



4th National Farm Injury Prevention Conference

**A report for the Rural Industries Research
and Development Corporation**

by Richard Franklin

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Foreword

Every three days a person is fatally injured on an Australian farm and every day ten people make a workers compensation claim for an injury sustained in while working in the agricultural industry. There are many different agencies and individuals that devote their time and energies to reducing this horrific statistic.

It is through the collaboration and sharing of ideas, solution and experience that we are able to become better equipped to reduce farm-related injury and death. To this end it was with great pleasure that the Farm Health and Safety Joint venture provided funding to Farmsafe Australia to help bring people from Australia and overseas to Warrnambool for the 4th National Farm Injury Conference.

Funds were also provided to collate work that had been undertaken by state work health authorities, Divisions of General Practice and University Departments of Rural Health over the last five years.

The project was funded by the research and development corporations contributing to the Farm Health and Safety Joint Venture - Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, Grains Research and Development Corporation, Australian Wool Innovation Limited, Cotton Research and Development Corporation, Sugar Research and Development Corporation and Meat and Livestock Australia. The Joint Venture is committed to improving well-being and productivity of the agricultural industries through careful investment in research and development programs that assist industry to manage OHS risk in a cost effective way.

This report, a new addition to RIRDC's diverse range of over 700 research publications, forms part of our human capital, communications and information systems R&D program, which aims to enhance human capital and facilitate innovation in rural industries and communities.

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In particular we would like to thank Dr Don Voaklander who undertook the review of the Departments of Rural Health and Amanda Peters who helped with the review of the State Work Health Authorities and the Division of General Practice. We also like to thank Eric Young from Worksafe Victoria for presenting the State Health Authorities summary, Susi Tegan from the Lime Stone Division of General Practice for presenting the Division of General Practice Summary and Don Voaklander for presenting the Department of Rural Health summary.

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Executive Summary

This report contains information about the last five years of work in farm health and safety that has been undertaken by Work Health Authorities, Division of General Practice and University Departments of Rural Health. The reports were prepared for the 4th National Conference on Farm Injury Prevention and Control held at Warnambool, Victoria 26-28 September 2001. Also included is the recommendation arising from the conference.

The objective of the project was:

To catalogue farm health and safety activities undertaken in the last five years by, Work Health Authorities, Divisions of General Practice and University Departments of Rural Health

A survey form was sent to each state Work Health Authority, Rural Division of General Practice and University Department of Rural Health. Responses were collated according to reoccurring themes and reported. Although all effort was made to collect all information, some places did not respond or were unsure of what activities in farm health and safety had been undertaken.

There are four chapters in the report. Chapter 1 to 3 examine work undertaken by Divisions of General Practice, Work Health Authorities, and University Departments of Rural Health. Each of these chapters were presented at the conference.

The work undertaken by each of these groups is quite diverse from research to rebates and displays the commitment of the people working in each of the organisation.

At each conference a set of resolutions from the conference is collected and reported to Farmsafe Australia, these can be found in chapter 4.

Introduction

As part of the 4th National Farm Injury Conference at Warrnambool, Victoria 26-28 September 2001, an audit of programs conducted in farm injury prevention over the last five years was undertaken by Farmsafe Australia. The audit was to report on farm health and safety programs undertaken by Work Health Authorities, Division of General Practice, and University Departments of Rural Health.

The objective of the project was:

To catalogue farm health and safety activities undertaken in the last five years by, Work Health Authorities, Divisions of General Practice and University Departments of Rural Health

A survey was sent to each Work Health Authority, rural Division of General Practice and University Departments of Rural Health. The forms were filled in by each group and returned, the information was then grouped into recurring themes. Although all effort was made to ensure that all programs were included, the people contacted may not have been aware or may have forgotten about work conducted by the authorities, particularly in the early years.

Chapter 1 examines work undertaken by Divisions of General Practice, chapter 2 examines work undertaken by Work Health Authorities, and chapter 3 examines work undertaken by University Departments of Rural Health.

The work undertaken by each of these groups is quite diverse - from research to rebates and training courses. The work presented in this report is limited to reporting activities and does not examine outcomes or effectiveness.

A set of resolutions from the conference was collected and reported to Farmsafe Australia. This can be found in chapter 4.

1 Division Of General Practice Report of Farm Related Safety Work Over the Last 5 Years

This report was prepared by:
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Every year General Practitioners (GP) treat thousands of farm injury cases from minor sprains and strains to major medical emergencies. The GP is often the first place people go for farm injury information and as many of these accidents are preventable through implementation of farm injury strategies and occupational health and safety practices, it is appropriate that GP's be undertaking education and promotion.

This report has been undertaken on behalf of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). The report aims to establish the level of work in farm health and safety conducted by Divisions of General Practice over the last five years. Although all care was taken to catalogue the amount of work being undertaken by each division, the people contacted may not have been aware or have forgotten about work conducted by the authorities, particularly in the early years.

This report aims to identify divisions of General Practice that have undertaken farm health and safety activities and the types of activities undertaken. For this report 63 Rural Divisions in Australia were asked to reply to a questionnaire about farm health and safety activities undertaken over the last 5 years. Of the 63 Australian Rural Divisions of General Practice 27 replied to the survey indicating having undertaken some form of activity in farm health and safety. The information from Australian rural Divisions of General Practice has been broken down into the following categories:

- Farm Health and Safety Research
- Involvement with State Farmsafe Organisations
- Farm Safety Action Groups
- Child Safety/Giddy Goanna/Field Day Promotion
- Information Sessions for Farmers
- Other Field Day Promotion (General Farm Safety, Health Screening)
- Q-Fever Projects
- GP Training
- Other activities

Farm Health And Safety Research

Research is important to understand the true nature and extent of health and safety in the Australian farming Community. Research in farm health and safety was reported as an activity in seven Australian rural divisions of General Practice. Outcomes from the research were not reported in the questionnaires.

The Riverina Division of General practice reported a project of a registrar of farm injuries by general practitioners in the NSW Riverina area.

West Vic Division of General Practice Project reported a project that aimed to provide farm injured workers with managed, effective health care through identification of farm injured persons at the earliest presentation, eg GP, investigation of selected farm injury accidents to access, report and review preventable/ re occurrence, providing the farm injured person with coordinated post injury care.

Eyre Peninsula Division of General Practice Farm reported a farm health and safety research project that involved injury research by GP's.

NSW Central West Division of General Practice Farm Safety Project undertook a farm health and safety project that involved research on accidents statistics that come into practices with farm-related injuries

South East NSW Division of General Practice undertook a project of putting together farm incident and farm accident register in hospitals. North East Victorian Division of General Practice reported a project of collection of data on all injuries seen at the local medical centres and hospitals with a focus on farm and sports injuries.

Murray-Plains Division of General Practice has just completed 2 years research in August 2001 into farm illness and injury in the Murray Plains region. The project was commissioned to determine the types of farm injuries and illnesses occurring at a local level within the Murray-Plains. The project also brought together health professionals, farmers, governments and other groups with an interest in farm safety to discuss and recommend ways of making the farm safer.

Barwon Division of General Practice is also undertaking a "Heart Health Pilot" in farmers to examine the effects of heart health on farmers.

Involvement With State Farmsafe Organisation

State Farmsafe organisations were established to coordinate farm health and safety activities in each particular state. Three divisions of general practices in Australia reported collaboration with state Farmsafe organisations. Two of these divisions were in Queensland and collaborated with Farmsafe Queensland and one was in South Australia and collaborated with Farmsafe South Australia.

Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice reported that they liase with Farmsafe Queensland on their farm health and safety activities.

Mackay Division of General Practice has undertaken a project of distributing farm safe kits and information to doctor's practices and distribution of Farmsafe Queensland 2001 resources.

Northern Queensland Rural Division of General Practice reported distribution of Farmsafe resources. The division also assists in providing general practitioner contacts for Farmsafe Queensland activities.

Limestone Coast Division of General Practice worked closely with Farmsafe SA in the development of its farm safe program. Representatives from South-East Division have been involved in the advisory boards of the state and national Farmsafe organisations.

Farm Safety Action Groups

Farm Safety Action Groups members are people from the community who join together to formulate goals and activities for the awareness of farm health and safety and the reduction of farm injuries in the Australian farming environment. Stakeholders include farm men and women, farm workers, state farmer organisation members, country women's association members, local council representatives, area health service members, state WorkCover authority representatives, Division of general Practice representatives and other interested community members. Six Australian rural divisions of general practice reported involvement in Farm safety action groups. The level of involvement by the divisions varies from representation to facilitation.

Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice Facilitate farm safety action group. Mid North Rural South Australian Division, Barwon, Barossa and Yorke Peninsula Division of General Practice reported involvement in a Farm Safety Action Group.

South East NSW Division of General Practice reported representation on South East NSW Farm advisory group, which also involves state health representatives, CWA pasture and protection board, and department of education. Limestone Coast Division of General Practice in South Australia represents and develops activities for the South-East SA Farm Safety Action Group.

Child Safety Giddy Goanna Program And Field Day Promotion

Child safety on farms is a significant issue for the Australian farming community. Awareness by children and parents about the dangers on a farm for children, including tractors, motorbikes, horses, machinery, dams and other vehicles is important.

Southern Queensland Rural Division of General Practice initiated the Giddy Goanna program in response to high mortality and morbidity of children in rural environment. The program is specifically targeted at children in the 4-10 years age group, with a secondary target of, the family of these children. Thirteen Australian rural divisions of general practice reported undertaking the Giddy Goanna program.

Mid-North Coast, Central Queensland, Otway Division, Mid North Rural South Australian of General Practice reported involvement in the Giddy Goanna child safety promotion program. NSW Central West Division, Greater Southern and South East NSW Division of General Practice reported undertaking the Giddy Goanna program through having a Giddy Goanna child safety display at agricultural shows and field days.

Toowoomba and District Division of General Practice, Southern Qld Division, and the Far North Queensland Rural Division of General Practice use the Giddy Goanna promotional material with giddy goanna, at schools, field days and education mornings. The Limestone Coast Division of General Practice undertook a program of child safety education and awareness including releasing RIPPER curriculum program and competition. General Practitioners from the area also conducted school talks.

SA Barossa Division of General Practice reported that they conducted a program of farm safety talks at primary and high schools involving GP's, interactive CD-ROMs and the Giddy Goanna products including appearances of Giddy himself. Victoria Greater Southern, South Australia Barossa and Eyre Peninsula Divisions of General Practice reported a child safety activity of school visits made by local GP and Giddy Goanna.

Information sessions for farmers

Education and awareness of health and safety issues in Agriculture is important for the Australian farming population. Six Australian divisions of general practice reported that they organise information sessions about farm health and safety for farmers.

Far North Queensland Division of General Practice reported a farm health and safety awareness project including information and demonstration day for farmers, evening sessions about de-regulation depression and heart disease for farm men and information evenings for farm women about depression, cardiovascular disease and nutrition. The project was reported to be well received. Far North Queensland Division also provided speakers at Cairns Farm Injury Prevention Conference in 1999.

South Australia Barossa Division of General Practice organised evening for farmers and Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice organised ambulance days. South East NSW Division of General Practice provided funding for group to train 6 community trainers in the MFS course.

Victoria Greater Southern Division of General Practice reported undertaking rural men's evening information sessions in remote towns by GP, local identities and other professionals including clinical psychologists and family/relationship counsellors. Eyre Peninsula Division of General Practice provided speakers to conferences and undertaking promotion through rural health and safety awareness days.

The Limestone Coast Division of General Practice initiated hypothetical sessions where issues concerning farm health and safety in a human, mechanical and financial focus could be explored. Managing Farm Safety Courses were run through the division. The Limestone Coast division also conducted tractor safety days, child safety days and safety days for agricultural T.A.F.E students.

Other Field Days Promotion

Farmers are often considered a hard target audience to reach, as they are relatively isolated. Field days are attended by farmers throughout Australia and are often considered a good access point to reach farmers.

A) General Farm Safety

General farm safety promotions can include tractor safety, pesticide safety, noise injury awareness and other general farm safety issues. Four divisions of general practice indicated that they undertake farm health and safety promotions at field days and agricultural shows.

Victoria Greater Southern, Far North Queensland and Yourke Peninsula Division of General Practice reported farm health and safety displays at Agricultural shows and field days. Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice reported supporting chemical liasing groups and field days. Barwon Division of General Practice has also been involved in field day promotion.

B) Health Screening

Health screening can include checking for noise induced hearing loss, skin cancer, Q-fever and blood pressures. Four divisions of general practice in Australia responded to the survey indicating a project involving health screening at field days and agricultural shows.

Central West Gippsland, East Gippsland, and South Gippsland Divisions of General Practice responded to the survey with a project involving doctors and nurses at farming events to conduct

health checks. Participants found to have potential health problems are referred to their local GP for further investigations.

NSW Central West and Yourke Peninsula Divisions of General Practice reported undertaking sunspot checks at agricultural shows and field days. Greater Southern and South Australia Barossa Division of General Practice reported a project of General Practitioners giving advice and simple screening at field days and shows.

Limestone Coast Division of General Practice reported providing health screenings at field days including immunisation, blood screening and diabetes.

Q-Fever Projects

Q-Fever is a zoonotic disease acquired through contact with an animal's bodily fluids. Populations at risk include abattoir workers, farmers and farm workers. Five Australian Rural Divisions of General Practice reported undertaking Q-Fever projects in the past 5 years.

Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice reported undertaking Q fever research and promotion.

Dubbo/Plains Division of General Practice reported a project that investigated the incidence, severity and the economic cost of Q-fever amongst the employees of the abattoir in Dubbo and increased the level of immunisation in this at risk group.

Central West Queensland Division of General Practice reported a project that aimed to up-skill GP's on screening and vaccinating for Q-fever and to promote community awareness of the disease. During the project a workshop was conducted with practical training in skin testing. Stickers and Q-fever pamphlets were distributed widely targeting at-risk individuals in particular pig and kangaroo shooters and graziers. Where individuals were identified, immunisations were carried out. Volunteers underwent testing for Q-Fever.

The Barwon Division of General Practice has been testing people for Q-Fever and providing information about q-fever.

The Limestone Coast Division reported a project to encourage and support interested in participating in giving presentations on topics of interest including Q-Fever.

GP Training

Presentation to local general practitioners of farm health and safety accidents is significant. The knowledge and skill of general practitioners in farm health and safety can assist in the treatment of the injury or reduction of the severity of the injury. GP's can also improve awareness of farm injury prevention through contact with their patients. Five Australian Division of General Practices reported education and promotion aimed at general practitioners.

Eyre Peninsula Division of General Practice undertook a project of development and distribution of resources and information for GP's. North East Victorian Division of General Practice reported education activities relating to first aid, sports medicine and farm safety for General Practitioners.

South East NSW Division of General Practice reported a project that aimed to encourage and support GP's to undertake the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety farm health and safety modules. Five general practitioners have completed the modules.

The Riverina Division of General practice also reported a project of GP up-skilling/education through the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety GP education modules. For the information of general practitioners the Riverina Division of General practice also distributes a pesticide reference database and a farm safety resource manual.

The Limestone Coast Division of General practice reported promotion of the Nationally accredited Managing Farm Safety Course to the GPs, TAFE and general community. The Division also reported an aim of the project was to raise GPs, rural registrars and other health professionals awareness of farm injury and increasing their participation in activities to prevent farm injury and illness.

Other

Far North Queensland Division of General Practice reported a project of organising a rural numbering system to assist ambulances and other emergency services locate farming properties. The project was not finished as a numbering system for this purpose was developed elsewhere.

2 State Work Health Authorities Report of Farm Related Safety Work Over the Last 5 Years

This report was prepared by:
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There is a death on an Australian farm every 3 days on Australian farms and many of these accidents are preventable, through implementation of occupational health and safety practices. Through education, training and promotion aimed at farmers, farm workers and involved stakeholders such as general practitioners, government departments other key agencies, Australia is able to address and reduce the burden of farm injury.

This report has been undertaken on behalf of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). The report aims to establish the level of work in farm health and safety conducted by work health authorities over the last five years.. Although all care was taken to catalogue the amount of work being undertaken by each authority, the people contacted may not have been aware or have forgotten about work conducted by the authorities, particularly in the early years.

This report aims to identify from state work health authorities activities that have undertaken in farm health and safety and the types of activities undertaken. For this report all Australian state work health authorities were asked to reply to a questionnaire about farm health and safety activities undertaken over the last 5 years. All of the state work health authorities replied to the survey, indicating that they had undertaken some form of activity in farm health and safety over the last five years. The information collected from state work health authorities has been broken down into the following categories:

- Development of Resources
- Field Day/Show Involvement
- Information sessions
- Standards
- Research
- Information services
- Awareness Campaigns
- Roll Over Protection Schemes
- Competition

Development Of Resources

1. Tasmanian Workplace Standards Authority

Farm Safety Management Guides: Two guides have been developed in conjunction with the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association for farmers. There was a need identified for a no nonsense publication to assist the rural community to comply with industrial legislation and to understand their responsibilities. The first guide is in two parts including managing safety and managing labour. The second guide is in four sections including common accidents, information sheets, managing your legal responsibilities and controlling safety risks.

2. Queensland Division of Workplace Health and Safety

- a) *Farm Safety News- Safety newsletter for Queensland Farmers:* The newsletter is designed to convey to producers and others interested in farm safety around Queensland the latest news, events and rural safety issues. Editions are released in autumn, winter and spring. The newsletter is produced in conjunction with Farmsafe Queensland.
- b) *Displays and promotional Material- Awareness of the hazards causing injury on farms:* Promotional material has been developed for use by field advisers at field days, agricultural shows, industry conferences and grower meetings. Three displays have been produced. The themes are: 'Causes of farm accidents'; 'Accidents don't just happen' and 'Child Safety on the Land'. A brochure has been developed around each display. Other promotional equipment includes a PTO shaft display, a fibreglass dummy displaying PPE and a diorama for children. This project was developed in consultation with Farmsafe Queensland.

3. New South Wales Workcover Authority

- a) *Electrical Hazard Awareness for High Machinery:* In conjunction with the Electrical association of NSW, WorkCover developed, printed, promoted and distributed a brochure titled "Electrical hazard Awareness for Operators of High Machinery". This publication came about in response to the fact that between 1997 and 2000 in NSW, ten people were killed and 93 injured in electrical accidents caused by high machinery, home handy work and fallen power lines.
- b) *Rural Safety Magazine:* For the second year running a 16-page magazine focussing on occupational health and safety in the rural sector, has been developed by NSW WorkCover. The magazine is distributed as an insert in The Land newspaper and features articles on ROPS, tractor and truck tyre safety (changing wheels) and electrical hazards.
- c) *Kids on Farms Project:* Development and distribution of a comic aimed at school children teaching them of various hazards found on farms. Distributed through school/talks given by Workcover Inspectors at Rural Field Days.
- d) *Future Farmers Project:* Development of 12 educational modules for secondary schools in rural NSW. The Minister launched project in early August. The modules are designed for teachers as a complete training tool including overheads, handouts and instructional notes.
- e) *15-Minute Checklist and video:* Commercial development and distribution of a rural safety checklist for rural employers to conduct a risk management exercise on their farm. The checklist was individually mailed to each rural household in NSW.

4. Victorian WorkCover Authority

- a) *Child Safety on Farms CD-Rom*: An electronic resource for children that was developed for the use in schools to educate children about health and safety risks on farms.
- b) *FarmSafety Trailer*: An interactive farm scene diorama that promotes through a scripted dialogue specific farm safety themes. Used initially to promote the new Hazardous Substances Regulations and now promoting the "Managing Farm Safety" course.
- c) *Guidance Document for Shearing*: Comprehensive document recently produced through industry stakeholders and WorkSafe Victoria.
- d) *Publication in continuous production*: Tractors & Farm Machinery, Safe Use of Farm Chemicals, ROPS requirements, Confined Spaces on Farms, Codes of Practice on Plant, Confined Spaces and Hazardous Substances.
- e) *Small Business Project*: OHS audit document produced for dairy industry, horticulture in current development. Project conducted by Victorian Farmers' Federation (VFF) with WorkSafe Victoria funding and support.
- f) *OHS Farm Safety Bulletins*: Series produced by VFF with WorkSafe Victoria funding and support.

5. WorkCover Corporation SA

- a) *Safer Industries Riverland Horticulture Council Project*: Produce Growers OHS improvement kit and calendar covering General, Orchard, Packing Shed and Workshop safety issues. Calendar ties in monthly activities to actions to make that activity safe. This project kit has been picked up by the Hills Regional Development Board, for modifying to suit Fleurieu peninsula grape growers.
- b) *Inland Aquaculture OHS Manual*: The project aims to produce a manual, including guidelines and practices that will form part of the essential prerequisites for any person or organisation wishing to engage in Inland Aquaculture.
- c) *Cambodian Horticultural Outworkers Project*: The project aims to provide culturally appropriate information, based on a community development model, about OHS issues to the Cambodian outworkers working on farms, market gardens and vineyards in the Salisbury and Playford Council areas.
- d) *Fruitlink Project*: This project is a joint venture (equal funding) with WorkCover organisations in NSW and Victoria and Employment National. The aim is to develop a training and competency program and assess the feasibility of an accreditation system for seasonal and itinerant workers in the fruit production industry.

6. Worksafe Western Australia

Worksafe WA through Farmsafe WA: Continued development of a Farmsafe farm accreditation system (subject to the availability of National guidelines, which Farmsafe WA is assisting to develop as a member of the national committee)

Field Day/Show Involvement

1. Tasmanian Workplace Standards Authority

- a) *Agricultural Show Participation:* The Rural, Meat, Food and Beverage sector participate at numerous country agricultural shows. Involvement consists of display presentations and manning with rural inspectors to answer any questions and to give/handout a wide selection of publications. This has been reported as a way to interact at the grass roots level with good results.

2. NSW Workcover Authority

- a) *Rural Field Days:* WorkCover NSW attends the major Rural Field days each year promoting occupational health and safety. In 2001 the shows schedules are Henty, Orange, Casino, Gunnedah and Mudgee.

3. Victorian WorkCover Authority

- a) *Rural Field Days and Show Involvement:* The Victorian Work Cover Authority attends all the major agricultural field days and shows each year. These covered Wimmera, Acme, Gippsland, Elmore, Sheepvention and specialist commodity field days for dairy and horticulture. Selected rural shows are attended as are specialist child farm safety field days on farm conducted by local communities.

4. SA WorkCover Authority

- a) *Field Day/Information Sessions:* Activities promoting farm health and safety have been undertaken at the Lucindale Field Day, Cleave Field day and the SA Farmers Federation Conference.

Information Sessions

1. Tasmanian Workplace Standards Authority

- a) *On farm discussion groups:* The Rural inspectorate present lectures, presentations and demonstrate the use of “check list sheets” – audits of Dairy’s, farm workshops, shearing sheds etc on farms to small groups of farmers. These activities are reported as appreciated by those who attend – they are done in a friendly, non-threatening and non-judgmental manner.

2. Queensland Division of Workplace Health and Safety

- a) *Farm Injury Prevention 99- 3rd Biennial National Farm Injury Prevention Injury Prevention Conference:* 150 delegates attended the conference from 26-29th August at the Rihga Colonial Club Resort, Cairns. Participants included rural producers, doctors, occupational health and safety practitioners, allied health professionals and state and federal government agencies. The conference theme was ‘A decade of change- a new era of management’. Four key concurrent workshops involved 24 speakers and addressed issues of; prevention strategies, management of specific injury/skill development and property management, defining farm injury and risk factors and GPs and farm safety. This project was run in partnership with Farmsafe QLD.

3. Northern Territory Work Health Authority

- a) *Farm Safety Education for cattle stations in Northern Territory:* Farm Safety Management sessions are run in April- May in line with the intake of new workers and June-July for mustering on Northern Territory cattle stations.

4. Victorian WorkCover Authority

- a) *Co-Instruction of Farmsafe Australia Managing Farm Safety Courses:* WorkCover inspectors are asked to assist with the instruction of the farmers in the legal health and safety responsibilities of farm owners / managers, during the Farmsafe Australia Managing Farm Safety Course. Three WorkSafe Victoria officers are accredited instructors and assist periodically in its delivery across the State.
- b) *Information Sessions, Farm Visits:* Farm Safety officers deliver OHS information sessions to farmer groups, rural community groups and farm industry and union groups on an ongoing basis as requested. Farm visits to advise and audit OHS performance is also conducted.
- c) *Child Safety Farm Days:* Conducted throughout the year in local rural communities to schoolchildren as requested.
- d) *VFF Conferences:* Specific OHS on farms safety sessions delivered at all VFF commodity conferences throughout the year.

5. WorkCover Corporation SA

- a) *Safer Industries Riverland Horticulture Council Project:* Training sessions free of charge, about the Produce Growers improvement kit involving monthly actions to make that activity safe.
- b) *Managing Farm Safety Training Program:* The project will fund the coordination and provision of the Managing Farm Safety Training Program in South Australian for the following regional areas; Lower Eyre Peninsula, Upper Eyre Peninsula, Far North, Mid North, Riverland, Adelaide Hills, Barossa, Murray Lands, Upper South East, and Lower South East.

6. Worksafe Western Australia

- a) *Worksafe WA through Farmsafe WA:* Conducting the Managing Farm Safety Course and short general duty of care and other farm safety presentations.

Research

1. Queensland Division of Workplace Health and Safety

- a) *Farm Safety Survey- Evaluating Change in injury and injury risk factors on QLD farms:* Injury rates for 11 rural industries expressed per 100,000 hours workers and per 100 farms. Common industries in 1993 and 1995 surveys were compared. Other risk factors pertaining to tractors and data on safety management practices, child safety and a farm safety behaviour index were also described.
- b) Profile of work-related injury and disease risk in Queensland's beef cattle industry.

- c) *QLD Summary*: A comprehensive profile of work-related injury and disease risk in Queensland beef cattle industry was developed for each of seven statistical divisions and on a state-wide basis. A total of 2782 injury records from WorkCover Qld were analysed in the study.
- d) *An investigation of health and safety risk associated with egg and meat production in the Queensland poultry industry*: The main aims of this project were to identify significant health and safety risks by collecting data on worker exposure in a suitable number of representative workplaces and to provide information to industry about these risks and ways to control them. Two industry reference groups were used to guide the project and discuss the results. A further aim was to assist industry with the management of injury risk by developing an audit checklist.

2. Northern Territory Work Health Authority

- a) *Health and safety in the Pastoral Industry in the Northern Territory*: This aim of this project was to examine the cost of workplace injury in the Northern Territory Cattle Station and possible prevention strategies. A coordinator was employed to collect information on the industry, study, collate and evaluate the information and develop a strategy to address the industry's health and safety problems.

3. WorkCover Corporation SA

- a) *Safer Industries Riverland Horticulture Council Project*: Ergonomic study of fruit picking bag. Project to highlight safety design requirements and usage of bags to minimise risks to health and safety.
- b) *Safer Industries Riverland Horticulture Council Project*: Testing safety glasses for use in picking and pruning etc of fruit trees and grape vines; to recommend criteria for the selection fitting and use of bags.
- c) *Improving OHS and Productivity in the Pig Industry*: Project aimed to consider the relationships between productivity, work conditions and work practices in the pig industry and to make recommendations to improve OHS. The project focused on respiratory health problems in humans associated with poor air quality in buildings housing animals.

4. Worksafe Western Australia

- a) *ATV Research* : WorkSafe Western Australia through Farmsafe Western Australia participated in ATV research funded by healthways.

5. Victorian WorkCover Authority.

- a) *Farm Injury Regular Surveillance Tools (FIRST)*. Twice yearly report on deaths and serious injuries sustained on Victorian farms using death, hospital admissions and emergency department presentations data. Produced by Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) with WorkSafe Victoria support.
- b) *Farm Deaths & Injury Presentation Data*: Produced monthly and widely distributed by WorkSafe Victoria.
- c) *ROPS Evaluation*: Produced by MUARC for the 1997/98 ROPS rebate campaign with WorkSafe Victoria support.
- d) *Tractor Safety Evaluation & Rating System*: Currently in progress with partial WorkSafe Victoria support.

Information Services

1. New South Wales WorkCover Authority

- a) *Farm Safety Hotline-1800 Number:* WorkCover in conjunction with the Rural Industry Reference Group created the Farm Safety Hotline- 1800 300 377- launched by the Minister in July 2000. The number allows people to choose between 6 options to gain rural safety information.
- b) *Rural Safety Web Page:* Compilation of 45 Rural Safety topics. This page is currently under development and when completed will be placed on the WorkCover website as a dedicated Rural Safety site.

2. Worksafe Western Australia

- a) *Worksafe WA through Farmsafe WA:* Development and maintenance of a Farmsafe WA web site, providing, relevant safety information and linked to WorkSafe Western Australia's safety line.

3. Victorian WorkCover Authority.

- a) *Advisory Service 1800 Number:* Service available on all OHS issues with agriculture enquires forwarded to the farm safety officers.
- b) *Farm Safety Web Page:* Extensive information service on farm safety OHS issues available as a specific section of the WorkSafe Victoria web page.

Awareness Campaigns

1. New South Wales WorkCover Authority

- a) *Rural Awareness Campaign:* Developed and funded a rural safety commercial aimed at raising awareness of various hazards on farms. The commercial was broadcast on regional TV and promoted the Checklist.

2. SA WorkCover Authority

- a) *Farm Health and Safety Awareness campaign* through advertising during 'safe work' week.

3. Queensland Division of Workplace Health and Safety

- a) *Farm Injury Prevention Information Campaign – Improved information access by rural workers:* The campaign features colourful posters and reply paid card leaflets that can be used to access a range of farm safety handout material. Nearly 8000 posters and 50,000 leaflets have been displayed in rural doctor's surgeries and hospitals, community meeting places, chemical and machinery retailers, government officers and rural colleges.

The project was run in conjunction with Farmsafe QLD and the QLD rural Doctors Association with support from QLD Country Women's association, AgSafe and the Tractor Machinery Association.

4. Victorian WorkCover Authority.

- a) *ROPS Campaigns:* Extensive media campaigns covering TV, radio, press and direct mail-outs for both the 1997/98 ROPS rebate campaign and the 2001 ROPS compliance project.
- b) *Farm Safety what are you doing about it?* A media and publications campaign during 2000 that highlighted personal experiences of farm accidents.
- c) *Weekly Times farm safety feature article:* periodically run to highlight farm safety issues. Currently highlighting personal farmer contributions to farm safety.
- d) *Attack of the Killer Farms:* Interactive CD-Rom produced and supplied to all rural schools.

Roll Over Protective Scheme

1. New South Wales WorkCover Authority

The NSW Government has committed \$2 million towards this project as part of a 4.3 million Rural Safety Initiative, which also includes education and, raising awareness of ohs in rural communities.

- a) *\$200 rebate for ROPS:* Provide \$200 rebate to each owner of a tractor used on a NSW farm to fit a Roll Over Protective Structure (ROPS) to their tractor. Farmsafe NSW is administering the scheme.
- b) *ROPS Education:* Support the Rebate Scheme to raise awareness throughout NSW through printed advertisements.
- c) *ROPS Compliance Project:* Workplace visits checking on ROPS compliance and general tractor safety eg PTO guarding.

2. Victorian WorkCover Authority

- a) *ROPS Rebate:* \$150 rebate for Victorian farmers to fit a roll over protective structure on their tractors: 1997/98 campaign resulted in 12,200 ROPS fitted to Victorian tractors.
- b) *ROPS Compliance:* Workplace visits checking on ROPS compliance. Project currently in progress with Notices issued on non- compliance.

Competitions

1. WorkCover Corporation SA

Safer Industries Riverland Horticulture Council Project: The Industry committee ran a competition for the employers and workers in the industry to design a Great Safety Gadget for the chance to win \$1000 for their idea.

Support For Farm Safety Action Group

1. WorkCover Corporation SA

- a) *Farm Safety at the Local Level:* The project was to support local Farm Safety Groups to implement a range of strategies to promote OHS and to establish new Farm Safety Groups. The aim was to increase the number and range of farm injury prevention activities. Provide small amounts of funding for Farm Safety Groups to undertake specific activities, implement sustainable mechanisms for Farm Safety Groups to continue farm safety activities and increase coordination and implementation of strategies for farm safety.

2. Victorian WorkCover Authority.

- a) *Victorian FarmSafe Alliance:* Joint funding support with other agencies for the Alliance that coordinates the establishment and functioning of over 30 Farm Safety Action Groups (FSAG) across Victoria. The Alliance conducts an annual Forum sponsored by WorkSafe Victoria, for all FSAG's and rural communities involved with farm safety.
- b) *FSAG Activities:* WorkSafe Victoria farm safety officers support and participate with most farm safety activities conducted by the Groups throughout the year.
- c) *Pilot projects:* Currently an application for funding support for the installation of safe access platforms to older tractors by FSAG's is being considered by WorkSafe Victoria.

Rehabilitation

1. WorkCover Corporation SA

- a) **Improving the Rehabilitation of Injured Farmers and Farm Workers:** The project is to assist farmers and farm workers with work related injury or illness who require rehabilitation to return to work. Project outcomes included:
- Develop a kit with information about rehabilitation services and distribute to farmers as soon as appropriate after admission to a metropolitan hospital.
 - Hold the training course "Return to work on the farm" in two rural regions.
 - Hold a "Train the Trainer" program of the "Return to work on the farm" course to increase sustainability of the course.

Other

1. Worksafe Western Australia

Worksafe WA through Farmsafe WA: Participation in farm safety activities undertaken and/or funded by others, such as programs undertaken by or in conjunction with the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health, the Health Department of WA, Divisions of General Practice and the Education Department

2. Worksafe Western Australia

Worksafe WA through Farmsafe WA: Participation in Farmsafe Week and relevant WorkSafe Western Australia promotional activities.

3. Victorian WorkCover Authority.

WorkSafe Victoria provides sponsorship support, establishes displays and speaks at annual VFF commodity conferences. WorkSafe Victoria works with other rural industry bodies such as Farm Machinery Dealers', Silo Manufacturers', Stockfeed Association, Fodder Association, Tractor and Machinery Association and the Motorcycle Association on relevant OHS issues.

Standards

1. Queensland Division of Workplace Health and Safety

- a) *Workplace Health and Safety Standards Applying to Silos:* Standard applying to storage and handling and the design, manufacture and installation: The issues concerning silo safety demand a national cooperative approach between the three major parties- farmers, manufacturers (suppliers/importers) and regulatory authorities. There is a need to adopt one uniform national standard regarding silo safety and design. The report discusses atmospheric and physical hazards and makes recommendations in how to reduce risk of injury from them.

2. Victorian WorkCover Authority.

- a) *Codes of Practice:* Agriculture specific codes for farmers are developed in conjunction with introduced legislative changes in Victoria. Codes and guidance material produced for Hazardous Substances, Shearing, ROPS on tractors and currently in preparation working from heights regulations.

3 University Departments/Schools of Rural Health Report of Farm Related Safety Work Over the Last 5 Years

This report was prepared by:
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Farm work related deaths occur every 3 days on Australian farms. Many of these accidents are preventable through implementation of best practice occupational health and safety practices. Education and promotion aimed at farmers, farm workers and involved stakeholders such as general practitioners, government departments and other key agencies are important activities to address farm health and safety in the Australian farming community.

This report aims to identify University Departments of Rural Health that have undertaken farm health and safety activities and the types of activities undertaken. For this report all University Departments of Rural Health as well as one University School of Rural Health were asked to reply to a questionnaire about farm health and safety activities undertaken in the last 5 years. All of the University Departments and School of Rural Health (UD/SRHs) replied to the survey with five of eight indicating some form of activity in farm health and safety. The information from the UD/SRHs has been broken down into the following categories:

- Research
- Development of Resources

Research

School of Rural Health – Monash University

Spinal Cord Injury in the Agricultural Workforce: Rates and Rehabilitation – The aim of this project was to identify the incidence of spinal cord injury in the agricultural workforce. A census between the years 1990 and 1996 was conducted of all new cases of spinal cord injury (n=393) in the south-eastern states of Australia. It was determined that the incidence of spinal cord injury in the agricultural population was 62 per million persons. Comparatively, this is a much higher incidence than the general population at 11 per million persons. It was determined that agricultural workers were at 1.65 times the risk of a spinal cord injury as those employed in other industries. Agricultural workers tended to have better return to work statistics with 72% employed post-discharge compared to 53% for other industries. However, when pre-injury work capacity (hours worked) was factored in, agricultural workers fared worse than their other industry counterparts. It was concluded that interventions could be targeted at both primary and tertiary prevention initiatives to reduce spinal cord injuries and facilitate re-integration into the agricultural workforce.

Funding – National Occupational Health and Safety Commission

Status – Completed 1999

Department of Rural Health – University of Tasmania

Getting the Message: Improving Manual Handling in the Wool Industry – The aim of this project is to identify the social and cultural barriers to the adoption of occupational health and safety strategies among workers and managers in the wool harvesting industry. Guidelines are to be developed from the information gathered for training programs and health messages for workers.

Status – Contingent on funding proposal to RIRDC

Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health – University of Western Australia

Reducing All-Terrain Vehicle Injury – The aim of this project is to assess the effectiveness of an ATV training course. Control and intervention sites will be surveyed at the one and two years to determine injury experience.

Funding - RIRDC

Status – Ongoing

Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health – University of Western Australia

All-Terrain Vehicle Injury – The aim of this project is to assess riding exposure and its relationship to injury in a cohort of adolescents (16-18 years) attending WA agricultural colleges.

Funding - Healthway

Status – Ongoing

Department of Rural Health – University of Melbourne

Evaluation of the NSW Rural Hearing Conservation Program – The aim of this project is to measure the impact a field-day hearing screening program targeted at farm families. A follow-up survey strategy will be used to learn if participants in the program have followed recommendations provided to them. A sample of 942 participants will be contacted by mail with the expectation that a final sample of 550 will be available after accounting for loss to follow-up and non-response. An evaluation report will be generated focusing on changes in behaviour following contact with the screening program. This program is being conducted in collaboration with the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety.

Funding – NSW Health Promotion Branch

Status – Ongoing

Department of Rural Health – University of Melbourne

Noise Injury Prevention in the Farming Community – The aims of this project are to measure current noise levels within the agricultural industry, estimate current levels of noise injury suffered by young farmers, as well as to develop a training program for persons interested in offering hearing screening programs to farm families. Noise intensity will be measured for different machine types during varying climatic conditions at different farm locations. Students in rural secondary schools and agricultural colleges will be invited to participate in a hearing screening exercise. The course material for the Field Day Hearing Screening Program will be piloted. This project will be the preliminary step in the development of national strategy for rural hearing conservation. This program is being conducted in collaboration with the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety.

Status – Contingent on funding by RIRDC

Development Of Resources

Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health – University of Western Australia

Farm Injury Prevention: Investing for Health – Using a modification of the European Verona Benchmark to assess current state of farm injury initiatives, the Centre is working with stakeholders to develop a unifying group akin to the Farmsafe Alliance in Victoria

Funding – Internal

Status – Ongoing

Mount Isa Centre for Rural and Remote Health – James Cook University

Injury Surveillance – The aim of this project was to examine the injuries presenting to a small rural hospital. It was found that about 50% of injuries were related to the pastoral industry. The information led to the development of a pamphlet and a workshop with Farmsafe.

Funding – Internal

Status - Discontinued

4 Resolution of the 4th Nation Farm Injury Conference

Cultural change / local action and community development

1. This conference recommends the increased promotion of the Farmsafe Australia brandmark and its role in coordinating a national program aimed at farm injury prevention.
2. This conference recommends that an identity and structure for farm safety be developed based on the successful Landcare model and using the Farmsafe name.

Farm Safety Training

3. This conference recommends the development of on farm assessment tools for the Managing Farm Safety course that are consistent with the proposed objectives of the Farmsafe Australia Accredited Farm and external Occupational Health and Safety Audit.
4. This conference strongly recommends further research and evaluation into the effectiveness of the Managing Farm Safety training course in enhancing farm safety management and to quantify the potential benefits to farmers.
5. This conference recommends an expeditious review of the Managing Farm Safety tools and resources, including the hazard checklists.
6. This conference recommends that a course be developed to provide skilled OHS consultants to assist and work with farmers to implement a successful policy and action plan on their farms. This would allow third party audit, reminders and a resource person at an individual level.

Legislation and Standards

7. This conference recommends that clarification be sought from relevant national and state authorities on the legal implications and practical requirements for farmers to be aware of in relation to on-farm modification of farm machinery and equipment.

Research and Data

8. This conference supports further research to define specific risks to the health and safety of farm women.
9. This conference encourages research to identify the psychosocial and other environmental factors that may contribute to work-related risk taking behaviour and their significance in relation to farm safety performance.

Audits and Quality Assurance

10. This conference recommends that a process is developed to enable farms to be accredited in safety management for the purposes of training, demonstration and other related agricultural health and safety extension activities.
11. This conference recommends that the development of the Farmsafe Australia Accredited Farm should be fast-tracked so as to enable a quantifiable recognition of a farmers performance in reducing risk.

12. This conference recommends the integration of occupational health and safety standards and audits into existing programmes particularly quality assurance and encouraging a homogenous approach for these programmes across commodities.
 - Auditors who undertake OHS Audits should be appropriately trained and accredited by FSA

Tractor and Machinery Safety

13. This conference recommends the provision of incentives to encourage the retrofitting of Safe Tractor Access Platforms to tractors similar to the ROPS Rebates schemes of Victoria and NSW.
14. This conference recommends that Farmsafe Australia collaborate with other farm safety organizations in other countries towards improving safety design of farm machinery and equipment.
15. FSA seeks national uniformity of design standards for farm machinery.

Noise Injury

16. This conference recommends the extension of the rural noise injury prevention program, as currently implemented in NSW to all other states, and that funding be sought from RIRDC or other relevant funding bodies.

General

17. This conference recommends that due process be taken to ensure adequate funding of Farmsafe Australia is secured to enable the development of adequate information dissemination through the use of the internet and the provision of a regular newsletter, in conjunction with partnership groups and member agencies.