

# PRACTICAL WAYS TO FARM WITHOUT HARM

THERE ARE LOTS OF WAYS TO GET HARMED WORKING ON A FARM. ON AVERAGE 17 OF US DIE EVERY YEAR DOING FARM WORK AND ANOTHER 2850 ARE OFF WORK FOR A WEEK OR MORE THROUGH INJURY.

Farm without Harm is a whole of sector approach to getting preventable harm out of agriculture. Its aim is to help people in the industry work together to avoid becoming one of those statistics.

Launched in June last year by Safer Farms, and designed with farmers, their communities, iwi, industry leadership bodies and primary sector organisations, it is the first time the whole sector has come together to address issues that lead to harm.

Its vision is 'Every day, farming people protect each other from preventable harm'.

Farm without Harm ambassador Lindy Nelson says over the next six years they aim to change the culture around health, safety and wellbeing in farming.

She says Farm without Harm is focused on the four high harm areas that are statistically where the most damage occurs.

These are 1) psychosocial risks that diminish wellbeing, 2) harm in and around vehicles and machinery, 3) muscular stress and injury caused by livestock handling, and 4) harm caused by exposure to agri chemicals and airborne risks.

A focus for Farm without Harm is rethinking

how we talk about health, safety and wellbeing. The aim is for rural people to help other rural people and learn from each other. It is not about outsiders imposing an impossible regime.

"This strategy represents a fresh approach to wellbeing on our farms. It involves gaining a deeper understanding of different forms of harm, redesigning our farming systems to prevent harm, and fostering a caring culture among us.

"Instead of relying on high-viz vests or helmets, we are looking to eliminate harm from the system by learning together, understanding that safety starts with a culture of care and investing in new approaches.

"This is our line in the sand. We need to do things differently."

Farm without Harm is about more than 'don't die'. It is about thriving, and that includes improving mental health and avoiding the strains and sprains that can slow you down for a few weeks.

Mental health issues include the stresses that come from trying to do everything while maintaining relationships (including those with staff), often with lack of sleep or time off the farm.

Health and safety is not just about farmers and farm staff. It must also include contractors. What hazards or risks are present on your farm? Who knows where you are and what you are doing? What system is in place to log contractors in and out and keep them aware of current conditions?



**FARM WITHOUT HARM AMBASSADOR LINDY NELSON SAYS THE INITIATIVE IS FINDING WAYS TO HELP FARMING PEOPLE CREATE A CULTURE OF SAFETY.**

This information must be available to all the contract team, not just the owner or manager.

## Practical help

Working around vehicles is where the most serious harm occurs. On average 11 people die every year in or around vehicles. The stats say from 2008 to 2020, 52 people died around quad bikes, 45 died around tractors, and another 48 died around other vehicles (utes, trucks etc.).

"Everyone in farming knows someone who has had a near miss, an accident or been killed on an ATV or quad. Rollovers are a major cause of fatalities on quad bikes. Addressing this has been a big focus recently," Lindy says.

Farm without Harm has some practical help and advice about vehicles.

First, ask if the quad bike is the right vehicle for the job you are doing, and the conditions you are working in? Take the extra time to go back for the ute or tractor if necessary.

The aim is to prevent anything going wrong in the first place. If it does, then, do we have systems in place to help us fail safely?

"Consider risks, talk to your team about jobs that need to be done that day, and whether a different vehicle might be safer."

Farm without Harm regularly publishes safety alerts on its website. These are learnings from real life incidents on farms. People can sign up to receive them, print



**FARM WITHOUT HARM IS FOCUSED ON THE HIGH HARM AREAS THAT ARE STATISTICALLY WHERE THE MOST DAMAGE OCCURS.**