

## FACT SHEET:

# Farm-related injury



**Every year in Australia 30 children die from farm-related injuries – one third of these children are visitors to farms.<sup>1</sup>**

Every day in Queensland, two children are treated at an emergency department after being injured on a farm;<sup>2\*</sup> at least one person in Queensland is hospitalised from a farm injury, and one fifth of these are children.<sup>3</sup>

## The risks<sup>2</sup>

Children of all ages are at risk of being injured on or around farms. Most fatalities occur in very young children,<sup>1</sup> and most hospital admissions occur in slightly older children.<sup>3</sup> Farm injuries more commonly occur to boys.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Drowning is the most common cause of death from injury on a farm, especially for young children (aged 0-4 years).<sup>1</sup> Death and serious injury can also occur from farm vehicles (including motorcycles and tractors), animals (for example, bites and being struck by farm animals such as horses, dogs, cattle, sheep and pigs, as well as bites and stings from snakes, spiders, ticks, bees/wasps, etc), and poisoning from agricultural chemicals.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Injuries

Common farm injuries in children include fractures, open wounds, head injuries (including concussion), poisoning,<sup>1,2</sup> and burns.

In children under five, falls are the most common type of farm injury. This includes falls from horses, other animals, fences, machinery/ tools and motorbikes/all-terrain-vehicles (ATVs).

## Risk factors

Children are uniquely at risk of injuries related to farms for three reasons:

**Environment** – the farm can be considered a ‘workplace in the home’.

**Child development** – due to their small size, curiosity and inability to judge dangers, children have a higher risk of injury around the farm.

**Child care** – children are often unsupervised while the caregiver is working. Older children working on the farm may become involved in hazardous situations which they are not physically capable of dealing with.

**Recreational activities** – motorbikes, ATVs and horse-riding are common activities for children living on farms, and all of these are common causes of farm-related injury in children.

**Water** – dams, troughs, dips and ponds present possible drowning hazards for children of all ages.

**Animals** – Bites and being struck by farm animals such as horses, dogs, cattle, sheep and pigs are common farm injuries, as are bites and stings (snakes, spiders, ticks, bees/wasps, etc).

## Prevention<sup>2\*\*</sup>

Create a safe fenced-off play area to keep children separate from hazards (for example, dams, moving vehicles).

Make sure children are supervised by an adult who is not also working – the child needs to be the main priority while supervising.

Always supervise young children around animals and during recreational activities.

Children should always use a helmet when riding horses and motorbikes/ATVs.

Educate children on safe practices for using motorbikes, ATVs and horses.

Children under 16 should not use adult-size ATVs.

Educate and set guidelines about the boundary areas on the farm.

Keep children away from machinery – *do not take children as passengers on tractors and other farm equipment.*

**Learn first aid and CPR skills!**

\*This figure is extrapolated from data provided by the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit.

\*\*We gratefully acknowledge the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit<sup>2</sup> for the tips on prevention of farm injury.

## References

1. Fragar LJ, Stiller L, Thomas P. 2005. Child Injury on Australian Farms. The Facts. Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and Australian Centre for Agriculture Health and Safety. Publication No. 05/047; <https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/items/05-047u>
2. Shepherd M, Barker R, Scott D & Hockey R. 2006. Injury Bulletin No.92: Rural/Farm Injury in Queensland. Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit.
3. Queensland Trauma Registry. 2011. People treated for Serious Farm-related Injury in Queensland 2009. University of Queensland

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