

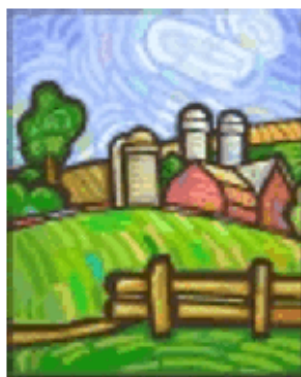
INTRODUCTION

Nova Scotia's farmers are a hard-working group of individuals who are dedicated to providing consumers with high quality products. Animals are also an integral part of the agricultural industry. Since the dawn of time, humans and animals have been entwined in food production and still share a strong interdependence on each other.

Unfortunately, working with animals can lead to situations where accidents may happen. The Nova Scotia Farm Health and Safety Committee has published this resource to provide Nova Scotia's farmers with safe animal handling information and techniques in hopes of reducing the number of animal-related accidents. By utilizing safe practices, farmers not only escape injuries, they also avoid costly loss of time, money and productivity.

These techniques are intended to provide farmers with ways to maintain a safe workplace. Using these guidelines along with good common sense and maintaining respect for animals are key aspects to avoiding injuries.

Whether you are the owner of livestock, a farm employee, family member or a visitor to a farm, safety cannot be overlooked. It is a major responsibility to ensure that humans and animals interact without risk.



Why Should We Worry?

Almost anyone who has worked with livestock has probably experienced a tramped-on toe or perhaps a not-so-gentle nudge from an animal at some time. Although these incidents are slight and don't usually cause serious injuries, it is a known fact that when working with animals, there is a possibility that accidents could happen. Unfortunately, sometimes these accidents can result in serious injuries or death.

The Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program conducted a study of farm accidents which occurred from 1990-1998. Animal-related deaths were the fifth highest cause of work related farm fatalities and accounted for 48 deaths in Canada. This study also includes the age groups and gender of those victims. The results show that regardless of age or sex, anyone working with animals must take proper precautions and follow safe work practices to ensure that future accidents are prevented. Also included in this study are statistics for non-fatal injuries due to livestock. Animal-related injuries are the second highest non-machinery related cause of injuries.

Top Ten Causes of Work-Related Farm Fatalities

Circumstance	# Of Fatalities 1990-1998
Entanglement	91
Traffic	75
Slope sideways roll-over	72
Towing backwards rollover	60
Animal related	48
Unmanned runover / crush	45
Other rollover	43
Fall	41
Blind runover	37
Falling material	37

Source: Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program

Work-Related Farm Fatalities Involving Animals, 1990-1998

Age Group	Male	Female
0-14 Years	4	2
15-59 Years	12	4
60+ Years	39	9

Source: Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program

The following chart shows the activities that resulted in the above 48 fatalities due to livestock.

Specific Animal Handling Duties Resulting In Fatalities

Animal Handling Task	Number of deaths from task
Herding	12
Feeding/Watering	10
Bystander in work area	5
Inspecting	3
Other veterinary activity (not vaccinating)	3
Calving	2
Loading / unloading	1
Other	2
Insufficient information to classify	10

Source: Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program

Also noted in the study was a higher incidence of fatalities from May to August. Nearly 60% of fatalities occurred during these crucial months when farmers are usually busier and dealing with more issues. High numbers of injuries were observed all year long with the peak number of animal related accidents occurring in spring.

Please, don't become a statistic!

General Safety Tips When Working With Livestock



- **Be patient, do not rush animals.**
- **Avoid rough handling of livestock.**
- **Avoid excessive noise or excitement. Animals usually respond favourably to calm, deliberate motions.**
- **Respect, rather than fear, livestock. Understand animal behaviour and disposition.**
- **Ensure buildings are evenly lit, eliminate shadowed areas that may frighten an animal. Animals need to see where they are going.**
- **Have a planned escape route.**
- **Pens should be equipped with a man-gate or other means of quick exit.**
- **Safety shoes should be standard footwear around animals.**
- **Be alert and well rested.**
- **Make certain that those persons handling livestock are experienced, properly trained and physically able to perform the necessary task.**
- **Move with slow, deliberate actions. Quick motions may result in dangerous reflexive motions by the animals.**
- **Be aware that animals in heat or with newborns may be more aggressive or defensive.**
- **Males animals are potentially dangerous at all times.**
- **Know warning signs such as raised or pinned ears, raised tail, raised back hair, barred teeth, pawing the ground and/or snorting.**
- **Exercise extra care around newly acquired animals. They will need time to adjust to their new surroundings.**
- **Certain situations involve high noise levels. Protect yourself and others from possible hearing damage by using properly fitting ear protection.**

- **Animals that are normally docile may become a safety hazard if startled. Take precautions to avoid spooking livestock. When approaching animals, announce your presence by whistling, talking softly, etc.**
- **Remain behind or beside an animal being led from a vehicle or trailer.**
- **Regularly inspect equipment to ensure safety devices, latches, clips, etc. are in good working order.**
- **Be careful around sick or injured animals. Air borne diseases may be transmitted between animal and human. Practice good hygiene by washing your face and hands after handling animals.**
- **Practice proper lifting techniques. Lift with the legs, not with the back.**
- **Practice good personal hygiene. Washing hands after handling animals greatly reduces the risk of transmission of disease between animal and human. Be especially careful when treating sick animals.**

ABC's of Safe Animal Handling

Avoid dangerous situations.

Be calm, quiet and capable of handling livestock. Never become complacent or over-confident.

Common sense should never be ignored.



Children and Animals



Children require special consideration when it comes to farm animals. For those who live on a farm, animals are often an everyday fact of life. It is too easy to become complacent where animals are concerned. Children need to understand that although animals shouldn't be feared, they definitely need to be respected and handled with care.

Particularly small children may see farm animals as cute, especially newly born animals. Always maintain proper supervision around farm animals and children. Do not allow children to reach between gates to pet animals, especially when the young animal has a protective mother nearby.

As farm children get older, they may become responsible for carrying out certain chores. Consider the following questions from the North American Guidelines For Children's Agricultural Tasks to see if a youngster is capable of the required task.

- G Is the child comfortable around the particular animal?**
- G If lifting and carrying is involved, is the child physically capable?**
- G Does the child have an appropriate attention span for the chore involved?**
- G Does the child have good hand-eye coordination?**
- G Has the child been properly trained on the procedure?**
- G Has an adult demonstrated the required activity?**
- G Has the child been trained on animal behaviour?**
- G Can the child react quickly?**
- G Is the child strong enough to restrain the animal?**
- G Growth spurts sometimes cause periods of clumsiness and reduced coordination. Has the child recently undergone a growth spurt?**
- G Can the child recognize a hazard and react without getting upset?**
- G Will the child recognize the need for appropriate safety equipment (respirator in poultry barn, hard soled shoes, etc.)**

Answering yes to the questions may indicate that a child is capable of the assigned task. However, adult supervision is still important to ensure the safety of both child and animal.

Livestock and Farm Dogs

Almost every farm has a dog. Whether the dog is a family pet or a trained work animal, they need to be taken into consideration when working with livestock. Even a friendly dog can unknowingly pose a hazard.

Dogs that are frequently around livestock often sense when something non-routine is occurring and want to get involved. An animal being moved, bred, examined or near delivery are examples of activities that may arouse a dog's interest.

A normally quiet animal may become highly excitable in a dog's presence. This may result in an animal bolting or kicking, possibly causing harm to the handler.



If a dog well trained and will immediately obey all commands, then he or she may pose no threat. However, if the dog is not so obedient, then it may be wise to temporarily isolate it until the necessary tasks are complete.

Even if livestock are familiar with the dog, a new mother may perceive the dog as a threat to her offspring. Whenever possible, keep dogs away from these animals.

Personal Protective Equipment

No animal handling should be done without the proper personal protective equipment.

- # Safety Footwear -Safety footwear is especially important around large animals where there is a possibility of tramped on feet. Ensure footwear has non-slip soles to guard against falls.**
- # Hard Hat -Although a hard hat may not be a regularly used item, one should be worn whenever there is any potential risk of head injury.**
- # Goggles or Face Shield -Eyes are very vulnerable to injury. Eye protection is important to prevent damage due to punctures or chemical damage.**
- # Lung Protection -Livestock can create dusty conditions. A respirator or dust mask will protect the lungs in these situations.**
- # Skin Protection -Treating livestock which may be infected with disease requires the handler to protect himself or herself from these diseases.**
- # Work Gloves -Cuts and scrapes are common types of minor injuries on farms. Work gloves can prevent these inconveniences.**
- # Hearing Protection -High noise levels can cause hearing loss. A good rule of thumb is that if you can't hear another person speaking when standing apart at arms length, then hearing protection should be worn.**