

Workplace Hazards in Farming

This fact sheet is for students undertaking work experience programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, students must NOT undertake the activity.

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
Powered mobile plant – tractors, forklifts, headers, vehicles including 'Ag Bikes', motorbikes, all terrain vehicles (ATV's)	Operator being rolled on, pinned underneath, crushed or struck: this could result in a fatality, or serious injury such as loss of a limb	Students must NOT operate powered mobile plant	Students must NOT operate powered mobile plant
Handling and transport of hay and silage bales	Crushing may result in fatality or serious injury Possibility of load catching fire if it contacts hot exhaust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document safe work procedures for loading, unloading and transport – e.g. cylindrical bales to be stacked on end no more than three high; tarpaulin to protect load from catching fire from hot exhaust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow safe working procedures – ask questions if you're not sure!
Pesticides, fertilisers, herbicides, cleaning chemicals	<p>Skin contact may result in allergic reaction and poisoning</p> <p>Splash, exposure to spray drift or inhalation of fumes can lead to headache, nausea, dizziness, vomiting.</p> <p>Long-term exposure may result in chronic (ongoing) illness, e.g. cancers, respiratory conditions, skin conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the least hazardous product for each job Read and follow safety information on label <i>and</i> on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) Dispense and mix chemicals in well-ventilated areas Label all containers Document procedures for handling, mixing, cleaning up spills – and brief workers in safe use of chemicals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use PPE provided Follow safe working procedures when handling chemicals Clean up spills immediately
Noise and vibration	Hearing loss Musculoskeletal disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain powered tools to reduce noise and avoid excessive vibration Provide appropriate PPE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear PPE (hearing protection) provided
Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting, repetitive motions, awkward working posture)	Musculoskeletal disorders including sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use mechanical aids where practicable Use team lifting Train workers in safe manual handling procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek help when you think a team lift is required Exercise: warm up/stretch before starting work, and cool down/stretch at end of the shift or working day
Heat, or cold/wet weather conditions Fatigue	Heat rashes, heat cramps, heat stress, dehydration, loss of fine motor controls, sunburn, numbness, frostbite, hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide regular rest breaks Provide shade where practicable Re-schedule work if extreme weather conditions present risk Assess work hours in difficult conditions Provide water in hot weather Provide appropriate clothing / PPE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of potential for hot or cold weather conditions to cause illness – rest and seek assistance if you feel that heat or cold may be affecting you Wear appropriate clothing and take regular rest breaks
Animals (including snakes), insects, spiders	Struck or bitten by animals Poison from bites, stings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess work locations - avoid long grass Provide first aid training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid potentially dangerous locations Seek First Aid treatment immediately if bitten or stung
Sexual harassment, work place bullying	Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish work place policy Provide staff briefings or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report any concerns immediately

