



MOTOR ACCIDENTS  
AUTHORITY

# Get Going!

## COMPETITION — INSIDE —

Enter to WIN  
great prizes!

First 100 entries  
win a child's  
t-shirt



## Moving Kids Safely on Farms

# Contents

	Pg
What's the problem?	2
Farm kids are at greater risk	3
It's up to parents and carers	4
Motor vehicles on farms	5
Motorcycles on farms	7
Other farm machinery	9
Yes, but .....	10
Appendix – child restraint advice	11
References and other resources	17
Competition	18
Useful contacts	19



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# What's the problem?

Most parents share a concern about road safety and their children. Rural parents, including farm parents, have special cause for concern. Compared with urban areas:

- almost **three times** as many young children are killed as passengers in vehicles in rural areas of Australia<sup>1</sup>
- **twice as many** young children in rural areas are killed as pedestrians in low speed impacts with vehicles.<sup>2</sup>

Yet only **one third of** children live in regional and remote areas - outside of major cities.



Farms are a special, smaller subset of rural Australia and have their own special risks. Children on farms:

- are often driven round farms where roads/tracks may be of poor quality
- regularly use motorbikes for transport or leisure
- are often near tractors, trucks and other mobile farm machinery.

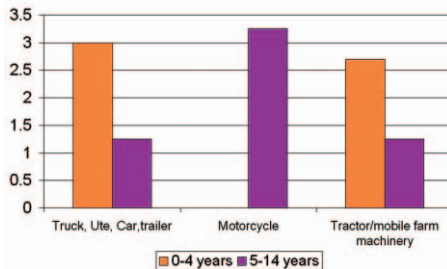
# Farm kids are at greater risk

On average **one child is killed every month** on Australian farms in incidents involving trucks, utilities, cars, trailers, motorbikes, tractors and other mobile farm machinery.<sup>3</sup>

Toddlers are most at risk around vehicles and farm machinery. Motorbikes (four and two wheel) are a key risk for older children.

Vehicles and motorbike injuries are also common. They account for around **one third of child hospital admissions** due to an on-farm incident.

Average Annual Child Deaths on Farms due to Vehicles/Mobile Machinery<sup>3</sup>



# It's up to parents and carers

These deaths and injuries are preventable.  
**"The protection of children on farms depends on adult decision making".<sup>4</sup>**

However, parents don't always get it right.

For example, children can appear very competent to their parents – until something happens.

Parents may not realise that children under 7 don't take into account oncoming vehicles hidden by objects and have poor ability to judge speed and distance.<sup>5</sup> Children are easily distracted and don't always do what they have been told.<sup>6</sup>

Parents don't always use the best child safety practices.

For example, we know that children are more likely to survive a motor vehicle accident if they are properly secured in an appropriate child restraint. Yet research shows that about 45% of children killed in road accidents were not properly restrained.<sup>5</sup>

This booklet lists practices that minimise the risk to children on farms from moving vehicles. The results of a survey are included (as pie charts) to show what other farmers are doing. You can use this information to see how your practices stack up against the best.

# Motor vehicles on farms

## Be a good role model

Start good habits with kids when they are young and always wear a seat belt yourself! Good habits on the farm will help keep children safer on the road.

### Vehicle-related events:

- Children run over by a reversing vehicle
- Children falling from the back of utilities, trucks or trailers
- Children in vehicles involved in a collision or rollover

### What you can do:

Have a securely fenced safe play area (a house yard) that vehicles don't enter - to support supervision and reduce the chance of a young child running behind a reversing vehicle

When buying a farm vehicle that children may be driven in - consider one with a back seat (eg a dual cab) and anchor points for child restraints and also consider the vehicle's reversing visibility index (see [www.nrma.com.au/reversing](http://www.nrma.com.au/reversing))

Keep children off the backs of utilities, tray trucks and trailers

Keep farm vehicles in roadworthy order. When driving children on the farm put them in appropriate, properly fitted restraints as you would on the road (see *Appendix pg 11 - 16*).

# How do your practices stack up?

## Case:

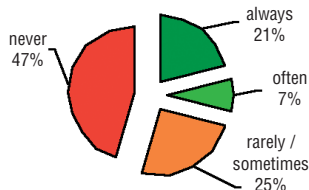
A nine year old boy was riding in the rear tray of a utility on a private access road on a farm. The driver was slowing the utility to allow the child to open a closed gate. The child jumped while the vehicle was moving, lost his footing, fell to the ground, and was run over and killed.

**Around a third of farm families follow good child safety practices with their farm vehicles.<sup>7</sup>**

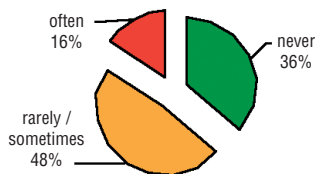
“We bought a dual cab with the kids in mind. We use the extra seats far more often than we would have used the 0.9m of tray we sacrificed. Also the cost difference - less than \$2000 - was much lower than I expected.”

*Gary Lang, farmer, WA*

**How often do children wear seat belts in vehicles on farms?**



**How often do children ride on back of utes / trucks?**



# Motorcycles on farms

## Be a good role model

Wear a helmet and other protective gear yourself!

### Motorcycle-related events:

- Children suffering serious crush injuries under a 4 wheel motorcycle (ATV)
- Children falling from motorbikes and sustaining serious head injury

Note: While there is more risk that a child will fall from a 2 wheel motorcycle than a 4 wheeler, the likelihood of death or serious injury is higher on a 4 wheeler due to the crush injury potential.



### What you can do:

Keep children from riding ATVs until they are over 16 (as recommended by manufacturers)

- they do not have the weight, limb size, skills or judgement to control them safely in all conditions

Never take children as passengers on ATVs

Consider other safer transport/leisure options more beneficial to a child's development eg mountain bikes

If purchasing a 2 wheel motorbike make sure it is suitable for the size and competence of the child.

Make sure they wear appropriate gear

- especially an approved helmet. Provide instruction and supervision.



# How do your practices stack up?

## Case:

A six year old boy with four years experience on a 2 wheeler and 18 months experience riding an ATV was killed when returning home after a day shifting rocks from paddocks on the family farm. The ATV he was operating overturned on a slope after hitting a protruding rock.

About a third of farmers (with ATVs) report that children under 14 never ride ATVs on their farm/rural property. A slightly higher proportion report that children never ride as passengers on ATVs. Half of the farmers report that children wear helmets when riding bikes on farms.<sup>7</sup>

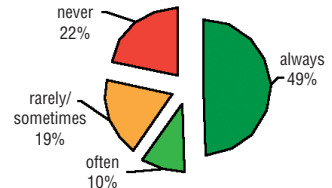
"we don't let our children on motorbikes. I'm a bike education teacher and I know their limitations. Children are unpredictable and push the boundaries."

*Ros Lanyon, farmer and teacher, Victoria.*

***Farmsafe Australia has secured a discount for primary producers to purchase motorcycle helmets.***

See the Farmsafe website: [www.farmsafe.org.au](http://www.farmsafe.org.au) or phone Farmsafe on 02 6752 8218 for more details on this offer. 'Be a role model, always wear a helmet yourself!'

**How often do children wear helmets when riding motorbikes on farms?**



# Other farm machinery

## Farm machinery - related events:

- Falls from tractors/mobile machinery. Even tractors with cabins can be a risk as incidents occur when getting on or off or due to accidental opening of a cabin door resulting in:
  - fall from height injuries
  - crush under wheels or trailed implements.

## What you can do:

Never take children for rides on mobile machinery such as tractors, harvesters, lawn mowers etc. Use other, safer activities to introduce young children to farming life.

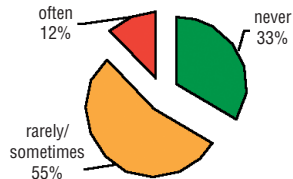
A third of surveyed farmers report that children "never" ride on tractors.<sup>7</sup>

"I have a real problem with kids going on tractors and headers. The kids go to sleep after a couple of rounds because of the heat and they can so easily hit a button or door handle ... and pop open."

*Rob Parsons, farmer SA.*

## How do your practices stack up?

How often do children ride as passengers on tractors?



## Yes, but...

**"Farm kids need to be taught young if they are to be good operators."**

Farming is a life long learning process; but childhood experience is not essential to becoming a competent machine operator, take crane or train drivers and pilots for example.

Parents need to make judgements about capability but play it safe and recognise that the impact of a poor decision can be very severe.

**"My children have always ridden ATVs and motorcycles. They are experienced riders and we haven't had a problem yet!"**

No parent would let their child ride an ATV if they thought they were not sufficiently capable. However, cases where young children have died demonstrate they have not had the ability to deal with the circumstances.

Incidents usually happen when several things occur at once...a distraction and something unusual (eg a rock on the track). A child is much less likely to be able to handle complex events.

**"The kids live for a ride on the ATV, tractor, etc... I can't disappoint them."**

There are many other activities that are just as interesting and more appropriate for a child's developmental needs.

Parenting often involves saying "no" to activities that can seem fun for kids but involve unacceptable risk. Children do not get to "joyride" on mobile equipment in other workplaces such as mines and construction sites.

# Appendix - child restraint advice <sup>8</sup>



## Planning ahead:

- Consider child restraint needs when purchasing a vehicle. The centre rear seat is the safest place for children of any age – so consider a dual cab rather than a ute.
- A vehicle with a centre rear lap/sash seat belt is safer than one with just a lap belt for booster seats. Newer cars usually have these centre lap/sash belts with a centre anchor point.

## Choosing a restraint is serious business

Select an approved model that suits the child's height, weight and age.

## Purchasing:

- Not all restraints fit all cars - try before buying.
- Follow instructions in the vehicle owner's handbook and the child restraint manual.
- Don't use a second-hand restraint without knowing its history, as the protective structure and harness could be invisibly damaged if it has been in a crash.

# Child restraint advice cont.



Do not place a child in a restraint in the front seat when a passenger airbag is fitted. In NSW this is illegal.

## Restraint use:

- Fit restraints properly. Make sure the capsule or seat is firmly fitted, with minimal sideways or forward movement on the car seat.
- Always use the child restraint - even for short journeys. Check that the restraint harness is properly adjusted and that only the thickness of two fingers, at most, can be inserted between the harness and the child's chest.
- A baby is not safe in your arms in a moving vehicle. Even in a minor crash, collision forces will tear the child from your grip.
- Make sure that anyone else driving your child knows how to correctly fit and use the restraint.
- Do not "rush" your child to the next type of restraint. Keep them in their appropriately sized restraint as long as possible because progression to the next type reduces the level of protection.

# Restraints for infants



- An approved rearward facing capsule is the most appropriate for an infant. It will suit a child less than 9kg and up to about 6 months of age.
- Don't carry your child in your arms. In a crash you won't be able to hold on to your child. He or she will be thrown around the vehicle interior or thrown out of the vehicle.
- Keep your child in a rearward-facing restraint until he or she physically won't fit.

# Restraints for young children



- When a child is able to sit and easily hold his or her head upright you can use a forward facing seat. You can buy seats which convert from rear to forward facing or that are designed only as forward facing.
- This type of seat will suit a child weighing from 9kg to 18kg, 6 months to approximately 5 years.
- You may be tempted to move your child on to a booster seat when a new brother or sister comes along. This is not recommended. Nothing else offers the same level of crash protection for young children as a child seat.

# Restraints for older children



- Once a child outgrows a forward facing seat, a booster seat with a lap/sash belt is the best option.
- This generally suits children up to 26kg, about 6 years.
- A rigid seat with back, side wings and sash guide to keep the seat belt in place is recommended.
- Use an adult lap/sash seat belt or a child harness in conjunction with the centre rear lap belt. When using a harness - firmly adjust the lap belt first, and then the harness, just removing the slack. The lap belt should always be much tighter than the shoulder harness.
- Never use a booster seat or cushion with just a lap only seat belt!



# Seat belts



A child is ready to wear a normal adult lap/sash belt when:

- they are too big for a child booster/restraint seat ie., when their eyes are level with the top of the booster seat
- (s)he can sit against the back of the rear seat with knees bent comfortably at the edge of the seat
- the belt rests low and snug across the hips (not the stomach)
- the shoulder belt is centred on shoulder and chest (not the neck)
- (s)he can stay seated like this for an entire trip.

# References and other resources

## Useful Websites:

Child Safety on Farms:  
[www.farmsafe.org.au](http://www.farmsafe.org.au)

Kids and Traffic:  
[www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au](http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au)

Kidsafe Australia:  
[www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au)

Roads and Traffic Authority:  
[www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au)

Motor Accidents Authority of  
NSW: [www.maa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maa.nsw.gov.au)

## References:

1. Michael Henderson , for the Motor Accidents Authority of NSW, Road Deaths and Injuries Among Children And Young People in Rural New South Wales, March 2002 (Page 12).
2. Department of Transport and Regional Services, Australian Transport Safety Bureau, Driveway deaths: fatalities of young children in Australia as a result of low-speed motor vehicle impacts. ROAD SAFETY REPORT CR 208, April 2002.
3. Franklin R, Mitchell R, Driscoll T, Fragar L. (2000) Farm-related fatalities in Australia, 1989-1992. ACAHS, NOHSC & RIRDC: Moree.
4. Resolution of Farmsafe Australia Occupational Health and Safety Conference August 2004.
5. Susan Adams Road Crashes and Child Injury Trends, Road Safer Kids MAA, 2003.
6. Dr John Irvine, Child Development a Road Safety Perspective, Road Safer Kids, MAA, 2003.
7. A survey of 800 people "who live or work on farms" was conducted at field days in SA, VIC, WA and NSW in August 2004 by the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety – results yet to be published.
8. See RTA NSW website: [www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety).

## Other Resources:

**Safe Play Areas on Farms – A Resource Package** (available free from Farmsafe Australia – ph 02 6752 8218)

**A Parents' Guide to Kidsafe Cars** (available from Kidsafe in your State/Territory)

**Where are your kids? Child safety in your driveway.** Go to MAA website to see this brochure: [www.maa.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety34campaigns\\_drive\\_way\\_safety.htm](http://www.maa.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety34campaigns_drive_way_safety.htm)

# Enter this competition and win!

See the Farmsafe Australia website [www.farmsafe.org.au](http://www.farmsafe.org.au) for more competition and prize details.

This competition closes 1 April 2005. Winners will be published on Farmsafe Australia's Website: [www.farmsafe.org.au](http://www.farmsafe.org.au) on 23 April 2005.

Farmsafe Australia is looking for child safety on farms stories, hints and tips that others can learn from.

If you have experiences or ideas (eg., dressing children in bright clothes to make them more visible) that you are willing to share, send them in to WIN great prizes. We plan to compile the stories for use in newspapers and on our website.

Send your story/hint/tip (no more than 200 words) to Farmsafe Australia, PO Box 256 Moree NSW 2400 with the completed entry form overleaf.

The first 100 entrants (must submit entry form plus story/hint/tip) will receive a high visibility kids "Watch Out - Livewire" T-shirt sponsored by Dial before you Dig.

The best entry can choose one of these great prizes valued at around \$500 from sponsor, the Australian Primary Superannuation Fund:

- a convertible child car seat or an alternative child restraint **OR**
- a child's mountain bike and helmet.

# Entry form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number/email: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you obtain the booklet? \_\_\_\_\_

What did you generally think of this booklet? *(tick appropriate box)*

☐ Very helpful    ☐ Helpful    ☐ Not very helpful    ☐ Not helpful at all

Did you change anything in relation to "moving children on farms"  
as a result of reading this booklet?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No

If yes, please specify what you have/will change(d)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Child's T-shirt size: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please place a tick in the box below (as appropriate) and sign at the bottom of the page:*

☒ I agree that Farmsafe Australia can use the attached story/hint/tip submitted by  
me as part of this competition for use in its farm/child safety promotion efforts

If Farmsafe publishes this material I wish to have my name:

☐ kept confidential    ☐ acknowledged \_\_\_\_\_

*(signature)*

## Useful Contacts

### **Farmsafe Australia**

Ph: (02) 6752 8218  
Fax: (02) 6752 6639  
www.farmsafe.org.au

### **Farmsafe NSW**

Ph: (02) 6752 8214  
Fax: (02) 6752 6639

### **Farmsafe QLD**

Ph: (07) 4774 0522  
Fax: (07) 4774 289

### **Farmsafe VIC**

Ph: (03) 9207 5509  
Fax: (03) 9207 5510

### **Farmsafe SA**

Ph: (08) 8232 5555  
Fax: (08) 8232 1311

### **Farmsafe WA**

Ph/Fax: (08) 9359 4118

### **Farmsafe TAS**

Ph: (03) 6332 1800  
Fax: (03) 6331 4344

