

MEDIA RELEASE
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**GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT: SETTING THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN HOME AND THE
WORKPLACE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FARMING KIDS**

For farmers across Australia the boundary between the home and the workplace is blurred. This is further complicated for those raising children when trying to balance the freedom that comes with living on lots of space with enforcing lifesaving safety precautions.

In 2021, 13 per cent of all farm fatalities were children under the age of 15. This Farm Safety Week, Farmsafe Australia is highlighting the importance of mitigating the risks that arise when home and workplace are intertwined.

Through her own experience working and living on farms, Felicity Richards, Chairperson of Farmsafe Australia, understands the anxiety many parents experience about the safety of their children in their home environment.

“When I was young there was a very close call on my parent’s farm. I was holding open a wooden gate for my mother and the strong Tasmanian winds blew the gate back and into an electric fence,” Ms Richards said.

“Luckily, I had lost my grip and fallen off the gate before it hit the fence. However, while I walked away from that incident, I will never forget my mother’s fear when she realised how seriously I could have been injured.”

For Ms Richards, avoiding feeling the fear she saw in her mother that day is a key part of why she focuses on educating her children to make the right safety decisions.

“When I grew up on my farm my parents rarely had any conversations around farm safety. Instead, they focused on teaching by example.

“While I learnt many invaluable lessons from my parents’ on-the-job style of learning, I plan on having more explicit safety conversations with my children as they become older”.

For Ms Richards these safety conversations are not about restricting the enjoyment her children can have living on a farm, instead they intend to cultivate confidence in her children and give them the power to make smart and safe decisions.

“Approaching farms with safety at the forefront of decision making does not make farms any less fun, instead safety conversations empower young people to fully embrace life on the farm.”

Ms Richards knows that approaching safety on farms is often daunting for many Australian farmers, but believes that by changing the way farmers view safety there are manageable ways to navigate the process.

“When farm safety begins to feel daunting, I pause and evaluate what I need to do over the next three months to ensure that I am constantly working towards implementing the most relevant and beneficial safety initiatives.

“I also am taking this approach to educating my children. At the ages of six, four and two my children cannot fully comprehend many of the safety information they will need to learn over time. To best introduce them to important safety information now I have focused on embedding certain behaviours at a young age.

“This can be as simple as telling my kids to wait to go outside until they hear Dad turn his tractor off and get out of the vehicle.”

This Farm Safety Week, Farmsafe Australia are encouraging farmers to just take a moment to consider the intangible factors that can impact safety on-farm.

“Every farmer understands the unique risks that come with working on their own farm. Taking one extra moment to weigh up factors such as fatigue, mental health or complacency is a first step towards creating a safer environment.”

To find out more about safety resources and how to keep yourself and your family safe, visit: farmsafe.org.au

For parents looking for additional resources to help communicate farm safety to children, they can look to Farmsafe Australia partner George the Farmer. George the Farmer is a character featured in picture books and other media with the purpose of teaching Aussie kids about Australian farming. Learn more here farmsafe.org.au/resources

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For more information, please contact:

Blake Hillier – Farmsafe Australia
0419 955 546
bhillier@farmsafe.org.au