



## Farm Safety Week 2017

### Day 2: Putting safety in the driving seat

The second day of Farm Safety Week focuses on Machinery & Transport. Poorly used or faulty vehicles and machinery are a major cause of death and injury on farms and HSE's latest report on ***Fatal injuries in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Great Britain 2016/17*** (available via HSE [webpage](#)) provides a detailed analysis and summary of each incident.

In summary, it confirms that transport remains the biggest killer in agriculture (e.g. due to overturning vehicles or being struck by moving vehicles). Farmers also work with a host of machinery daily, each of which bring their own attendant dangers. Hands, feet, hair and clothing can be caught by unguarded PTO shafts or other unguarded moving parts. People are regularly killed or injured by mobile machines such as loaders, being trapped by or falling from moving tractors, or being struck by wheels or trailers.

Each day during **#FarmSafetyWeek** a different press release on the daily theme is being published in each country, featuring 'survivors' from each of the 5 nations taking part. Many of IOSH Rural Industry Group's (RIG) members are spread throughout England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland, and will no doubt read their local examples in the media, but we will be sharing some of these stories more widely – together with other useful information and sources of guidance.

#### England

For example, the publicity in England today features Helen Banham, a dairy farmer from Skegness Lincolnshire, who is all too aware of how easily a risk that you have taken "a million times before" can change your life and your business forever... Helen lost two fingers on her right hand in a life changing accident on a bottling machine four years ago. As she was going about her daily routine, a bottle dropped through the machine. Instinctively, and without thinking or turning off the bottling line, she reached into the machine to grab it. The results of her actions were devastating and would have long lasting effects for her, for her family and for the family's farming business.

Helen's right hand was trapped in the machine; her thumb was severed, and a spike penetrated the palm of her hand. Without thinking, she pulled her hand free and in doing so, ripped her hand open, severely and irrevocably damaging the tendons of her third finger. This incident is a useful reminder that the 'Safe Stop' procedure applies to static plant and equipment, not just tractors and mobile field machinery.

Helen's husband and business partner David added: "We did know that the machine needed to have some guards added; that was the stupid thing about it. We had employed a health and safety consultant who had said something about guards, but we hadn't picked up on it, specifically. The trouble with farming is that you're always a "jack of all trades" and constantly juggling jobs and we wanted so much for the milk processing part of the business to work, so perhaps we didn't have our eye on the safety side of things as we should have done."

#### Wales

In Wales, Stephen James, President of National Farmers Union Cymru and member of the Wales Farm Safety Partnership highlighted the fact that: "Machinery and transport continue to be the main causes of life changing and life ending injuries on farms. In fact, 40% of all farm workers who lost their lives in agriculture over the past decade were involved in workplace transport or machinery-related incidents.



After losing his leg in a life-changing accident with a combine harvester in September 2008, Robin Foord, a livestock and arable farmer from Llanfapley, Abergavenny, is all too aware of how easily a task that you have done many times can go terribly wrong.

Robin admits to taking an unnecessary risk with a routine task - something many farmers and farm workers have probably done in their time. (A recent survey indicated that more than 50% of farmers admit to taking a risk in the last year).

Unfortunately for Robin, it was 'third time unlucky' and his actions had life-changing consequences. As he explained: "2008 was a very wet harvest. I had done a bit of combining on a Sunday and stopped because it was too wet. By Wednesday I thought it was time to remove the small amount of damp grain in the combine tank, which was stuck together. I did everything by the book, twice: I stopped the engine before I climbed into the tank to loosen the grain to try and make it flow."

"But the third time, I took the risk of leaving the unloading auger running and climbed into the grain tank again. I failed to realise, because this was my first year with this combine, that unlike machines that I had used previously, there was a lot more room between the auger guard and the bottom of the grain tank. My foot slipped, and I knew immediately that I had made a serious error of judgement. I could see my right boot trapped under the far side of the auger, but I think the adrenalin must have kicked in, as I felt no pain.

Fortunately, the noise his dogs were making alerted his wife to the situation and she immediately called the emergency services. Despite everything, fortune was smiling on Robin that day as a training exercise had been taking place at the local fire station and the fire brigade team arrived in a very short time to tend to him - although it took almost four hours to release him!

Robin suffered a broken pelvis and the medical team had to amputate his leg at the hip. He spent six weeks in hospital and a further six months in a wheelchair. He continues his harrowing tale: "Just before Easter 2009 I received a prosthetic leg. I remember that, despite much training and practice at the Artificial Limb & Appliance Centre in Cardiff, after I collected the leg on the Thursday before Easter, it took me until Sunday to pluck up the courage to retrieve it from the car and put it on. Workwise, I can no longer handle livestock, and what I can do takes a lot longer. Prior to my accident I had enjoyed walking holidays, but since my accident, that is something I can no longer do."

Having experienced an accident of this magnitude, Robin admits that this has changed not only his life, but the way he views farming. "My message to every farmer is: A lot of what we do can be a calculated risk so make sure you get the calculations right."

More information on this incident and very useful '**Ten Tips for a Safe Harvest**' are available in a [Farmers Weekly article](#) starting the Week off on 23 July.

Glyn Roberts, President of the Farmers' Union of Wales and member of the Wales Farm Safety Partnership agreed with Robin: "Everybody in farming knows somebody who has been injured or killed in an accident. Robin is right - the fact is that farmers often take risks, but farm safety is a lifestyle, not a slogan. So, reminding farmers of this seems like the right thing to do, not just during farm safety week but every week. One day your luck could run out. One day it could be you."

Glyn continued: "Agricultural machinery may be advancing with new safety features, but it is still dangerous. Please take a minute to use the [SAFE STOP approach](#) - i.e. ensure tractors, telehandlers and associated equipment is switched off and handbrake applied



when doing routine tasks or making routine checks and maintenance and take your time to think about what you are doing. Think about what might go wrong, because making a few simple checks could actually save a life. Farmers need to take care of themselves so that their families don't have to cope without them because of poor physical or mental health, serious injury - or worse."

Stephen James added: "Whilst this year we have seen an improvement in the numbers of farmers losing their lives because of machinery and transport, the fact is that one death is one too many. Farm Safety Week is in its fifth year of existence and on Wednesday we will be holding a panel discussion at the Royal Welsh Show to discuss the stubbornly high levels of accidents and fatal injuries in the industry. Farm safety training is improving across the country and initiatives like **Farm Safety Week** demonstrate that the industry has decided that enough is enough and it's time to make a change."

A good example of this is [Devon Young Farmers Club's 'Growing Safer Farmers'](#) initiative. This was set up after a 20-year-old member of a local Club was killed when she became caught on a PTO shaft in March. This initiative was also featured in BBC's Countryfile on Sunday, launching the week.

With time and cost being the main reasons that farm safety is often overlooked, Devon YFC proposed new measures to be introduced by both dealerships and independent mechanics to make safety more accessible across the board. A meeting of the biggest machinery dealers in the South West was held in April to discuss how they could work collaboratively to reduce farm incidents and deaths. They aim to get 1000 damaged PTO shaft guards replaced in the first year alone. So far, over 20 dealers and independent mechanics have agreed, and begun to:

- Issue Advisory Notices, flagging up any safety defects on machinery being serviced
- Providing a discount for an annual health check on PTO shafts and brakes
- Back the Devon YFC 'kitemark' standards for dealerships to show their commitment to farm safety.

This campaign has even received Royal backing, with HRH The Countess of Wessex appearing at the launch at the Devon County Show in May, and it now looks set to be implemented throughout the country.

Meanwhile, in Ireland, the Irish Farmers Association have produced a [film](#) to make tractor drivers and other road users think about the consequences of causing an obstruction on the road. Over the summer months, there is an increased number of tractors on the roads, please be patient and overtake safely.

Several suppliers are also offering discounts of 10-15% on safety equipment during Farm Safety Week.

Also, in Northern Ireland, HSENI have posted an effective short [radio advert](#) emphasising 'Safe Stop'.

Many will be aware of the excellent articles in Farmers Weekly, Farmers Guardian and other farming media supporting Farm Safety Week, but in Ireland another useful series of on-line articles by 'That's Farming' was initiated in Farm Safety Week, the first on ['Safe Operation of Tractors'](#)

Alan Plom, RIG Vice Chair and Chair of England's Farm Safety Partnership 'Transport and Machinery Safety' Group points out that we must also not forget that transport doesn't



stop at the farm gate – as highlighted in Scotland’s press release, which features Ednie Farms, an extensive farming enterprise consisting of livestock, arable renewables and forestry in Peterhead, run by husband and wife team Peter Robertson and Dr Elaine Booth.

Last year, Peter read about the safety statistics for the industry, with one standing out, and decided to take action. He explained: “I was looking at the safety statistics for this industry and I was shocked to see that 37 per cent of accidents on Scotland’s farms were caused by people being hurt by vehicles or machinery. I know in this area of at least two incidents in recent years where family members have been seriously injured by vehicles

### **Making Safety 'Hi-vis'**

“I decided that to reduce the risks of that happening on our farms that we needed to take action, and we decided to put in place a hi-vis policy, where anyone, no matter their age or purpose, who comes onto the farm must wear a hi-vis jacket or hi-vis boiler suit. We’ve invested in those for our employees and family too, and when we have school children on the farm we ensure every single one of them wears one.

“This policy is widespread in nearly every other manual labour industry, such as the buildings and construction sector, so why should agriculture be any different? We often work in challenging conditions – late into the night, in dark sheds, or at a pace to try and get jobs finished, and any small measures our industry can take to make their farms and crofts safer, is a huge step to reducing the accident and death toll that our industry has such a bad record of.

Elaine adds: “We spoke with our employees and family at the time and talked through the reasons for implementing this policy, and they were fully supportive. And it has proved effective. When I went to one of our forestry sites recently, the contractor admitted that he had seen me far in the distance because I was wearing hi-vis, and not just when I was up closer to the machinery. He was aware I was nearby and was able to easily keep an eye on where I was as he worked and stop as he saw me approaching.”

The team agree that it has made workers across the whole business much more aware of those working around them, making the farm a safer place to live and work. “You can get hi-vis for so little these days” says Peter. “It really is a very simple, cost effective, but yet highly useful way of making our farms and working environment safer and I certainly think others should be considering implementing this policy on their farms.” Peter agrees that farm safety should be a lifestyle and not just a slogan. Safety is now so much more a part of their lives and he freely admits that they should have been far more conscious of it years ago.

Martin Malone from Scotland’s Farm Safety Partnership added: “Everybody in farming knows somebody who has been injured or killed in an accident. The team at Ednie Farms are right – reminding farmers that farm safety is a lifestyle, not a slogan seems like the right thing to do this week, given the culture of risk taking in the industry. One day your luck could run out.

“According to American journalist Henry Mencken ‘Man is a beautiful machine that works very badly’ and unfortunately, as we have seen very recently, agricultural machinery may be advancing with safety features, but it is still dangerous so please take a minute to use the SAFE STOP approach - ensure tractors, telehandlers and associated equipment are switched off when doing routine tasks or making routine checks and maintenance and take your time to think about what you are doing and what might go wrong, as making a few simple checks could actually save a life – maybe your own!”

## Road Traffic Accidents

Alan Plom also points out that road traffic accidents involving farm vehicles are not included in HSE's fatal injury statistics as these usually only relate to activities on farm. However, a [recent prosecution](#) reported in SHP online, has clearly extended the application of HSW legislation and HSE's involvement in investigating incidents beyond the farm gate....

This reported that a Lincolnshire farming business was fined £75,000 after pleading guilty to health and safety failings, following a road accident involving a seed drill in which an elderly motorist was killed.

The incident happened in August 2013 when a tractor operated by JE Dale was in collision with a car driven by 82-year-old Jim Thompson. The OAP was travelling through the village of Howsham, in north Lincolnshire, when his car was struck by the arm of a 'partly manufactured' [sic] seed drill, which was being transported behind a tractor. He suffered fatal injuries and died at the scene.

This led to a four-year investigation by Humberside Police and the HSE, which culminated in the case being brought to the Crown Court in Grimsby. The investigation found that JE Dale Farmers had failed to take adequate precautions to ensure the safe transportation of the seed drill and to properly secure the arms and had failed to provide adequate training to the employee transporting the equipment.

Directors of JE Dale pleaded guilty to the offences under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and were fined £75,000, including costs. A spokesman for the Crown Prosecution Service said: "This was a tragic case in which Mr Thompson needlessly lost his life. Traumatically, the incident was also witnessed and experienced by his wife, a passenger in the vehicle."

"This dreadful incident illustrates the fact that failing to have or neglecting to follow the correct procedures can result in the most tragic consequences. The Thompson family will live with those consequences forever."

Mr Thompson's son, James, added: "We are very keen to raise awareness, especially during harvest when pressures on agricultural businesses are at their highest, to ensure that corners are not cut in relation to health and safety regulation in the workplace."

Another 'RTA' case involving a [Cambridgeshire farming company](#) is reported to be awaiting trial in Peterborough Crown Court. This arose after a 19-year-old student who had only been working for the farm for about a month in August 2014 when he lost control of the tractor and grain trailer he was driving and crashed into an A1 flyover, suffering multiple injuries. He later died in hospital.

A Cambridgeshire Police and HSE investigation later found the trailer brakes were faulty and were not suitable for use on the road. The firm was then charged under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and section 5 of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

## Save the date – Safe Farm Deliveries and Road Transport event

Road transport using farm vehicles will be covered in the next RIG Networking event on 'Safe Farm Deliveries and Farm Transport' being organised on behalf of the Farm Safety Partnership in conjunction with the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC), and supported by IOSH Food and Drinks Group. This is currently being organised and is



planned to be held at Askham Bryan College (nr York) on 2 November 2017. More details very soon, but meanwhile why not save the date now?

### Further information

RIG will again be extending **#Farm Safety Week** into the weekend, when we will also be giving advice on health issues and emergency procedures. We will also review the Week's activities and any other useful Tweets, guidance or films which surface.

During last year's Farm Safety Week, RIG provided links to other useful guidance and training materials on Transport and Machinery Safety in an article which is still relevant and helpful, including on:

- 'Safe Potato Operations' – The 'Potato Council's' excellent series of (updated) multi-lingual training modules for operators and managers. These are now available online via the AHDB's [website](#).
- [Farm Safety Partnership](#) 'Safety Focus' leaflets - eg "Safety Focus on Farm Machinery";
- [HSENI](#) – a range of excellent materials, information and films, useful for training sessions and Tool Box Talks;
- [HSA](#) – likewise, including the useful [Guidance on the Safe Use of Tractors and Machinery](#) on Farms and a Safety Alert specifically on [Clearing Blockages Safely on Agricultural Machinery](#)
- [HSE's extensive range of guidance](#), eg on [Safe use; Maintenance; Design, manufacture & supply](#) (covering what to look for when buying new or second-hand machinery), plus of course 'Farmwise' and the leaflet "[Working safely with agricultural machinery](#)". And don't forget the '[Make The Promise](#)' case study 'Survivor' films, which can be downloaded and used in presentations.

On Day 2 of #FarmSafetyWeek, David Knowles, a member of IOSH's Rural Industries Group Committee, interviewed Will Haupt, Farm Manager of Whitbread Farms Ltd, about their approach to risk assessment, managing risks during harvest and the importance of following 'Safe Stop' in particular. [Watch the interview here](#).

Don't forget to show your support by (re)tweeting the many informative Tweets on Twitter or posts on Facebook – and don't forget to use the hashtag **#FarmSafetyWeek**. If you haven't signed up, then do it now! Thank you.

Here are today's 'Top Tips' for safer transport and use of machinery:

## FARM SAFETY WEEK 2 17

# ATV TOP TIPS

- **SAFE STOP** - Handbrake on, controls in neutral, engine off and remove keys!
- You should always wear a helmet when riding an ATV.
- Always plan your route and check ground stability
- One seat = One bottom. Passengers are not allowed to travel on ATVs used as light agricultural vehicles.
- Always ride at a safe speed and know your limits

**FARM SAFETY - IT'S A LIFESTYLE, NOT A SLOGAN**

## FARM SAFETY WEEK 2 17

# MACHINERY TOP TIPS

- **SAFE STOP** - Handbrake on, controls in neutral, engine off and remove keys!
- Plan your jobs beforehand
- Never remove or modify guards in order to save time.
- Only use a machine if you know how to use it safely and have received suitable training.
- Machines have no brains so always use your own! A second of lost concentration can cost your life.

**FARM SAFETY - IT'S A LIFESTYLE, NOT A SLOGAN**

## FARM SAFETY WEEK 2 17

# TRANSPORT TOP TIPS

- **SAFE STOP** - Handbrake on, controls in neutral, engine off and remove keys!
- Carry out regular checks and maintenance on all farm vehicles.
- Check those brakes especially handbrakes and on trailers.
- Make sure all drivers have received adequate training when operating a vehicle. Eg ATV
- Safe vehicle, Safe driver, Safe site!

**FARM SAFETY - IT'S A LIFESTYLE, NOT A SLOGAN**