

MEDIA RELEASE
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STAY ON THE SAFE SIDE: FARM SAFETY SHOULDN'T COST AN ARM OR A LEG

Farmsafe Australia, the national advocate for farm safety, is using Farm Safety Week to urge farmers and farm workers to 'Stay on the Safe Side' by highlighting the importance of prioritising safety when working around Power Take-Off (PTO) shafts and farm machinery implements.

PTO shafts transfer power from tractors to various implements such as mowers, balers, and augers. PTO-driven equipment is essential in agricultural operations but can pose significant entanglement risks if not handled with caution. By raising awareness and implementing proper safety measures, farmers and farm workers can prevent injuries and fatalities.

Farmsafe Australia Secretary Kerri-Lynn Peachey of AgHealth Australia noted an overall decline in injuries and fatalities relating to catch hazards saying, "We've seen a significant decrease in amputations and fatalities relating to entanglement due to the rise in machinery guarding and automatic shut-off innovation. Unfortunately, when an incident does occur, the consequences are usually severe to catastrophic. It is critical that farmers remember to replace broken guards and only attempt maintenance when machinery is fully shut off and stationary."

AgHealth Australia reported the average cost of an on-farm fatality is over \$1.95M, making it an economic as well as ethical imperative to ensure guards are repaired and replaced as required and that all machinery is properly and regularly maintained.

In addition, Farmsafe Australia is emphasising the following safety information to minimise risks associated with PTO shafts and farm machinery implements:

- **Guard PTO Shafts:** Ensure that all PTO shafts are properly guarded to prevent contact with moving parts. Regularly inspect and maintain the guards to ensure their integrity and effectiveness. Never operate PTO-driven equipment without the necessary protective guards in place.
- **Properly Maintain Machinery Implements:** Regularly inspect machinery implements for any damage, wear, or loose components that could pose a safety hazard. Repair or replace damaged parts promptly and ensure proper alignment and balance of the implement in line with manufacturer guidelines for safe operation.
- **Follow Safe Operating Procedures:** Train all operators on the safe operation of machinery and implement attachments. Emphasise the importance of maintaining a safe distance from rotating parts and never reaching into or over a moving PTO shaft or implement.
- **Engage Safety Features:** Familiarise yourself and all workers/contractors with the safety features of the equipment they are using. Implement devices such as master shields, interlocking guards, and electronic or mechanical shut-off systems to prevent accidental activation or contact with dangerous components. Never circumvent safety mechanisms.
- **Wear Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Always wear PPE, including sturdy work boots, close-fitting clothing, and eye and hearing protection when operating or working near PTO-driven equipment. Avoid loose clothing or accessories that could get caught in moving parts.

Paul Sloman of Cotton Australia, a long-time member of Farmsafe Australia, stated, "Safety should be the top priority when working around PTO shafts and farm machinery implements. By implementing proper guarding, conducting regular maintenance, and following safe operating procedures, we can prevent entanglement and protect the well-being of farmers and farm workers."

Farmsafe Australia remains committed to promoting farm safety and advocating for best practices in working with PTO-driven equipment. For more information on PTO safety, farm machinery safety information, and educational resources, please visit www.farmsafe.org.au .

About Farmsafe Australia:

Farmsafe Australia is the national voice for farm safety and is dedicated to promoting farm safety, providing educational resources, and advocating for best practices in the agricultural industry. With a mission to reduce the incidence of injury and fatality on Australian farms and protect the well-being of farmers and their families, Farmsafe Australia actively collaborates with industry stakeholders and raises awareness about the importance of safety in agricultural operations.

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For more information or to request an interview with Felicity Richards, Chair of Farmsafe Australia, please contact:

Blake Hillier
Stakeholder Engagement Officer
0419 955 546
bhillier@farmsafe.org.au