

Child Safety – Working with Livestock

Farm animals represent one of the ‘inherent’ risks that all farm workers are exposed to due largely due to what can be assumed to be their unpredictable behaviour. Livestock are ‘prey animals’ and they can be unpredictable because people are improperly trained, impatient or complacent.

Livestock are unpredictable, especially during the joining (mating) season where they can be protective of their mates and their young. Often reverting to a fight or flight response when they perceive a threat, Livestock always need to be treated with caution.

Working children should be supervised at all times when working with animals.

Make sure yards, sheds and equipment are in good repair. The smooth flow of the animals through the yards is important. Self-latching gates are more preferable than chains so as to maintain visual contact with the animals. Children should be taught to not stand behind gates and to understand escape routes.

Workers need to be appropriately trained so as to be familiar with the temperament of the animals on your farm.

Working children should only be exposed to small farm animals (calves, lambs) until they can demonstrate competency and confidence in moving and handling animals.

Engineering controls

- Yards, crushes, cradles and sheds should be suitable in size and strength for the animals being handled.
- Avoid blind corners and sharp turns in the design of your yard.
- Keep the walkways and laneways dry and nonslip wherever possible.
- Make sure your gates, footholds and access ways are well positioned.
- Keep all equipment in good repair: gates moving and hung, latches work, hinges greased.

Administrative controls

- Supervise working children at all times.
- Only allow working children to work with smaller farm animals until such time as they are competent and experienced in moving and handling animals.

GET HELP

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