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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **'In Safe Hands' - National Farm Safety Week Spotlights Low-Stress Stock Handling**

As part of this year's National Farm Safety Week, Farmsafe Australia sheds light on simple, practical ways in which farmers can ensure their business is 'in safe hands'. Following six farm businesses from across the country, the campaign features practical solutions that are being used to create safer farms and safer farmers.

Farming, at its core, involves a delicate balance between productivity and the well-being of both farmers and livestock. The 'In Safe Hands' theme resonates strongly with promoting low-stress stock handling practices as a cornerstone of farm safety and in fostering better animal welfare outcomes.

This topic was explored beautifully by Sam and Kirsty White of Bald Blair Angus Stud from Guyra, NSW. Their operations span across four properties but their stock handling techniques are consistent and effective. They make training their workers and their family the top priority to ensure that the result is a safer and less stressful working environment with calm and responsive livestock. They have also invested heavily in yard infrastructure to ensure that they have a safer environment for their workers to operate in.

Low-stress stock handling focuses on creating a calm and controlled environment during the movement and management of livestock. This approach not only reduces the risk of physical injuries to both animals and handlers but also enhances the overall psychological safety of the yard or paddock environment.

With horses and cattle accounting for a combined 28% of severe injuries on farm in 2023, raising awareness around safe behaviours and practices is not just about complying with work, health and safety legislation, it's about taking care of the people that matter; those who work in the paddocks and in the yards with us.

Felicity Richards, Chair of Farmsafe Australia and a Tasmanian cattle farmer, underscores the significance of handling livestock with care. 'Low-stress stock handling is a win-win for both farmers and animals. It ensures that our farmers are minimising the risk of injuries to themselves and their workers, while also prioritising the welfare of our livestock.'

'There are other factors that often come into play in the paddock when mustering,' she continues, 'When you couple handling techniques with other protective equipment such as rollover protection and helmets on quads, seatbelts and helmets in SSVs and helmets when riding horses, you start to build a multi-pronged approach to risk management that reduces the chance of injury much more effectively.'

Mrs Richards highlights the alignment between the National Farm Safety Week theme and low-stress handling. 'When we prioritise low-stress stock handling, we are actively putting ourselves and our livestock in safer hands. It's about understanding the way the animals operate naturally, and then using appropriate handling techniques, and creating a working environment that is relaxed and responsive to the dynamic challenges that farming presents.'

*Committed to keeping you safer on Australian Farms*

National Farm Safety Week serves as a reminder for farmers and farm workers to adopt simple and practical habits that reduce their risk of injury and death and create a culture of farm safety in their businesses. By raising awareness, sharing information, and advocating for industry approved training, such as approved stock handling courses, Farmsafe Australia aims to foster a culture of continual learning and improvement, where both farmers and livestock are placed in safe hands.

**FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT**

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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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## 5 Suggestions For Working with Livestock to Reduce the Risk of Injury

- 1. Understand Animal Behaviour:** Take the time to learn about the natural behaviours and instincts of the livestock you are working with. Recognise signs of stress, fear, or aggression, and use this knowledge to anticipate and prevent potential problems.
- 2. Use Calm and Consistent Movements:** Approach animals slowly and avoid sudden movements or loud noises that could startle them. Consistent, calm movements help keep animals relaxed and reduce the risk of provoking an aggressive response.
- 3. Maintain Proper Equipment and Facilities:** Ensure that all handling equipment, such as gates, crushes, yards, and loading ramps, are in good condition and designed to facilitate low-stress handling. Regularly inspect and maintain facilities to prevent injuries.
- 4. Work as a Team:** When handling large or potentially dangerous animals, always work with at least one other person. Clear communication and coordinated efforts can significantly reduce the risk of injury by ensuring that all handlers are aware of the animals' movements and behaviours.
- 5. Provide Regular Training and Refresher Courses:** Continually educate yourself and your team on the latest livestock handling techniques and research. Regular training sessions and refresher courses help to keep skills sharp and ensure that everyone is up to date on the safest methods for working with livestock.