

Six tips for a safer summer on the farm

It's the deadliest time of year so take great care and be sure to avail of financial supports for safety measures

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1 Make plans to keep children safe on the farm

July brings an increased responsibility associated with children out and about on farms. It is important to be vigilant and focused on managing the care and safety of children during the holiday period. Health and Safety Authority figures state 91% of childhood deaths on farms had a farm vehicle or a machine involved.

Young children should not be allowed near tractors or farm vehicles. Make plans to ensure that children always have adult supervision when on the farm. Even stationary tractors, farm vehicles and machinery pose a high risk due to sharp edges, machine parts moving and the possibility of falls from the machine.

2 Support contractors in managing health and safety

Help your contractor manage workload during busy periods. It is important to listen to your contractor and proactively work with them in relation to planning work on your farm. Contractors are very aware of the impact of long working hours and fatigue on their driver's ability to manage machines in a safe way.

Take time also to prepare for their arrival on your farm. Tidy yards, hedges trimmed at gateways, animals

removed from sheds before slurry agitation are some examples of how you can help make your farm safer for your contractor.

3 Treat livestock with cautious respect

Put safety first when working with livestock. All animals can be unpredictable so regardless of how 'quiet' an animal may seem, care needs to be taken. It is important that time is taken to think before each animal handling task. Plan the task and carry out necessary preparatory work to avoid dangerous situations arising.

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Planning and preparation will help to better manage animal behaviour, secure handling equipment and avoid high-risk activity.

Always cull dangerous animals, plan an escape route from fields and pens and keep a physical barrier between you and the cow during calving/dehorning.

4 Consider the benefit of new/upgraded farm safety equipment.



Is there equipment that you would like to purchase or upgrade to help improve safety and efficiency on your farm? If so, the Farm Safety Capital Investment Scheme, (FSCIS) under the new Targeted Agricultural Modernisation schemes (TAMS III) may be of interest to you. This scheme provides incentives to invest in equipment that would help improve safety on the farm.

- Grant aid under the scheme will be paid at a rate of 60% up to a maximum of €90,000.
- Where an application is made by two or more eligible farmers the maximum rate goes up to €160,000.

Talk to your advisor about the possibilities for your farm under this scheme.

There is a wide range of items available. See Table 1. Scan the QR code on your smartphone for more.



5 Revise your farm safety code of practice risk assessment document

The farm safety COP risk assessment document will help you identify hazards on the farm. It must be revised annually or when farming system changes or when new equipment or machinery arrives on the farm.



Trained staff in both Teagasc and agricultural consultancies provide a half-day training course on completion of the farm safety risk assessment document.

A farm safety COP training certificate must be submitted as part of the TAMS II and TAMS III payment claim process.

Contact your local Teagasc office if you would like more information or to attend a farm safety course.

6 Remember the new national farm safety measure

Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with special responsibility for farm safety, Martin Heydon TD recently announced the opening of a new National Farm Safety Measure.

The measure will provide a financial contribution to participating farmers covering 60% of the eligible cost of quad bike helmets and power take off (PTO) shaft covers. A total of €1.5m has been allocated to support farmers in the purchase of this equipment.

Over the past decade (2013 – 2022) there have been 10 farm fatalities involving quads, of which two were under 18 and six were over 65 years.

Farm vehicles and machinery account for over half of all fatalities on farms and entanglement in power take-off (PTO) shafts has caused fatalities and life-changing injuries on Irish farms.

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Items that are eligible for grant aid under TAMS III

Calving pen
Bull pen
Unroofed fixed cattle crushes/races
Unroofed enclosures
Mobile sheep handling equipment
Fixed sheep handling equipment
Electronic tag readers
Mobile cattle handling unit
Head scoop
Leg hoist lifter
Cattle weighing scales
Protective fence around existing tank
Safety agitation platform for existing external tanks
New tank cover over existing open tank
Replacement tank extension cover
Replacement of damaged slats or removal of existing internal agitation point and replacement by gang slats
Tank extension to provide external agitation point
Circulation pipe (6") to allow for agitation of slurry
Simple aeration systems
Calving gate in existing house
Replacement of a hinged door/sheeted gate with a new sliding door/roller door on agricultural buildings
Safety rails on silo wall
Retrofitting roof-light with safety cages
Wiring/rewiring existing agricultural building
Yard lights (LED equivalent to min 200W halogen)
Calf dehorning crate
Horse handling facilities
Wheel changing equipment
Hydraulic motor to substitute PTO shaft
Livestock monitors
Bale slice