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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Farmsafe Australia's 'In Safe Hands' Campaign Highlights the Vital Role of 'Hands On' Parents

As we celebrate National Farm Safety Week under the theme 'In Safe Hands,' Farmsafe Australia underscores the inherent benefits of growing up on the farm while promoting the role of 'hands on' parents to ensure children experience the wonders of rural life safely.

Farmsafe focused on Clovelly Dairy in Tasmania to highlight the important part that family life plays in agriculture. Stephen Creese, Country Manager of Ingleby Farms provides an insight into how the Dairy manages the safety of children on farm. Acknowledging that dairy farming is a seven-day-a-week operation, the organisation strives to strike a positive work-life balance by allowing families to spend time together while on farm. However, there are important policies around supervision, ensuring that children are not roaming around the farm on their own and are always with parents or guardians who are responsible for them. Strong communication about when and where children will be in the dairy is also a necessary part of their management of child safety. This allows all workers to be extra vigilant and keep an eye out for the little farmers.

Living on a farm provides children with unparalleled opportunities for learning, growth, and the acquisition of life skills that will stay with them forever. From tending to animals to understanding the cycles of nature, farm life fosters resilience, responsibility, and a deep appreciation for the world around them.

However, on average, 15% of on-farm fatalities are children under the age of 15. This is a tragic number of young lives being lost every year and accounting for immense suffering amongst parents, siblings and small communities who are left to grieve.

Felicity Richards, Chair of Farmsafe Australia and mother of three small farmers, celebrates the positive aspects of farm life for children. 'Growing up on a farm is a unique and enriching experience. It instills values of hard work, resourcefulness, and a profound connection to the land,' she says. 'However, with these incredible opportunities come responsibilities. During National Farm Safety Week, Farmsafe Australia highlights the critical importance of active supervision, ensuring that children are in safe hands while exploring and participating in the wonders of the farm.'

Dr Richard Franklin, professor at James Cook University, Farmsafe Australia Board Member and President of Kidsafe Australia, agrees that active supervision is the number one action parents and caregivers can take to ensure the safety of their children or visiting children to their farm. 'Active supervision goes beyond mere presence. It involves staying engaged, anticipating potential risks, and guiding children as they navigate the farm environment. The evidence is clear,' he states, 'The statistics provide very important information in this area, with more than 58% of child fatalities on farm lacking parental supervision at the time of the incident occurring.'

Committed to keeping you safer on Australian Farms

Mrs Richards is quick to dispel common misconceptions. 'Active supervision is not about saying children can't be part of farm life; farms are often family homes and children experience so many benefits growing up as farm kids. It's about fostering an environment that allows our kids to have those experiences as safely as possible,' she explains, 'As farming parents, it can be challenging to balance the desire to involve our children in the workplace, with keeping them under active supervision. It might seem harmless for them to play in the yards while we work, but it's important to recognise if we're focused on cattle work, we're not supervising our kids. And if we're not supervising our kids, especially our young kids, it's only too easy for them to come into harm's way.'

National Farm Safety Week encourages parents, caregivers, and the farming community to embrace the positive aspects of growing up on the farm while prioritising active supervision. By doing so, we ensure that every child's experience is not only joyful and filled with valuable life lessons, but also safe.

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 Tips for Active Supervision on the Farm

1. **Stay Close and Attentive:** Always keep children within arm's reach and ensure they are never left alone near hazardous areas such as machinery, animals, or water sources. Being physically close allows you to respond instantly if a dangerous situation arises.
2. **Designate Safe Play Areas:** Create and clearly mark safe, properly enclosed play areas away from work zones.
3. **Set Clear Boundaries and Rules:** Educate children about off-limits areas and the reasons why they are dangerous. Establish and consistently enforce rules about where they can and cannot go.
4. **Engage in Safe Activities Together:** Involve children in age-appropriate farm tasks under close supervision. Use these opportunities to teach them about proper processes and safe practice.
5. **Lead by Example:** Demonstrate safe behavior at all times. Children learn by watching adults, so always wear appropriate PPE, follow safety protocols, and explain why these measures are important.