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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Driving Farm Safety: 'In Safe Hands' Campaign Focusses on Vehicle and Machinery Safety

As part of the National Farm Safety Week 'In Safe Hands' campaign, Farmsafe Australia turns the spotlight on the critical importance of vehicle and machinery safety. Simple, effective strategies such as regular maintenance, wearing seatbelts, and providing inductions can significantly reduce the risk of incidents and injuries. Recognising that farm safety must be practical to be adopted by farmers, the campaign aims to instill a culture where every farmer and worker acknowledges the simple yet life-saving acts of habits like buckling up.

Farm vehicles and machinery are indispensable tools in modern agriculture, but their operation comes with inherent risks. By adopting straightforward safety measures, farmers can create a safer working environment and enhance overall productivity.

Following six farm businesses across the country, the campaign features practical solutions that are being used to create safer farms and safer farmers. Irvine Wines and Karu Harvesting in Angaston South Australia ensure their teams are properly inducted, their machinery is regularly maintained, and their workers have access to PPE other protective measures to address challenges around vehicle and machinery safety. With staff working on multiple vineyards and seasonal workers being extremely important to business operations, thorough inductions and monthly staff meetings ensure the flow of communication around workplace hazards.

Consistently wearing seatbelts, performing regular machinery checks, and adhering to proper protocols may seem minor, but they collectively build a foundation of safety that protects everyone. These simple, routine practices prevent injuries, reduce risks, and ensure a culture of vigilance and responsibility. By ingraining these habits, farmers create a safer environment where everyone can work confidently and efficiently, knowing that their safety is prioritised through every small, mindful action.

Prioritising safety not only protects the lives of farm workers but also contributes to the overall efficiency and sustainability of agricultural operations. Ensuring that everyone on the farm understands and follows these safety measures is crucial for maintaining a safe and productive working environment.

Felicity Richards, Chair of Farmsafe Australia, emphasises the significance of building habits. 'In the daily busyness of life on the farm, we often overlook the simplest safety measures, or become complacent towards their importance in keeping our business running smoothly and efficiently. Wearing seatbelts and proper PPE in vehicles such as tractors and side by sides is a fundamental practice that requires a daily commitment.'

She goes on to say, 'We often hear ourselves making excuses like, 'it's a flat paddock' or 'there's too many gates to get in and out for.' But the reality is, when we carve out exceptions, we compromise safety. And ultimately, that puts lives and limbs at risk. As business owners, we must remain committed to fostering a culture where every journey, no matter how short or flat, is approached with the importance it deserves. In the end, there is nothing more important than making sure we all make it home safely.'

Committed to keeping you safer on Australian Farms

Incidents involving farm machinery are a leading cause of injuries and fatalities with 63% of on-farm fatalities in 2023 being attributed to farm vehicles or mobile farm machinery. Regular maintenance and safety protocols are not just good practice—they are essential for protecting farm workers and ensuring the sustainability of a farm business.

Mrs Richards underscores the practicality of the 'In Safe Hands' campaign. 'Farm safety is not about complex solutions; it's about cultivating habits that safeguard lives day in and day out. Buckling up before every ride is one such simple habit that contributes to a safer farm. Is it hard to slip the seatbelt on every time you get up into the tractor? Not really. But telling someone's family that their loved one isn't coming home because they were injured at work? That will be the most difficult thing you ever have to do.'

The 'In Safe Hands' campaign run by Farmsafe Australia throughout the 2024 National Farm Safety Week encourages farmers, farm workers, and rural communities to view work, health and safety as simple and practical habits. Through educational initiatives and awareness, Farmsafe Australia aims to highlight that a small action like fastening a seatbelt or maintaining farm vehicles can make a significant difference in ensuring everyone's safety on the farm and making sure that our industry is in safe hands.

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About Farmsafe Australia

Farmsafe Australia is an industry not-for-profit, farmer-led organisation and the leading Australian voice for farm safety, dedicated to promoting practical measures that prioritise the safety, health and wellbeing of individuals on the farm. Farmsafe is committed to fostering a culture where the well-being of individuals is at the heart of every agricultural operation.

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Top Strategies for Vehicle and Machinery Safety

- Regular Maintenance and Inspections:** Conducting regular maintenance and thorough inspections of all vehicles and machinery ensures they are in optimal working condition. This helps to identify and address potential issues before they become serious hazards. Keeping a detailed maintenance log can aid in tracking the condition and service history of equipment.
- Wearing Seatbelts:** Seatbelts are a fundamental safety feature that can save lives in the event of a rollover or collision. It is important to make wearing seatbelts a mandatory practice for all operators of tractors, machinery, and other farm vehicles such as utes and SSVs.
- Providing Proper Inductions:** Comprehensive inductions for new, seasonal and returning workers are essential, covering the safe operation of all machinery, highlighting specific safety protocols and emergency procedures. Refresher courses provided regularly are a great way to keep all staff updated on safe practices.
- Creating a Safe Work Environment:** Ensure that work areas are free of obstructions and hazards. Clear communication with other workers about the movement and operation of machinery can prevent incidents. Designating specific zones for machinery operation can further reduce risks.
- Implementing Safety Protocols:** Establish and enforce safety protocols for all farm operations involving vehicles and machinery. This includes guidelines for safe driving, machinery operation, and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Regularly reviewing and updating these protocols keeps safety at the forefront.