

# FARM VEHICLES, 2 AND 4 WHEELED MOTORBIKES

**F**arm vehicles, including cars, utilities, trucks, aircraft, two and four wheeled motorbikes, accounted for around 35% of all injury deaths on farms from 2001-2004. A further 70-100 farmers and farm workers are killed each year from road accidents in vehicles on public roads.

## FOUR WHEELED MOTORBIKES (QUAD BIKES)

Four wheeled motorcycles, are the leading cause of on-farm vehicle-related deaths in Australia, with around 12 -15 quad bike related deaths each year. The main causes of severe injury and death are head and neck injury; as well as crush injury and asphyxia associated with quad bike rollover. Quad bikes are also the leading cause of fatal injury in children aged 5-14 years on farms. Quad bikes are sometimes used for tasks beyond their original design limits. Lack of formal training, excessive loading (eg. spray tanks), inappropriate attachments, carrying of passengers and use by children not mature enough to control the machines, increase the risk of quad bike collision and rollover. Poor use of helmets also increases the risk of head injury.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT MACHINE FOR THE JOB

The farm ute or the newly marketed Small Utility Vehicles, have safety features that provide protection for operators in the event of roll-over or collision. These include a wider wheel-base, roll-bars (ROPS), seats for passengers, seat belts and trays for carrying loads.



- Check that the quad bike is the safest machine to do the job. If you need to carry passengers, use a ute
- A suitably tested crush protection device (CPD) should be fitted to the quad bike. These are commercially available, contact your state Farmsafe Group or Farmer Organisation
- Do not carry any passengers on quad bikes
- No riders under 16 years on quad bikes – either as operator or passenger**
- Set speed limits and establish ‘no go’ areas on the farm, such as hills and slopes, dam banks or any where the quad bike is at higher risk of roll-over
- Do not use attachments that may interfere with operator control and stability
- Do not modify quad bike wheels and maintain the tyre pressures at the level advised in the Manual
- Do not overload the quad bikes. Check the Operator’s Manual before carrying or towing loads
- Check with your local dealer about operator training courses for quad bikes

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## CARS, UTES AND TRUCKS

A number of accidents have involved vehicles colliding with an object or rolling, with unrestrained passengers being thrown from the vehicle or crushed. This is a common problem involving young people 15-24 years and includes passengers riding in the tray of utes, trucks and trailers during recreational activities such as hunting, mustering or skylarking. Young children under five years are also at risk of runover falling from utes or as pedestrians.

- Do not allow children, young people or adults to ride in the tray of utes, trailers or trucks**
- Ensure seatbelts are fitted and used in all cars, utes and trucks and that everyone is instructed to use them
- Set speed limits for all vehicles on farm and for areas near the house where children may be located. A securely fenced house yard can help prevent young children wandering into vehicle areas
- Keep all farm vehicles, motorbikes and quad bikes well maintained. Many accidents have been caused by non functioning brakes, suspension and worn tyres
- Check the tyre pressures regularly. Do not over inflate tyres. Check the Operator's Manual for proper inflation
- Have a "No drink and drive" policy that includes drugs



## SAFETY BEHAVIOURS

Vehicle safety checks, skills development and use of safety equipment needs to be second nature.

- Make sure all riders are trained to safely operate farm motorbikes and vehicles
- Conduct a safety check on all farm vehicles and motorbikes before starting work
- Always wear an approved helmet and sturdy workboots when riding farm motorbikes (including quad bikes)**
- Always wear seatbelts in vehicles on the farm and follow speed restrictions
- Make sure children are trained and supervised when riding two-wheeled motorbikes; and that these are an appropriate size. (Can they lift the bike from the ground unassisted and reach the ground with their feet when astride the bike?)



For farm safety checklists and other information on farm safety risks and controls, go to [www.farmsafe.org.au](http://www.farmsafe.org.au) or contact:

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