors closed when driving and wear our seatbelts
- We check to ensure loads are stable, secure and within relevant weight limits
- Reversing is avoided wherever possible
- Our drivers only take a passenger if they are over 13 and sat on a passenger seat

Telehandlers and lift trucks

- Our operators have received training from a qualified instructor and passed a practical and theory test
- Equipment which lifts loads over or in close proximity to people is thoroughly examined by a competent person at least every 12 months, unless it is less than one year old.

- Our lifting accessories (such as chains, slings and hooks), and any equipment used to lift people, are thoroughly examined at least every six months

ATVs

- Riders of quad bikes and other ATVs have been trained and assessed by a qualified instructor
- We check tyre pressures and, if necessary, adjust them to meet manufacturer recommendations to maintain good handling
- Our riders always wear helmets, normally an ATV one but occasionally helmets designed for motorcycles, horse riding, cycling or mountaineering are used
- We check the brakes before starting work and make sure that the throttle operates smoothly in all steering positions

Pedestrians

- We have separate routes for vehicles and pedestrians
- We never attempt to mount or dismount a moving machine
- Pedestrians wear high-visibility clothing and we keep yards and other areas well lit during working hours

Maintenance

- Our brakes, mirrors, reversing cameras, cab structures and access steps are kept in good condition
- Our windows, mirrors and cameras are clean enough for a driver to see their route and any hazards
- We only carry out maintenance and repairs, particularly clearing blockages, when all power is isolated
- We check our PTO guards before starting work and replace damaged ones before use
- Any machinery that needs work to make it safe is securely taken out of use – we disable or isolate it and attach a warning notice, so it can't be operated inadvertently
- We prop cabs, bodies and trailers when we work underneath them so we don't rely on hydraulics or pneumatics

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/machinery/farm-vehicles-1.htm

Falls from height and falling objects

Access equipment

- We only use ladders for short-duration work and keep them in good condition
- We don't use working platforms ('man cages') attached to telehandlers to lift people for routine tasks
- Every person that erects scaffolding, including towers, or operates a MEWP (cherry pickers or scissor lifts) on our farm, has received training
- We inspect access equipment before we use it, and MEWPs are thoroughly examined at least every six months

Work on fragile roofs

- We avoid doing roof work ourselves. We use a competent contractor with the knowledge, skills, equipment and experience to safely work at height on buildings
- On the very rare occasions we do roof work we make sure we have received the relevant training and work from underneath the roof using a suitable work platform, such as a tower scaffold. When this is not possible we use a MEWP and work from within the basket without standing on the roof itself. If this is not possible, as a last resort, we may access the fragile roof but only after installing perimeter edge protection and staging boards fitted with guard rails. This spreads the load and we only work on this staging

Bales and trailers

- We stack bales on firm, dry and level ground, building them up using bale steps
- Our bales are interlocked, with the strongest ones used around the edges, and we keep people clear when unloading or destacking
- All of our big bales are moved using mechanical equipment
- We don't stack round bales on their ends or work near the edges of stacks or trailer beds

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/falls.htm

Children

- Children are always supervised to make sure they are kept out of our workplace as they are not allowed into the farmyard and other work areas
- Our workers stop work immediately if an unsupervised child appears in their work area and they take the child somewhere safe
- Both our lagoon and reservoirs are surrounded by fences or walls at least 1.3 metres high
- Children only watch farm work if the task is not inherently dangerous, the person supervising the child is not the same person doing the task and the child is kept in a safe place
- We know it is illegal so we don't let children under 13 ride in or on, or drive, farm vehicles such as tractors and ATVs
- Our harvesters, spreaders, machines with power-driven, soil-engaging parts, adult-sized ATVs and other self-propelled machines are only operated by people over 16

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/children.htm

Overhead power lines (OHPLs)

- We contacted our distribution network operator (DNO) to identify the location of all the OHPLs on our farm and we know the maximum working heights under each span
- We have marked the line routes and maximum working heights on our farm map
- Workers and contractors have copies of our farm map and we make sure they understand it
- We don't do any of the following within a horizontal distance of 10 metres from OHPLs:
 - stack bales, bags, boxes or other materials
 - erect temporary structures such as polytunnels
 - operate telehandlers or work on top of combines or other high machinery
 - fold/unfold booms or tip trailers and lorries
 - move ladders, pipes or scaffolding
- If the presence of an OHPL is a problem, we contact our DNO to see if they can re-route it, put cables underground or isolate the power

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/electricity.htm

Cattle

Handling

- Our stock tasks are carried out on restrained animals using good handling facilities
- Our workers are in good health, fit and have the physical ability to work with livestock
- Doors in a race are operated from the working side so we don't have to reach across to close the gate
- We don't work in the crush if there is an unsecured animal waiting in the race behind
- Our crush is fitted with a self-locking front gate, a yoke, rump rail and a bar. It is able to safely constrain our animals whatever their size
- Bulls are ringed at 10 months and we use handling aids such as poles and halters
- We never enter an enclosure when a bull is loose or a cow is with a calf unless the animals are restrained or segregated

Fields with public access

- We don't keep bulls of recognised dairy breeds in fields containing public rights of way
- Wherever possible, we select fields without rights of way when cattle are calving or have calves at foot
- When we haven't been able to do this, we take precautions to separate the animals from the path and fit signs at field entrances advising that a beef bull or cows with calves are present
- We check all our cattle for causes of aggression, such as illness, at least once a day and segregate any animals that display aggressive behaviour

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/livestock.htm

Drowning and asphyxiation

- We stay out of the buildings connected to our slurry storage system when mixing or pumping and leave the buildings ventilated for at least 30 minutes before we re-enter
- We never stand over slurry mixing points, reception pits or slats, even the outdoor ones
- When there is no alternative to working inside a slurry storage system or a sealed grain/forage silo, we use specialist contractors competent in confined spaces work

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais26.pdf

Asbestos

- We have identified and labelled the parts of our buildings that have, or we suspect to have, asbestos-containing materials (ACMs)
- We have assessed the condition of all ACMs on our farm
- We used this assessment to produce our asbestos management plan, which contains sketches of where the ACMs are and records what we will do with them
- Well-sealed, undamaged asbestos has been left alone. Damaged ACMs have been removed by those trained to work with the relevant type of asbestos and, where necessary, licensed by HSE
- Workers and contractors are briefed on the contents of the asbestos management plan to make them aware of the presence of asbestos

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/building.htm

Moving loads by hand

Mechanisation

- Our workers always try to avoid manual handling and repetitive movements by seeing if they can do the job with a machine
- We have installed a piped feed handling system incorporating bulk storage bins to eliminate manual handling
- The big bales and bulk bags we use can only be moved by machine

Risk reduction measures

- Our workers are aware that the risk of injury is higher when loads:
 - weigh more than 25 kg
 - can be difficult to grip, handle or manoeuvre
 - are lifted or lowered frequently or carried long distances
 - have to be lifted above shoulder height, up from the floor or involve twisting
- Knowing these risks we use mechanical and lifting aids, sheep turnover crates, smaller feed blocks and lighter feed bags and train our workers
- For repetitive work on grading lines, inspection tables and in processing areas, we use height-adjustable seats and tables, and staff rotate between tasks and take frequent short breaks

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/manual-handling.htm

Chest problems and lung disease

Choice of materials

- We use the least harmful chemicals available
- We buy materials in granule or pellet form to keep dust to a minimum

Work methods

- We enclose sources of dust or spray if possible
- Dry spillages in buildings are vacuumed or wet cleaned, rather than swept up
- Clean, dry and mould-free straw is used in our well-ventilated sheds
- We spread straw mechanically whenever this is practical
- We use subdued lighting in poultry sheds to keep birds calm

Exposure controls

- Filters in tractors and other vehicle cabs are maintained in line with the manufacturer's instructions
- We select tight-fitting respiratory protective equipment (RPE) on the basis of a fit test, ensuring they are worn without facial hair and stored in a clean and dry place
- Our RPE has the correct filter type depending on whether we want protection from dust particles or vapours

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/asthma/agriculture.htm

Animal diseases

- All our workers wash with soap and water and dry their hands before eating, drinking or smoking
- All cuts and grazes are immediately washed, dried and covered with a waterproof dressing
- We don't clean buildings and equipment with compressed air but we regularly disinfect them
- Gloves and a waterproof apron are worn when handling potentially infected material such as birth, muck or sewage products
- Where there are suspected or confirmed cases of animal diseases such as avian flu, we wear RPE, protective coveralls, boots and eye protection in addition to our gloves

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/zoonoses.htm

Noise

- We take noise emissions into account when purchasing equipment
- We keep cab windows and doors closed
- Noisy machines and processes are enclosed or put into separate rooms
- Our maintenance work addresses loose panels, unbalanced parts and damaged mountings
- Hearing protection is always worn where noise exposure exceeds 85 dB and we encourage its use where noise exceeds 80 dB

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/noise.htm

Pesticides

Storage and transportation

- Our pesticides are kept in their original containers in a store that can contain leaks and spills
- The store is made from non-combustible material and locked when not in use
- We carry pesticides in an externally mounted cabinet, on a trailer or in a separate load compartment, but never inside a cab
- The vehicle storage is locked whenever we are not in sight of it

Application

- We only use pesticides authorised by HSE and follow the instructions on labels and in safety data sheets
- We check the weather forecast when considering spraying and won't apply if it is likely to drift away from the target area
- No one eats, drinks or smokes when applying pesticides and we wash our hands with soap and water before taking a rest break
- We clean all equipment, inside and out, before leaving the treatment area
- We keep records of all pesticides we use

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/pesticides.htm

Chainsaws

Training

- Everyone who uses a chainsaw to work on or in trees has been awarded a certificate of competence or a licence to practice. They attend refresher courses at least every three years
- Workers using chainsaws for any other work have received suitable training from a qualified instructor on how to operate and maintain them

Location

- We only fell trees when overhead power lines (OHPLs) are at least two tree lengths away and we do not undertake other types of tree work, such as branch removal, within 10 metres of OHPLs
- For work within these distances we use a competent tree surgeon who liaises with the local distribution network operator (DNO)
- Chainsaw operators obtain secure footholds, know their escape route and no one is allowed within two tree lengths of a tree being felled

Saws and protective clothing

- Our saws are well maintained and fitted with a chain catcher, combined chain brake and front hand guard, silencer and anti-vibration mounts

- The chains have low kickback characteristics and are sharp, correctly tensioned and lubricated
- All operators wear a safety helmet, hearing protection, eye protection and gloves
- Operators also wear protective clothing around their legs and feet, usually chainsaw trousers with all round protection and chainsaw boots

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/forestry.htm

Electrical systems

- The fixed electrical installations in our buildings are inspected and tested by an electrician, who carries out all repairs
- We keep the covers to electrical equipment closed. We isolate and repair or replace damaged cables
- We have an RCD connected to our pressure washer and we always test it before use
- Most power cables to our machines are armoured, although some are covered in thick, flexible rubber or neoprene, or installed in conduit, while all have a good earth connection

Find out more at:

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/electricity.htm

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For more guidance on health and safety in agriculture visit www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture