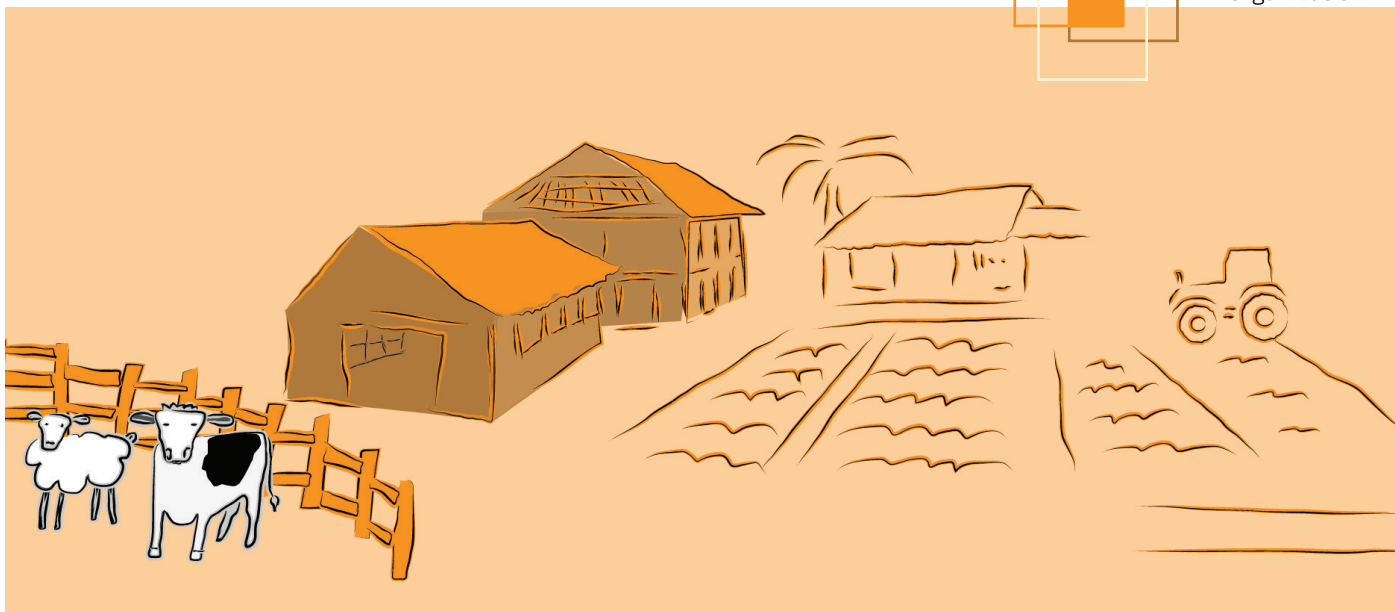


SAFETY & HEALTH

on the farm



International
Labour
Organization



As a farmer you do many different things during your workday. Among your activities you regularly work with animals, transport loads, use different kinds of machines and handle different chemicals including pesticides.

Did you know that there are many hazards involved in those activities, and that you and your family could be at risk?

For example, working with animals can lead to injuries and diseases. Exposure to pesticides can cause serious illnesses. Carrying heavy loads can cause muscular pains and injuries. Using machines incorrectly can result in serious injuries and even death.

This information sheet explains what you can do in certain instances to reduce the chances of suffering from occupational accidents and diseases. Remember though, that there are many other hazards that you are exposed to other than the ones that we cover here, and additional precautions may be required in certain situations, for instance pregnancy. So before you start any task, stop and ask yourself:

1. How will I do the work?
2. Do I know enough to remain safe and healthy?

Let's look at some precautions when working with certain hazards.

Please also contact your local labour inspectorate or occupational safety and health authority to help you understand the hazards and what precautions to take.

Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch - Governance and Tripartism Department
International Labour Office - www.ilo.org/labadmin-osh

Working with ANIMALS

Animals not only provide food, they also help carry out work; pulling carts, carrying loads etc. But animals and their waste transfer many unseen germs. Some of these are harmful to humans because they can cause various illnesses.

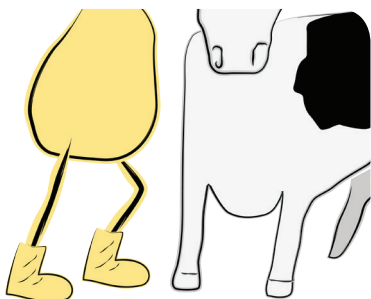


After working with animals wash your hands with soap and preferably warm water and then dry them.

This reduces the risk of infections.

Never eat, drink or smoke while you handle animals, feed them or clean their sheds.

Because bugs and germs can be transmitted from your hands to your mouth and may make you ill.



Wear robust footwear when working with large animals.

To help protect your feet if animals step on them.

Wear dust masks when working in dusty environments e.g. catching poultry or cleaning poultry houses.

To prevent dust and bugs entering your lungs.



Consider visiting your local doctor and veterinarian for advice on available vaccinations.

Vaccines will prevent many human and animal diseases.

You might have to take further preventive measures. For instance, in some areas tick bites can cause diseases. Ticks jump from grass and bushes onto animals or humans. You can reduce the risk of tick-borne infections by wearing long sleeves and long trousers tucked into socks or boots, using insect repellent on exposed skin and insecticide on socks and trousers. Inspect your entire body for ticks after outdoor activities. Removing them immediately reduces the risk of infection.

Handling LOADS

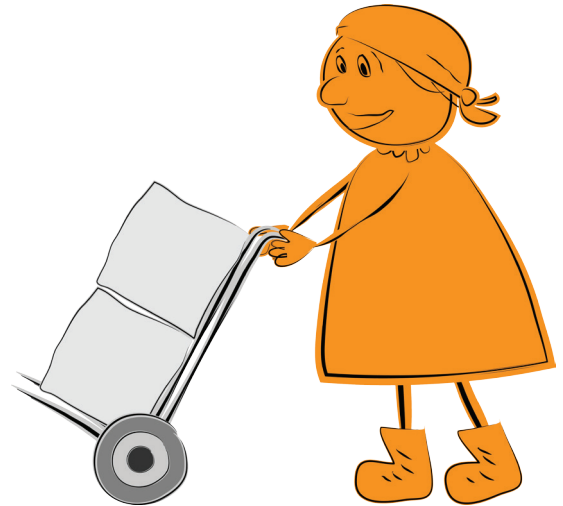
Many farmers carry out a lot of manual handling activities, lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling loads and packing products. Depending on the load that you are handling, its size, the position of hand holds and its weight, it can seriously harm you.

Handle the load with the help of equipment or animals, for example powered equipment such as tractors or manually powered equipment such as homemade carts, wheelbarrows or a sack trolley.

This means less effort is required to move the load and will help in preventing injuries.

Keep containers and packages small.

So they are easier to move, thus avoiding muscle strain and injury.

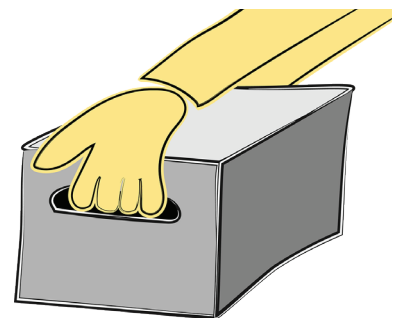


Maintain handling equipment regularly.

To ensure it remains efficient and therefore requires less effort to use.

Use containers/packages with handholds.

This will make lifting and transporting easier.



Work benches should allow you to work at elbow height. You can either raise or lower the bench, or raise the floor level by making a platform to stand on.

To ensure your body is in a good working position.

For example if you need to move 100 kg, it is best if you move the load in smaller amounts e.g. 4 bags each of 25 kilos. If you use equipment, like a wheelbarrow, to move loads, ensure that the tyre is correctly inflated and the wheel moves freely. This will mean less effort is needed to move the load.

Using and storing CHEMICALS

Chemicals are regularly used on farms. These can include paints, solvents, and most frequently pesticides to control pests. Before using any chemicals, be sure you really need them and know how to use them! Pesticides, for example, are designed to kill pests and can be very harmful to humans.

Plan your work to take place when there is less chance of others entering the treated area, and place signs warning others that pesticides have been applied.

To prevent others from entering and being exposed.

Always use personal protective equipment (PPE). The type of equipment varies depending on how you apply the pesticide. When you apply it manually use:

- Eye protection
- Mask suitable for vapours
- A coverall or long sleeves, leg coverings and closed footwear
- Impermeable (nitrile) gloves

To prevent the pesticide contacting your skin or being inhaled, avoiding burns and respiratory problems.



Always keep your PPE on while handling pesticides or disposing of the container.

This reduces the possibility of exposure to the pesticide.

After finishing work wash your hands, any exposed skin and any clothing that may have come into contact with the pesticide.

This will help to prevent further exposure to the pesticide.

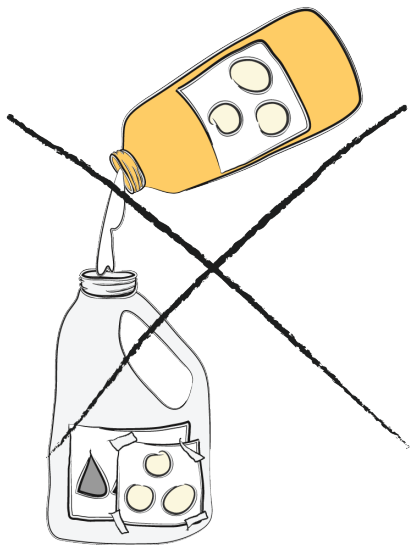
If the pesticide contacts your skin, eyes or mouth don't waste any time! Wash it off immediately with fresh running water. Check the pesticide label to see if you need medical assistance.

This will help to reduce burns, skin irritations and absorption of the pesticide.

Have all emergency contacts available.

So that you can call them immediately in case of emergency.

How do you store pesticides safely?



Never reuse pesticide containers for any purpose and ensure the empty containers are placed in a locked store before being disposed of.

Empty containers may still contain pesticide residue and pose risks to others and the environment.

Keep all chemicals, including pesticides, in original containers with proper labels.

The label explains how to apply the pesticide and warns you and others of the contents of the container.

Keep all pesticides in a securely locked ventilated area.

To stop children and others having access to them.

Always keep containers securely closed.

To help prevent spillage.

Store powders above liquids.

Because if a liquid leaks, the powders will not be contaminated.

Keep a brush and sand close to the pesticides.

The sand will help to absorb any spilt liquid which can then be swept up.



Ensure that any spillage or leakage will be contained in the store. For instance; place a capture tray below the liquids or build a small wall around the store.

So any contamination is kept in one place thus reducing the risks to you, others and the environment.

Never store the chemicals in your home, near food or drinking water.

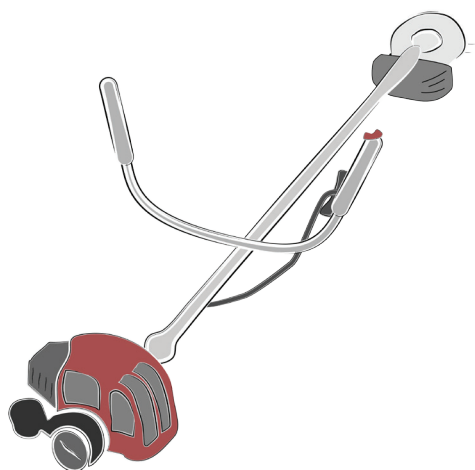
Because exposure to the chemical will pose health risks to you and your family.

Transferring pesticides to other containers that anyone may associate with food or drink could be lethal.

Working with MACHINERY

Farmers use different machines all of the time. Before using any machine you need to understand how to operate it safely and the reasons why it must be operated in that way. Always consult the operator's manual. Knowing how to operate the machine, along with ensuring you are wearing any necessary PPE, will reduce the risk of accidents.

When using pedestrian operated machines:

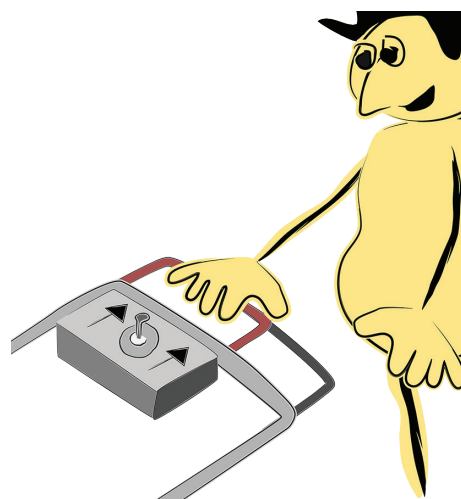


Make sure that blades, soil incorporating parts and any other moving parts are appropriately guarded.

To prevent you contacting the dangerous parts, reducing the risk of cuts and other injuries.

Make sure any hold-to-run devices are operating correctly.

Because in an emergency situation if you let go of the hold-to-run device it will automatically stop the machine.



Identify the required PPE, for example; protective footwear, gloves, eye protection, ear protection and overalls.

Because PPE reduces the risks of injuries.

For example, when using a correctly guarded hand-held brush cutter the guard prevents you from touching the cutter; wearing goggles will stop particles getting into your eyes, ear protection will reduce exposure to the noise, overalls/long pants helps to prevent ejected particles cutting your legs and sturdy footwear protects your feet and prevents you from slipping.

When operating tractors:

Ensure you have the skills to drive a tractor and understand how all the controls work.

This will ensure that you do not put yourself or others at risk.

Carry out the pre-work safety checks (not just oil and fuel levels), including checking the equipment is well maintained, safely connected and access to all moving parts is prevented. For example check rotating shafts are guarded.

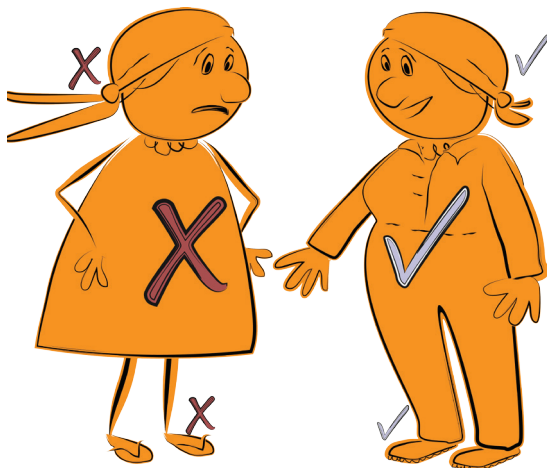
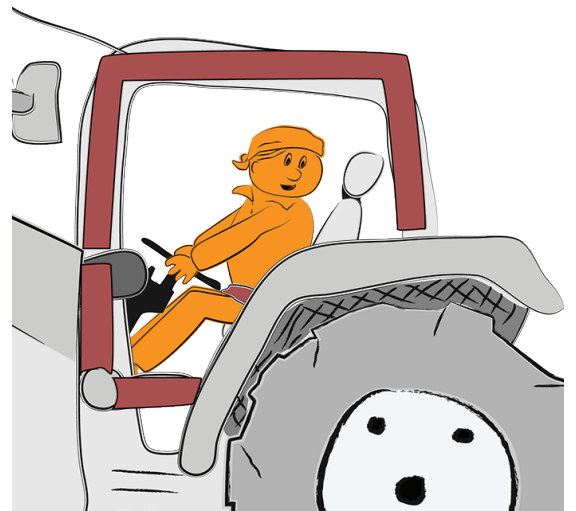
This will avoid break downs and exposure to dangerous parts of the equipment thus reducing the chance of accidents.

Use tractors with roll over protective structures.

To protect you from getting crushed if the tractor rolls over.

Use the safety belt.

This will protect you in case the vehicle rolls or if you have to stop suddenly.



Wear suitable close fitting clothing.

Clothes that can snag on the controls can cause an accident.

Wear suitable non-slip footwear.

Footwear that can slip on the foot pedals causes unwanted movements of the tractor.

For example, you should regularly ensure that your tractor's brakes are fully operational. Check the seatbelt is operational. Use the seatbelt at all times when the tractor is fitted with roll over protection, then even if the tractor rolls over, you will remain in the seat and will not be crushed by the structure.

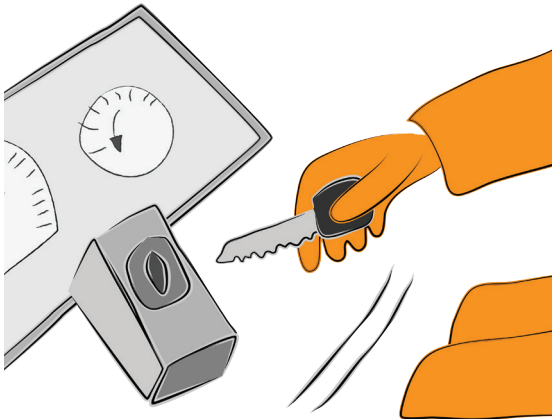
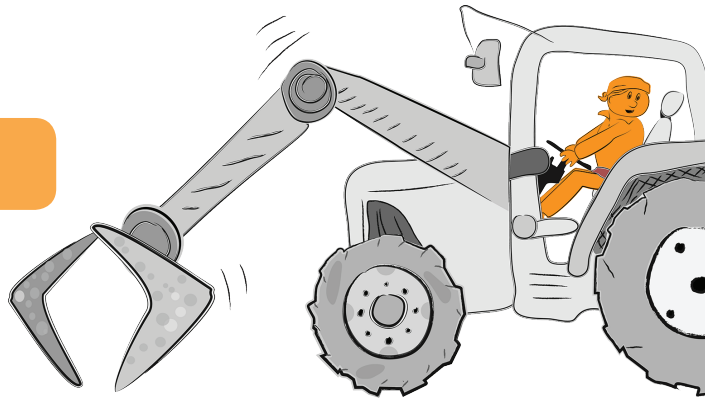
When operating tractors follow “SAFE STOP”:

You must remember when driving a tractor that ‘SAFE STOP’ must be followed whenever you leave the driver’s seat or when people approach the tractor. What should you do?



Apply the handbrake to ensure the tractor will not move and take it out of gear.

Lower any equipment to the ground so it cannot fall onto others.



Stop the engine and remove the key to prevent others from starting the tractor.

If you can't follow the SAFE STOP procedure, for instance when the tractor is powering irrigation pumps and is left running, fence the surrounding area to prevent risk to others, particularly children.

