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## Progress made on farm safety in 2021, but far more work to be done – Report finds

Farmsafe Australia's Safer Farms Report 2021 has revealed the number of fatalities on Australian farms in the first six months of 2021 has decreased to 20, compared to 33 in 2020. But serious farm-related injuries remained alarmingly consistent reaching 70 reported incidents, proving injury trends have remained flat in the last three years.

The annual report produced by Farmsafe Australia – a not-for-profit body working *with* farmers to improve their awareness of hazards while educating them on best practice ways to mitigate risks – found there were clear misconceptions underpinning farmer safety, health, and well-being.

Based on 215 interviews with Australian farmers across eight agricultural sectors, Stevi Howdle, Executive Officer at Farmsafe Australia said this year's Report focused on digging deeper into farmer's understanding of their own health and safety decision-making, while dispelling the safety myths circulating in rural communities.

"Farmsafe Australia is not the regulator, nor a safety consultant. We are an organisation that is dedicated to helping farmers to improve their own understanding of farm safety, and passionate about promoting the importance of physical and mental well-being in rural communities."

Although Australian farmers identified they are most concerned about animal handling (47%) and operating machinery (40%) as their top safety issues on their farms, the Report reaffirmed that quadbikes (21%) and tractors (20%) remained the leading causes of fatalities in the last 18 months.

In 2020, nearly 60 per cent of farming injuries occurred in Queensland, while males accounted for more than four in five (82%) fatalities on farms.

This week is also Farm Safety Week, which has been themed 'Farm Safety Through The Ages – From 2-92', aiming to highlight the key safety issues and risks that are prevalent throughout the different life stages of a farmer. Ms Howdle confirmed that there is a common misconception that more knowledgeable and experienced farmers equal safer farmers. In reality, those who are older than 45 years of age accounted for nearly two thirds (62%) of fatalities.

"Having broad agricultural experience does not necessarily correlate to a 'safety at all times' mentality on farms. Our goal is to ensure that when fatigue and stress sets in, farmers do not get complacent and accidentally put themselves, their loved ones or their colleagues at risk. These heartbreaking figures have not seen a reduction in more than a decade, and we want to positively shift farming culture, to prioritise a 'safety-first' mindset so that all farmers, whether they are aged 2 or 92, are safe at all times," said Ms Howdle.

*Committed to keeping you safer on Australian Farms*

Tragically, the report also discovered that one in ten fatalities and injuries in the first six months of 2021 involved children under the age of 15.

“Farms provide such a unique and exciting opportunity for our children to learn while they grow, and talking to them about safety in the farming environment is critical. We need to make sure that we set clear and consistent boundaries, teach them where the risks and hazards are, how to react in an emergency and how to safely engage in age-appropriate tasks with the appropriate adult-supervision.”

“I strongly encourage everyone to refer to the Safer Farms 2021 Report and consider the immediate and longer-term actions they can take to improve the safety procedures and parameters already in place in their work and living environments,” Ms Howdle concluded.

For more information on farm safety practices and to access the Safer Farms 2021 Report, visit: [www.farmsafe.org.au](http://www.farmsafe.org.au).

**ENDS**

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