

Health & Safety Update | July 2016

Welcome to Strutt & Parker's Farm Research Group Health & Safety Update

The quarterly Health & Safety Update is to assist you in ensuring you are thinking about topical health and safety matters on your farm and/or estate. Health and safety is a vital part of any business operation.

With the arrival of the summer staff and harvest students, harvest will soon be underway. Farms and estates are often at their busiest at this time of year with staff and machines working longer hours to ensure all of the work is completed. It is therefore imperative to ensure everyone is well briefed in regard to health and safety on your farm or estate.

For further assistance, or information on the issues discussed below, please call your nearest Strutt & Parker office.

Inductions

All temporary and casual staff must receive a clear induction for the farm/estate regardless of whether they have worked there before - things may have changed! Harvest staff are frequently students who are keen and ready to prove themselves in the industry so it is essential to highlight all known hazards. A good induction should include:

- An introduction to the farm/estate and to everyone in the induction including their role;
- Who to report any accidents to;
- Who to call in an emergency;
- Who the qualified first aiders are;
- The location of first aid kits, accident books, fire extinguishers, electric isolation points, Health & Safety policy;
- A list of key phone numbers and to ensure that everyone has exchanged mobile numbers;
- An explanation of how emergency action plans are to be implemented in the case of an accident;
- Identification of any machines which cannot be used without specific training or supervision;
- Farm plans, marked with the location of overhead cables, ditches and rights of way.

You must ensure that all new staff read and sign to confirm they have read the firm's Health & Safety policy as soon as possible after their start date. Ensure that you have a copy of their personal details, including next of kin, medical conditions, allergies (e.g. penicillin, bee or wasp stings) and where they keep their epi-pen if appropriate.

Storage of Fertiliser

Storing and handling fertiliser safely is essential for both human and environmental safety. Ammonium nitrate should be stored in dedicated clean, well-ventilated buildings that are constructed from materials that do not burn. Bags should be stacked in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and be at least one metre away from the edge of the building to ensure the stack can be inspected around its full perimeter. Where 25 tonnes or more of fertiliser with nitrogen content greater than 15.75% is stored the Fire Brigade and HSE must be notified, and if more than 150 tonnes is stored the Fire Brigade must be notified of the anticipated tonnage. The site must be marked with an appropriate hazard warning sign showing that there is an oxidising agent being stored.

In some cases it is necessary to store fertiliser outside, in which case measures to prevent it deteriorating from sunlight and/or water must be put in place. Stacks should be covered with a sheet and where appropriate fenced to protect the bags from damage.

- Do not leave fertiliser where it is visible to the public;
- Record fertiliser deliveries and usage and carryout regular stock takes;
- Report immediately any stock discrepancy or loss to the police;

Storage areas should be away from drains and any sources of heat, fire or explosion such as oil or gas stores. Any spilt product should be cleared as soon as possible to prevent spillages reaching any watercourses or drains.

Silaging

Working with silage is potentially dangerous as high-powered machinery is being operated at speed. Other factors which increase the chance of an accident occurring include fatigue, poor weather, and difficult ground conditions. There are a number of safety measures around key areas that will help make silage time safer.

Children

- Children under the age of 13 should ever be carried in the cab of any machine involved in making silage;
- Contractors must not allow children to ride in tractor cabs;
- Children should not be allowed to play around the farmyard or fields when silage is being made.

Machinery Safety

- All tractors and other equipment must be properly maintained and in good condition;
- Only competent drivers should be allowed to operate machinery during the silage season and the carrying of passengers should be avoided;
- All guards must be in place on all equipment and in particular PTO shafts must be properly guarded;
- Blockages, which need to be cleared by hand, should only be carried out when the drive has been switched off and sufficient time has been allowed for the machine to stop completely;
- It is essential to practice a 'safe stop' procedure during any maintenance operations;
- Approved safety cabs or roll bars must be fitted on all tractors;
- Take care when driving on the public road especially when entering or leaving fields or yards;
- Keep all lights and indicators in working order.



Clamp Safety

- Clamps must never be overfilled as this increases the chance of a tractor or loading shovel overturning when filling or rolling;
- No one should go underneath a silage cover once it has been put in place, fermenting grass uses up the oxygen in the air under the cover very quickly anyone going under the cover risks rapid death due to asphyxiation;
- On open clamps, with earth embankments, the sides and ends of the silage should be sloped off at a safe angle (less than 45 degrees).
- On clamps where machines and their drivers can drop 600mm (2 feet) or more, strong front end barriers and guide rails are required;
- Clamps with walls should never be filled above the top of the wall. If overfilled the guard rail will no longer be effective and will increase the risk of a machine overturning;
- Excessive filling will overload walls and increase the risk to the operators of machinery.

Electricity

- Be particularly careful when working near overhead power lines;
- If you use a contractor for silage making, inform them of the location of any overhead lines which you feel may impact on large machinery;
- Remember, self-propelled forage harvesters need a lot of headroom, as do large trailers when tipped in the yard.
- If in doubt about the height of overhead power lines and suitable clearance distances UK Power Networks.

Grain & Silage Carting

Grain and silage carting is frequently the least experienced member of staff's job. Accidents frequently occur when turning into or leaving fields adjoining public roads. When entering and exiting any location take particular care; check for motorbikes, other vehicles and pedestrians on the public highway. It may be necessary to put appropriate signage on the highway. It is imperative to ensure that the following is conveyed to those carting and loading trailers;

- Ensure loads are evenly distributed;
- Loads should be tipped in a controlled manner, without excessive speed or fierce braking;
- When tipping there should be adequate headroom to tip the trailer and to pull forward as the load comes out;
- Lower the trailer body as soon as the tipping operation is complete and before moving away;
- Care must be taken when tipping around other people – it is not sufficient to assume you have been seen unless definite contact has been made between parties;
- Never stand under an unsupported raised trailer body;
- A number of fatalities have occurred during maintenance and repair, particularly during works which require the trailer body to be raised for access. Always follow a 'safe stop' procedure before attempting to service or adjust either the tractor or trailer.

Escaping hydraulic fluids under pressure can have sufficient force to penetrate the skin, causing serious injury. Before disconnecting pipes, be sure to relieve all pressure. Before applying pressure to the system, ensure all connections are tight and that pipes and hoses are not damaged. Use a piece of cardboard or wood, rather than hands, to search for suspected leaks. If injured by escaping fluid, see a doctor at once. Serious infection can develop if proper medical treatment is not administered immediately.

Baling and Stacking of Bales

Balers are operated at peak periods and often in catchy weather conditions when staff are under stress due to heavy workloads. All guards must be correctly fitted and in position before commencing work, guards should be fitted at the front, sides and rear of the machine to guard chains, sprockets, rollers and other parts which can cause injury. The pick-up reel guard should extend in front of the tines.

Blockages and uneven bale formation can occur when baling in poor conditions, so avoid baling wet or damp hay and straw. Avoid baling light material when starting to form a fresh bale. This can lead to poor core forming and uneven bales which could pose a risk to others in the future particularly when stacked.

The stacking of large bales is done mechanically. You should ensure that only staff authorised and conversant with the safe use of the equipment or those undergoing supervised training can work on or with the machinery associated with bale stacks. It is important to ensure that:

- Children are kept away from bale stacks, handling and stacking operations;
- There are no overhead power lines near or above the stacking or working area;
- Properly designed and constructed mechanical handling equipment for handling bales is used;
- The machinery is properly maintained;
- The rated capacity of lifting machinery is not exceeded;
- Only trailers designed or properly adapted for bale handling are used;
- Hooks are fitted so ropes can be used to secure loads; the use of restraining devices at both ends is recommended.



Where small bales are manually handled, observe correct manual handling technique, make arrangements for communication between those on the load and those on the ground, particularly if loading by machine – the stacker should always remain visible to the loader. Be careful of lifting small bales by their string when working on stacks or loads. The sudden release of tension if the string snaps can force you to lose your balance and suffer a dangerous fall.

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Chelmsford	01245 258 201
Chester	01244 354 888
Chichester	01273 832 602
Cirencester	01285 659 661
Edinburgh	0131 226 2500
Exeter	01392 215 631
Farnham	01252 821 102
Gerrards Cross	01753 891 188
Guildford	01483 306 565
Harpenden	01582 764 343
Harrogate	01423 561 274
Haslemere	01428 661 077
Horsham	01403 246 790
Inverness	01463 719 171
Ipswich	01473 214 841
Lewes	01273 475 411
Ludlow	01584 873 711
Market Harborough	01858 433 123
Moreton-in-Marsh	01608 650 502
Morpeth	01670 516 123
Newbury	01635 521 707
Northallerton	01609 780 306
Norwich	01603 617 431
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