

MEDIA RELEASE
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STAY ON THE SAFE SIDE: CHOOSE THE RIGHT VEHICLE FOR THE JOB

Farmsafe Australia, the national advocate for farm safety, is urging farmers and agricultural workers to 'Stay on the Safe Side' this Farm Safety Week by selecting the appropriate vehicles for various tasks on farms. Choosing the right vehicle significantly reduces the risk of injuries and fatalities. By making informed decisions about equipment and vehicles prior to beginning a task, we can create safer working environments in the agricultural industry.

According to the recently released 2023 Safer Farms Report, 64% of fatalities on Australian farms in 2022 were attributed to farm vehicles or mobile farm machinery. Since 2001, nearly 30% of all on farm fatalities could be attributed to two vehicles in particular: tractors and quad bikes.

Farmers rely on different vehicles for a wide range of tasks, including transportation of goods, hauling equipment, and navigating rough terrain. However, each task demands a specific vehicle with the necessary features and capabilities. Farmsafe Australia encourages taking the following points into consideration to ensure the right vehicle is chosen for the job:

- **Assess Job Requirements:** Begin by assessing the specific needs and requirements of the task and consider factors such as load capacity, terrain conditions, and manoeuvrability. Matching the vehicle's capabilities to the job requirements is crucial for optimal safety.
- **Consider Operator Comfort and Familiarity:** A comfortable and familiar vehicle promotes operator confidence and reduces the likelihood of incidents. Ensure that all operators, including contractors, receive appropriate information and training to handle the chosen vehicle safely and efficiently.
- **Evaluate Safety Features:** Prioritise purchasing vehicles equipped with safety features designed to protect operators. Features such as seat belts, roll bars, and enclosed cabs offer crucial protection in the event of a rollover. Don't compromise on safety and never circumvent safety mechanisms when selecting vehicles for farm operations.
- **Maintain and Inspect Regularly:** Establish a regular maintenance and inspection schedule. Routine checks of brakes, lights, tyres, and other essential mechanisms ensure that the vehicle remains in prime working condition. Promptly address any repairs or maintenance needs to prevent potential hazards.
- **Promote Communication and Training:** Encourage open communication among farm workers to share insights and experiences related to vehicle safety. Check operators have the necessary licences. Provide comprehensive training to all operators, emphasising safe operating procedures, load limits, and any specific considerations related to the chosen vehicles such as speed limits, age limits and required personal protective equipment (PPE).

Farmsafe Australia's Chairperson, Felicity Richards stated, "Safety comes down to the choices we make. By stepping back and considering job requirements we can ensure we are selecting the right vehicle for the job and thereby create a safer working environment on our farms. Our organisation is dedicated to providing educational resources and information to help farmers make informed decisions about vehicle selection and value safety."

Farmsafe Australia remains committed to promoting farm safety and will continue to advocate for best practices in vehicle selection and usage on farms. For more information on farm safety information and educational resources, please visit www.farmsafe.org.au .

About Farmsafe Australia:

Farmsafe Australia is a leading national voice dedicated to promoting farm safety, providing educational resources, and advocating for best practices in the agricultural industry. With a mission to reduce injury and fatality on Australian farms and protect the well-being of farmers and their families, Farmsafe Australia actively collaborates with industry stakeholders and raises awareness about the importance of safety in agricultural operations.

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