

LKL Safety Note

Safety during Spring Calving



Dairy farmers have been urged to ensure staff understand and adhere to safety procedures during the busy spring calving period. Work around cattle is always hazardous and risks include kicking, butting or crushing - but risks are higher during calving. It's important that staff take time to plan and carry out work in the safest manner possible.

Upon calving, different animals will react in different ways. It is important to keep an appropriate distance and approach calmly when taking the calf while also keeping an eye on the freshly calved cow, especially with heifers.

Here are some safety reminders to help things run smoothly.

- Keep a clear safe walkway to calving facilities which is accessible 24 hours a day over the calving period – (You may need to think about external/internal lighting, clear from traffic, possibility of slips and falls, a supply of grit or salt in case of ice.)

- Get ready to assist cows with calving by having good calving facilities such as



calving camera, calving gate and non-slip calving jack and ropes to help reduce stress levels. Be ready by preparing and disinfecting calving sheds, keeping a clean water source and heat lamps ready and adequate lighting and check there are no trip hazards from twine etc. (All prevent a lot of rushing and a potential increase in accidents).

- Ensure that staff have sufficient warm and waterproof clothing and access to hot water and soap for hygiene. (There is a risk of zoonotic diseases to staff during calving so good hygiene and adequate PPE in the form of washable protective clothing, boots and arm length gauntlets)



When handling livestock in general and particularly cows and heifers - **Always:** -

- Prepare an escape route or refuge area (before handling)
- Watch out for any signs of aggression especially cows and heifers (Cull out aggressive, difficult cattle)
- Remember cows with newborn calves will be protective and potentially unpredictable
- Use a head gate to restrain a cow when checking a calf
- Don't work alone – always have help
- Stay calm and move slowly to keep cattle calm and not stress them
- Remember children need supervision at all times during calving
- Be aware of fatigue, which can be a safety factor and ensure enough staff available to assist.

Never – Turn your back on a cow during calving time, come between the cow and the calf or get yourself trapped between a cow and a wall - plan your escape route.

The following leaflet is also good source of information.

https://www.hseni.gov.uk/sites/hseni.gov.uk/files/safety-around-calving-time-stop-and-think-safe_0.pdf



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Looking after Children on Farms

Spring has well and truly sprung here at LKL and with the warmer weather and Easter holidays just around the corner – more children are going to be outside or visiting farms – particularly with the arrival of calves. It therefore seems a good time to have some reminders of child safety around the farm.

Every year there are children under the age of 18 who are seriously injured or killed when either visiting, playing or working, inadequately supervised around the farm or when riding on agricultural machinery.

Most common causes of accidents included; falling from a vehicle or struck by a vehicle or contact with machinery, falling from height or injured by an animal.

Remember it is illegal: - for children under 13 years to drive or ride in agricultural machinery or machine or implement mounted on, or towed by, a tractor or other vehicle
It is illegal to carry a child under 13 years of age in a tractor cab.

ATV's are considered to be self propelled vehicles and therefore it is illegal for them to be driven by under 13's or for children to be carried as a passenger.

If you have Children living on or near the farm then an assessment of the hazards of the fixed environment and the work activities should be carried out.



You can help keep them safe by: -

Play Areas & Supervision

- Providing a large secure play area with interesting activities. Prevent them from playing around farmyards and livestock.
- Educate older children on the hazards and put up signage
- Explaining to all staff that they must **stop** if they see a child in a '**no go area**' and escort them back to a safe place and under the supervision of an adult
- Instruct contractors on procedures and about keeping their working area secure and prevent access by children

Vehicles

- Segregating children from work activities and traffic routes as far as possible
- Make sure vehicles have good visibility and mirrors – small children can be difficult to see from a vehicle cab.
- Always **use Safe stop** and remove the key and ensure that equipment is properly guarded.
- Avoid reversing as far as possible and put up mirrors on blind spots



Slurry & Chemicals & Storage Areas

- Ensure your slurry lagoon is securely fenced to prevent children from gaining access and make sure tank covers are always in place
- Always keep children well away when mixing slurry
- Keep chemicals and veterinary medicines in a locked store when not in use
- Secure all heavy wheels, gates, heavy equipment and stacked materials to prevent them from toppling over and ensure ladders are kept secure and not able to be used to climb bales, walls or roofs.



Make sure all family members know what to do in an emergency and prepare a list of emergency contact telephone numbers



The Farm Safety Foundation has also produced a guidance document aimed at the parents of children who live on farms. It contains lots of excellent farm safety advice: http://yellowwellies.org/FarmSafetyMessage_Parents_1020/flipbook/?page=1

Wishing you a very Happy Easter from LKL

By Michelle Jeal, LKL Health & Safety Advisor

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