

October  
2011  
Update

# Farmsafe WA Alliance

- *Founded By Farmers, For Farmers* -

Inspiring Safe Farming



## HARVEST SAFETY

With harvest season upon us, it is timely for farmers to take a few moments to think about their safety during this period. The long hours and stress involved with harvest every year result in too many farmers being injured in the bid to take their crop off quickly. This causes needless pain and suffering to the farmer not to mention delays in the program and financial cost.



In order to prevent these injuries farmers need to plan ahead to :

- Ensure you look after your general health with regular nutritious meals and snacks, plenty of sleep and exercise and regular breaks throughout the day
- Ensure that all machinery, equipment and workplaces are in safe working condition and that guards are in place (for example PTO, Belt and pulley guards)
- For maintenance jobs, implement a checklist procedure to ensure guarding is replaced and that there are procedures to prevent machinery being accidentally started during maintenance
- Ensure employees are fully instructed about safe procedures for guarding, isolation devices and locks
- Avoid making adjustments to headers, hay mowers, balers, augers etc while the machinery is still running
- Tractors should have an approved ROPS (roll over protection structure) and seatbelt fitted, and the seatbelt should be used; tractor rollovers are a major cause of farm injury and death
- Do not allow passengers on tractors and trailing implements
- Wear suitable clothing, ensuring loose clothing is tucked in and long hair is tied back
- Wear safety equipment such as ear plugs, eye protection and/or dusk masks when required
- Be aware of overhead power-lines when moving augers, balers and headers, and ensure that the intake points are guarded
- Ensure appropriate supervision for all workers, family members and visitors; everyone's whereabouts must be known; those operating equipment should be adequately informed and trained in its use
- Ensure that children cannot climb into silos, and that the loading/unloading mechanism cannot be started when someone is in the silo; always have an observer outside whilst someone is inside
- Check that fire extinguishers and first aid kits are readily available
- Keep emergency numbers on hand and have an emergency procedure plan in place

*Further funding acquired from the Department of Health WA to deliver workshops in the Midwest and Great Southern regions over the next 2 years. Details coming soon.*

**Postal Address:**  
PO Box 118  
Forrestfield, WA, 6058

**Street address:**  
100 Bougainvillea  
Avenue,  
Forrestfield, Perth,  
WA, 6058

**Phone:** (08) 9359 4118  
**Fax:** (08) 9359 3468

**Email:**  
admin@farmsafewa.org

**Web:**  
www.farmsafewa.org

## WA Delays Implementation of National OSH Laws

The WA Government has told the Federal Government that implementation of the new national occupational safety and health laws is not achievable by the planned date of January 1, 2012.

Commerce Minister Simon O'Brien stated that the Federal Government had not met the timelines it set for providing the information about the new regulations and the impact of the new laws on WA businesses.

"I have requested Senator Evans consult with all jurisdictions and delay implementation of the new laws, and I await his response. WA has been left with an impossibly short period of time in which to analyse the impact on businesses of introducing a new set of laws, and this could have a devastating impact on our small business sector in particular. The State Government is not willing to place an unnecessary financial and operational burden on WA businesses" Minister O'Brien said.

WorkSafe WA has published [Frequently asked questions—harmonized OSH laws](#), which includes an outline of the state government's current stance on the harmonized WHS laws, found at: [www.commerce.wa.gov.au](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au)

# Working At Heights

When working on windmills, silos and roofs, never start any work until you have assessed the risks. Make sure all health and safety hazards are noted and that action has been taken to manage them.

## Things to check:

- Working height
- Roof pitch
- Surface condition
- Electrical hazards
- Type of material
- Weather conditions
- Area beneath;
- Others working below
- Point loading
- Employee competencies/experience

## Fall prevention methods:

- Edge protection—hand rails, guard rails
- Scaffolding—guard rails, working platforms, mobile towers
- Fall arrest systems—harness, energy absorber, lanyard, inertia reel, catch platforms and nets
- Elevating work platform systems (EWPS) - cherry picker, scissor lift
- Walkways / protected walkways
- Planning and platforms



Planning is essential when working at heights. All height work should be planned and coordinated, and an assessment should be carried out. This assessment should record all actions taken to manage height work. Planning needs to be done well in advance of starting the job to minimize risks such as removing tarpaulins and sandbags, working in windy conditions, exceeding the safe working load of materials, point loading, working with others, or working near power lines.

Falls Prevention in the Agricultural Sector guidance notes 2011 are now available. Contact Farmsafe WA or visit [www.commerce.wa.gov.au](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au)

# Grain Silo Safety

## Silo Safety

Every year farmers and farm workers die or are seriously injured in the process of filling, emptying and maintaining silos and bulk grain storage.

According to the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety 18.5% of injuries on grain farms occur while storing or elevating grain.

Falls from height, silo collapse, exposure to toxic fumigants and entrapment within stored grain are the main hazards. Other risks include toxic atmospheres, extreme internal temperatures, dust fires and explosions, dust exposure, live electricity and moving equipment.

## OHS Legislation

Producers have a responsibility under state Occupational Health and Safety legislation to maintain work areas, machinery and equipment in a safe condition, adopt safe systems of work, ensure safe handling, storage and transport of equipment and substances, assess health risk and provide adequate training and supervision to employees.

## Silo Access

Restrict unauthorised access to ladders and silo roofs by fitting lockable covers that enclose ladder rungs to a height of 2m.

Another option is ladders where the lower 2m section folds or slides up for locking or remove the lower 2m and use a portable ladder to gain access. Immediately after the job is finished secure all bottom level inspection hatches and ladders to prevent access. Take time to educate all visitors and children about the dangers of climbing silo ladders.

All silos should have a bottom access point with a minimum diameter of 450 millimetres to help with cleaning.

## Safety First

Whenever someone is working inside a silo have an observer standing outside and anybody engaging in silo work needs to be aware of what to do in an emergency. Workers need to know not to follow the person into the silo unless more help is on hand and breathing apparatus and a life-line are worn.

Clearly display danger signs warning of a confined space. Position signs outside all silos and replace when they become illegible.



## Recommendations for proper maintenance of Silos:

- A competent person carry out inspections of the silos at least once a year prior to the harvesting season.
- Repair or replace rusted structural members, welds, bolts and screws.
- Provide safe operating procedures and maximum rated load markings (bases on volumetric capacity) on the silos to avoid overloading them.
- Silo manufacturers and persons responsible for the modification of silos and supporting structures employ the services of competent persons such as engineers to properly design the silos and supporting structures.

# Being Seen, Being Safe with High Visibility Vests

Lindsay Smoker, Corrigin farmer and Treasurer of Farmsafe WA Alliance provided these photos whilst working on his property.

The Being Seen, Being Safe campaign has enabled a huge distribution of high visibility vests within and around the Corrigin community, as well as various other regional areas.

The photos clearly demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of wearing high visibility clothing whilst at work.



"If you can save one life a year" commented Lindsay "that will be a very good year". Lindsay is also involved in the Corrigin Farm Improvement Group, received a large supply of high visibility vests for the local farming community.

The sponsor behind this great initiative was CBH Group who provided the funds for the production of these vests. Thank you CBH Group for your on-going support in helping to prevent injury in our rural community.



## Fatigue

Fatigue can be defined as the loss of alertness, which eventually ends in sleep. This loss of alertness is accompanied by poor judgement, slower reactions to events, and decreased skill such as in operating machinery. It affects the efficiency and productivity of a worker performing tasks.

Fatigue can result from long or arduous work, little or poor sleep and the time of the day when the work is performed and sleep obtained. Importantly, fatigue impairs a worker's judgement of his or her own state of fatigue. This means they may not realise that they are suffering from fatigue and not notice mistakes being made.

The risk of injury due to fatigue increases when a farmer is working at times when they would normally be asleep, that is at night and during the mid-afternoon "siesta hours." Injury due to fatigue also increases when working prolonged hours (greater than 12 hours) with early starts and irregular eating and sleeping patterns.



Warning signs that your body is tiring and continuing to work will place you at greater risk of injury include:

- A drowsy relaxed feeling
- Blurred vision
- Difficulty keeping your eyes open
- Excessive yawning;
- Increased errors
- Loss of concentration
- Head nodding;

Farmers need to consider ways to manage fatigue during the busy harvest period. These can include:

- Restricting continuous working periods (driving the tractor) to not greater than 5 hours;
- At the minimum have a 30 minute break within every 5 and 1/2 hours;
- Ensuring you have at least 6 hours of continuous sleep in 24 hours;
- Be aware of the signs of being tired and take breaks as they occur;
- Having regular nutritious meals with healthy foods available as snacks;
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle by restricting alcohol, eating properly and exercising.

***Harvest is a busy time in the farmer's calendar. Make sure you don't have unnecessary delays this year due injury from fatigue.***

For further information contact Farmsafe WA Alliance office.

## Quad Bikes—Time for action

Quad bikes are an extremely useful vehicle on Australian farms. However, over the past 10 years they have been responsible for an average of 14 deaths/year. For 2011 (to March 31), there have already been 9 deaths. Additionally, its estimated that for each death there are 15 serious injuries (head, spinal, multiple fracture) that have lifelong consequences.

We know that 50% of deaths occur from the quad bike rolling over and trapping the victims - death results from crush and asphyxiation.

Manufacturer research that has historically indicated crush protection devices increase the risks of injury, has now been found by several highly respected and independent forensic/mechanical engineers to be incorrect. As such, support for fitting a crush protection device is now common among independent scientists working in the field.



Despite this overwhelming evidence the manufacturers continue to use “scare” tactics that this device will increase injury and that fitting one will void owner warranties (they have also previously tried this tactic in NZ). Both points are incorrect, as Workhealth Authorities in some states are now advising farmers to consider fitting crush protection devices. Just why the manufacturers continue to hold this position is dumbfounding, however it clearly threatens the health and safety of farmers, their employees and family members that use these vehicles. Some key points on safety are listed in the

box below and with the active support of CWA members across all states and territories, we can reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries from quad bikes.

### Key steps to improve quad bike safety

- 1) Quad bikes are generally not the best or safest vehicle for most jobs on farms, so preferably choose other vehicles like farm utilities, side-by-side vehicles or two wheel motorcycles that are safer and have a lower risk of rollover. That is, choose the most suitable vehicle for the tasks you have to complete. If still choosing to use a quad bike following this assessment, ensure that you have fitted a tested crush protection device.
- 2) Keep all children (under 16) off quad bikes (as either riders or passengers).
- 3) Never carry passengers on quad bikes (this impairs stability significantly increasing the risk of rollover)
- 4) Seek relevant training and wear a helmet

The Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety is part of the Sydney Medical School within the University of Sydney. The charter of the Centre is to assist rural Australians to attain improved levels of health and well-being by reducing the incidence and severity of injury and illness associated with life and work in agriculture.

As a completely independent and scientific agency our Centre’s stance to fit these protective devices to prevent the increasing number of deaths and serious injuries, has recently been made clear in our position paper.

The position paper and resources for farmers to improve quad bike safety can be accessed at [www.aghealth.org.au](http://www.aghealth.org.au) or call (02) 6752 8210.

Dr Tony Lower  
ACAHS Director

## Working Alone

Working alone can lead to death and serious injury within the agricultural industry.

Employees are frequently working alone away from the main farm buildings on a daily basis. These employees will often not return to the main buildings of the farm until the job is complete. This means that if an accident happens it could be days before the person is found.

The employer must ensure that the employee has been provided with sufficient information about hazards to which he or she is likely to be exposed to. The employer must also ensure the employee has been adequately trained and equipped to carry out the work in a safe manner.

The employee must be given clear instructions as to where the work is to be carried out and a safe way to get to the site.

The employee and employer should agree on a start and finish time for the job and the time the employer should expect the employee to return to the main buildings.

A risk assessment will indicate if and how often there should be contact between the employee and employer between the start and finish of the job. The start and finish times and the location of the employee should be displayed in an accessible place in the main buildings of the farm where it can be easily viewed by other employees and other persons at the workplace.

All employers and self-employed people who work alone in the agricultural industry should have a nominated person who knows where they are and make contact with them during the day. This could be a family member or a neighbouring farmer.

# A Guide for Migrant Workers and Employers

Managing safety and health issues for migrant workers should be considered within the context of safety and health management for all workers. As an employer you have a general duty to provide and maintain, as far as practical, a working environment where workers are not exposed to hazards. This includes:

- Providing and maintaining safe workplaces, plant and systems of work so they do not expose workers to hazards;
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision so workers can perform their work safely;
- Consulting and cooperating with safety and health representatives (if any) and other workers regarding occupational safety and health at the workplace.
- Ensuring safe use, cleaning, maintenance, transportation and disposal of substances and plant used in the workplace; and
- Providing personal protective equipment—however, this should be considered only when other control measures are not practical or to increase protection.

## Know your workforce and its needs

As an employer, you have an obligation under your duty of care responsibilities to adapt your work practices according to the different needs of your workers. The key to maintaining a safe workplace is matching job-task demands with an individual's abilities and skill sets. This can be achieved through various processes, including:

- Identifying workplace hazards and conducting risk assessments, which are appropriate to the cultural needs of the workers;
- Pre-placement discussions;
- Ongoing consultation and communication;
- Liaison with safety and health representatives; and
- Monitoring and reviewing workplace practices.
- Medical observation and/or assessment;

## Specific issues for migrant workers

Issues to consider for migrant workers may include:

- Language barriers;
- Cultural or religious differences;
- Literacy difficulties;
- Limited knowledge of local legislation and safety standards; and
- Reluctance to engage with authority figures.

## As an employer, therefore you may need to:

- Consider how to convey information about safety to those with a limited knowledge of English;
- Consider accessing English language support for workers;
- Arrange for any necessary support to be provided by others within the workplace; and
- Encourage supervisors to be understanding and approachable.

**In Western Australia, the law requires that a high standard of safety must be provided at your workplace, and that you are not injured or harmed because of your work. Making workplaces safer relies upon the employer and employees working together.**

Employers have a responsibility to provide, as far as practicable, a safe workplace. This is called a 'duty of care'. You as an employee, also have a duty of care to work safely and not affect the safety and health of others.

The law in Western Australia also requires the employer to consider how to convey information about safety to those with a limited knowledge of English, or those with other specific needs.

## Participating in safety matters at the workplace

As an employee, there are different ways you can participate in ensuring safety and health at your workplace. You can do this by:

- Talking directly to your employer, supervisor and co-workers about any concerns you may have;
- Notifying the supervisor or employer of any hazards or injuries, or potential hazards or injuries;
- Participating in training on any procedures with which you are unfamiliar;
- Asking questions about any matters you do not understand;
- Where required, requesting information and training be provided in an appropriate format to suit your needs, for example through the use of an interpreter or translator; and
- Where there are safety and health representatives or a safety and health committee, raising issues with them.



For further information, please contact Farmsafe WA on 9359 4118 or visit [www.farmsafewa.org](http://www.farmsafewa.org)

# New Benefit for Farmsafe WA Members

As a result of the recent OH&S project, funded by the Department of Health, Farmsafe WA has developed a 'members only' section on their website to provide access to a new OH&S audit tool.

This initiative was a direct result of the Farmsafe WA Safety Needs Survey, conducted in 2010, which indicated the farming community required a more user friendly, cost effective and less time consuming OH&S audit tool. In collaboration with partners, OH&S experts and the farming community, the new audit tool will initially cover four risk areas:

- Occupational Noise
- Chemical Storage, Handling and Disposal
- Slips, Trips and Falls
- OH&S responsibilities for employers, employees and contractors.

Workshops that occurred in Corrigin, Brookton, Cuballing, Lower Chittering and Mingenew delivered OH&S information and tested the new audit tool on farms. Results proved very positive. A key

recommendation which came directly from workshop attendees was to make the audit tool available via the Farmsafe WA website and consequently this resulted in the creation of a special members section. This allows access to the audit tool, OH&S general information and a forum where members can share their OH&S concerns and best practice options.

The modules include audit points which correspond to legislative requirements and best practice options. Ultimately, we hope to offer an interactive web-based application to allow users to quickly search for their required information.

The contributions we receive from membership fees will certainly help towards this cause. If you would like to support this initiative, please contact the Farmsafe WA office.

It is the aim of Farmsafe WA to continue seeking new and innovative ideas that will protect farming families and workers and improve farm business performance through better safety awareness and practices.

## ~ Farmsafe WA Alliance Membership ~

Become a member and strengthen the relationship between Farmsafe WA and your community, and gain access to our fantastic and valuable OH&S Self Audit Tool!



For more information call us on **9359 4118** or  
Email: [admin@farmsafewa.org](mailto:admin@farmsafewa.org) or visit  
our website at [www.farmsafewa.org](http://www.farmsafewa.org)



## Do you have a Safety & Health Plan in place on your Property?

### FREE ON FARM ADVISORY SERVICE

A fully accredited advisor will conduct a non threatening risk assessment of your property and prepare a safety and health action plan. Presentations are made to small groups on farms and over a period of four hours plus can be conducted on a weekend if more suitable. Throughout the advisory visit there is an opportunity to raise concerns and issues regarding all aspects of occupational health and safety on rural properties. The host is provide with a written set of recommendations for the property and attendees from nearby properties will be provided with the knowledge to complete a safety check on their own property. Areas which have historically been of concern include workshop, silos, chemical sheds, machinery and 4 wheel motorbikes.

If you'd like to book this service or seek further information, please contact Farmsafe WA Alliance on **9359 4118** or email: [admin@farmsafewa.org](mailto:admin@farmsafewa.org)

#### Workshop overview:

- Outline and reasons for the workshop.
- Definition of hazards and risks.
- Types of control measures which can be implemented.



# Annual General Meeting 2011

The seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the Farmsafe WA Alliance was held on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011 at the Department of Agriculture and Food complex in Forrestfield.

John McDougall addressed the meeting and in his Chairman's report stated:

"This report will draw to a close my long involvement with Farmsafe WA Alliance and my commitment to on-farm safety. I wish to acknowledge our sponsors and supporters one and all, in particular the CBH Group who has been very generous with sponsorship of the safety vests. Also, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of my Executive team and the continued support of the greater community. Farmsafe WA Alliance belongs to the agricultural industry and for this little organisation to flourish, it must continue to be supported by it".

The Executive Officer, Sheila Payne, thanked John for his support, his time and his commitment to Farmsafe WA over the past years, quote: "John's efforts have been invaluable and he has truly played an integral role into where Farmsafe WA is presently placed".



John McDougall, Farmsafe WA's Retiring Chairman

## Farmsafe WA Committee 2011-2012

We wish to thank all our past and current Committee members for their support to Farmsafe WA Alliance. The volunteering of time, effort and industry knowledge is greatly appreciated.

The 2011-2012 Committee for Farmsafe WA has been formed as follows:



Farmsafe WA Alliance welcomes Murray Hall and Sandy Pate, new Ordinary Committee members from the farming community of WA

### Executive Board

|               |                |            |
|---------------|----------------|------------|
| Chairman      | Max Watts      | Farmer     |
| Vice Chairman | Tony Gooch     | WA Farmers |
| Treasurer     | Lindsay Smoker | Farmer     |
| Secretary     | Chris Wyhoon   | Farmer     |

### Ordinary Members

|                   |                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Andrew Pittaway   | CBH Group                         |
| Owen Catto        | Wheatbelt Mens' Health            |
| Melita Leeds      | Kidsafe WA                        |
| Katherine Celenza | Royal Life Saving WA              |
| Judi Forsyth      | CY O'Connor Institute             |
| May Bowden        | Paraplegic Benefit Fund           |
| Norm Hammond      | Kelmscott Senior High School Farm |
| Murray Hall       | Farmer, Brookton                  |
| Sandy Pate        | Farmer, Chittering                |

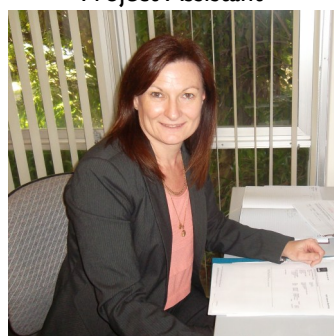
Annual Reports are available from the Farmsafe WA office or can be downloaded from our website

## Farmsafe WA Personnel

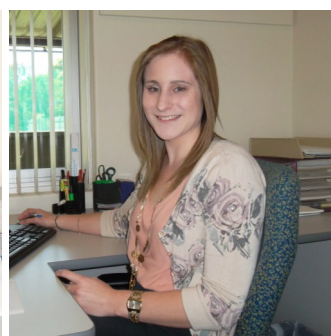
**Sheila Payne**  
Executive Officer



**Julie King**  
Accounts Manager /  
Project Assistant



**Alicia Hughes**  
Project Officer



**Justin Manuel**  
Project Assistant



# ICCWA Community Safety Month 2011

## Working together for a Safer Community

Community Safety Month is held every October and reminds us that we all have a role to play in making our community safer. The month aims to promote awareness of a broad range of community safety issues, including personal safety, road safety, suicide prevention, emergency management, safety in public places, safe work practices and many more.

Community Safety Month is a nationwide campaign and is an opportunity to take place in activities and events and learn how to make local communities safer places to live and work.

Get your local council, school, business, emergency services, road safety groups or health and welfare service to partner you in organizing Community Safety Month events and activities. For a range of ideas visit the Community Safety Month website at [www.iccwa.org.au](http://www.iccwa.org.au) or telephone ICCWA on (08) 9420 7212.

## Our Support to Community Safety Month

### Karragullen Field Day

Organised by the Hills Orchard Improvement Group this Field Days attracts thousands of visitors each year. Farmsafe WA were approached to attend the event and offered complimentary exhibitor space. The team at Farmsafe WA will be setting up their display in the pavilion with a selection of safety resources and checklists made available for attendees.

Where: Old Station Road, Karragullen

When: Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Contact: David Fennell,  
Coordinator, Hills Improvement  
Group on 9293 7152

### Kelmscott Senior High School

In support of the professional development day for the Teachers and Principals at Kelmscott Senior High School, Farmsafe WA will be offering a safety awareness presentation and highlight the valued role that the organisation plays within the wider community.

Where: Kelmscott Senior High School

When: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October

Contact: Norm Hammond, Primary  
Agricultural Program Coordinator,  
Kelmscott Senior High School on  
0409 688 853

### Women's Day at Koorda

Coordinated by WFI and including guest speaker Glen Mitchell (former ABC Sports Broadcaster and Media Personality) sharing his journey with depression.

Farmsafe WA will be presenting at 1pm a reminder on safety awareness practices relative to living and working on our farms and to incorporate a display on our new OH&S Self Audit tool.

Where: Koorda Recreation Centre

When: Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October

Contact: Christine Cotter-Ward, WFI  
Event Coordinator on 0428 929 750

### Safety Aware for Year 6 Students

Coordinated by Norm Hammond, Primary Agricultural Program coordinator Kelmscott Senior High School, Farmsafe WA will be presenting a safety awareness and education session to the year 6 students of the Dawson Primary School and Kelmscott Primary School. Plenty of safety resource materials will be on display and each student will be given a high visibility vests, timely for the Dawson Primary students Bike Education Course.

Where: Dawson Primary School &  
Kelmscott Primary School

When: 27<sup>th</sup> October & 21<sup>st</sup> October

Contact: Sheila Payne, Executive Officer,  
Farmsafe WA Alliance on 9359 4118

