



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta  
Health and Safety Authority

# Farm Safety Code of Practice RISK ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

**For Farms with Three or Less Employees**

[www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

**Our Vision:** To deliver healthy and safe working lives and contribute to productive enterprises

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<b>Emergency Telephone Numbers</b>	
Doctor	
Eircode	
In case of Emergency- name and number	
Neighbours Name & Number	
Vet	
Agriculture Advisor	
Fire Brigade	
Garda Station, Priest or Minister	
Emergency Services	999 or 112
ESB Networks	1850 372 757
Health and Safety Authority	0818 289 389
National Poisons Information Centre	01 - 809 2166

## Risk Assessment Document for Farms with Three or Less Employees

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

FARM ENTERPRISES: \_\_\_\_\_

HERD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Completing and implementing the findings of this Farm Safety Risk Assessment document will help you to meet your duties to carry out a risk assessment on your farm and to complete a Safety Statement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

## Code of Practice – Risk Assessment

This is my programme in writing for managing health and safety. It is aimed at protecting myself and others who live on, work on, or visit the farm from accidents, injury and ill-health.

### I undertake to,

- Provide a safe place of work.
- Use safe systems of work.
- Provide all machine guards, protective equipment, information, training, and supervision necessary to protect those at risk.
- Advise all who work or are present on the farm of the hazards identified in this risk assessment and the controls in place or to be taken to protect all from injury.
- Stop work immediately, until the hazard is controlled if a dangerous situation arises.
- Share this risk assessment document with any contractors working on my farm.
- Review health and safety on my farm and this document on a regular basis and at least annually.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This document should be revised at least annually or whenever there has been a significant change in the facilities or work practices on the farm.

### REVISED;

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As an employee/contractor I have read and understood the contents of this farm Risk Assessment;

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## How to Complete this Document

### Tractors, Farm Vehicles and Quads

<b>Tractor, Vehicle and Quad Risk Assessment</b> I will ensure that:	List all vehicles used on the farm				
	Ford	Zetor	ATV	Loader	Loader
The Cab/Roll bar is in good condition.	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓
The U guard is in place to cover the PTO stub.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
All controls are in working order and are clearly marked/ understood.					
The brakes are in good working order and adequate for the work undertaken.					
The handbrake/parking brake is fully operational.					
The mirrors, lights, indicators and wipers are all functioning, clean and visible.					
All hitching equipment is free of defects.					
All visible defects in the vehicle are identified and rectified before starting work. (List defects on control sheet)					
<b>Safety Practices</b>					
Pre-checks are carried out on tractors and vehicles before use.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regular maintenance will be carried out on all tractors and vehicles.	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓
The tractor/ farm vehicle is only operated by drivers who are trained and competent.					
Where the operator handbook is available it will be consulted.					
Lifting equipment (material) is examined annually.					
Lifting equipment (lifting people) is examined 6 monthly.					
The vehicle is always started and operated from the correct position.					
Passengers are only carried where the manufacturer has provided a seat and seat belt for this purpose.					
A helmet is worn by the operator when a quad bike is being driven.					
When starting and operating any vehicle, the driver looks out for bystanders.					
The speed of all vehicles will be suitable for the ground or road conditions.					
When a vehicle is stopped, the SAFE STOP procedure is used.					
The cab floor is kept clear to allow safe use of brakes & clutch.					
<b>Additional vehicle controls used.</b>					

**STEP 1.** Read the information about the hazard.

**STEP 2.** Complete this list.

**STEP 3.** Read the Control Measures.

**STEP 4.** Check that Safety Control Measures are in place for each item listed. Answer ✓, X or N/A.

**STEP 5.** List additional controls that are in place.

**STEP 6.** Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing indicate this on your Action.

## Major Risks in Farming

### The overall situation

- Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in Ireland. Over one third of all workplace fatalities in Ireland occur in farming but the sector employs just 4% of the workforce<sup>1</sup>.
- Children and the elderly are particularly at risk. Almost two thirds of all farm deaths involve over 65s and children.
- Many serious injuries occur every year. Many are life changing and place the farm at risk.
- The leading causes of fatal accidents in Agriculture are associated with Vehicles, Machinery and Quad Bikes, the handling of livestock and work at height/falling materials.
- 178 People have lost their lives working on Irish Farms between 2016 and 2025.

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.cso.ie/table/QES04>

## Children and Young Persons

Over the 10 Year Period 2016 – 2025, 8 fatal farm accidents involved children and young persons under 17 years of Age. Farm machinery and vehicles were a key contributor to all of these accidents.

Farms are a high risk environment for children, young persons and for visitors. There is therefore a major responsibility on the farmer to ensure that the risks posed to children on the farm are assessed and controls are put in place.

## Older Farmers

Over the ten year period 2016-2025, More than half of all deaths involved farmers aged 65 or over. The majority of these deaths were associated with tractor and machinery usage, livestock and falling from heights. The clear message is that older farmers must take greater care and before doing any work they must consider their age-related limitations.

## Children, Young Persons and Older Farmers

Children, Young persons and Older Farmer Safety Assessment	Answer ✓ X or N/A
I will ensure that:	
<b>Children and Young Persons</b>	
A safe and secure play area for children is provided away from all work activities and children are supervised directly.	
The dangers to children on the farm are explained to all children and young persons.	
No one under 16 years of age is permitted to drive a Quad/ATV	
Over 16s must have successfully completed legally required Quad/ATV training and wear appropriate helmet.	
A high level of adult supervision will be in place when children are present on the farm.	
Children under 14 are not allowed operate tractors or self-propelled machines.	
Only children over 14 will be allowed to drive a tractor or self-propelled vehicle in line with legal requirements.	
Children over 14 and young persons who drive tractors have attended safe tractor driving skills training and are closely supervised by responsible adult when driving the tractor.	
Children under 7 are not allowed to be carried on a tractor or self-propelled vehicle in line with legal requirements.	
Particular dangers to children on my farm are identified and controlled for example, tractor operation, slurry pits, livestock, falls.	
Children over 7 are only carried if a seat with a lap-belt is provided in tractor.	
Contractors are made aware of my traffic management plan + possible presence of children and of these controls.	
<b>Older Farmers, Household Members</b>	
Physical ability, age related limitations and risks are identified, particularly when working with machinery, livestock and accessing heights.	
The older farmer will consider his/her speed of movement and any other limitations before and during work activity.	
Quad/ATV training completed and Quad helmet worn by operator	
The older farmer considers if he/she is physically able to carry out the work at hand.	
Measures are taken to minimize risks to all including risks to visitors on the farm.	

List additional controls

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Tractors, Farm Vehicles and ATV's

Tractor and vehicle use is potentially lethal. Tractors, farm vehicles and machinery account for the highest proportion of fatalities. Of those, being crushed, overturning, being struck or falling from the vehicle are the causes of most tractor/vehicle incidents. Those at risk include persons using the tractor and those who may be in the area where the tractor is operating. Poor operation of vehicles particularly when reversing is another cause of fatalities.

### Tractors, Farm Vehicles and Quads

Tractor, Vehicle and Quad Risk Assessment	List all vehicles used on the farm			
<b><i>I will ensure that:</i></b>				
The Cab/Roll bar is in good condition.				
The U guard is in place to cover the PTO stub.				
I do not allow children to ride on tractors or machinery without a seatbelt.				
All controls are in working order and are clearly marked/understood.				
The brakes are in good working order and adequate for the work undertaken.				
The handbrake/parking brake is fully operational.				
The mirrors, lights, indicators and wipers are all functioning, clean visible & without cracks				
All hitching equipment is free of defects.				
Training has been completed on the Code of Practice on Industrial trucks where relevant				
All visible defects in the vehicle are identified and rectified before starting work. (List defects on control sheet)				
A helmet is worn on a Quad Bike and all operators have completed the QQI Accredited Training Course				

Ensure that keys are removed from the vehicle when not in use				
<b>Safety Practices</b>				
Pre-checks are carried out on tractors and vehicles before use.				
Regular maintenance will be carried out on all tractors and vehicles.				
The tractor/ farm vehicle is only operated by drivers who are trained and competent.				
Where the operator handbook is available it will be consulted.				
Lifting equipment (material) is examined annually.				
Lifting equipment (lifting people) is examined every six months.				
The vehicle is always started and operated from the correct position.				
Passengers are only carried where the manufacturer has provided a seat and seat belt for this purpose.				
When starting and operating any vehicle, the driver looks out for bystanders.				
Drivers take account of their own physical limitations/fitness before deciding to drive				
The speed of all vehicles will be suitable for the ground or road conditions.				
When a vehicle is stopped, the SAFE STOP procedure is used.				
The cab floor is kept clear to allow safe use of brakes & clutch.				
Where farmyard is close to farmhouse, traffic risks are assessed and controlled.				
Where farmyard is close to farmhouse with children present, suitable non climbable fencing is installed to prevent child access to work areas				
<b>Additional vehicle controls used</b>				

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Machinery

Machinery is a significant factor in fatal and non-fatal accidents in Agriculture. The primary causes of these fatalities involving machinery are crushing, being struck and trapped. Those at risk of injury are persons operating the machinery and those in the vicinity when machinery is being operated.

## Machinery

<b>Machinery Risk Assessment</b>  <i>I will ensure that:</i>	List all machinery used on the farm			
All safety guards/ devices are fitted, undamaged and in good working order.				
I ensure keys are removed when machinery is not in operation to prevent unauthorised use.				
The “O” guards are present on the machine end of the PTO drive.				
The hydraulic systems and hoses are in good repair.				
Pre-checks are carried out on machinery before use.				
Regular maintenance is carried out.				
<b>Safety Practices</b>				
Machinery is only operated by competent trained operators.				
All machinery is pre-checked with any safety defects identified and rectified before use.				
The operator handbook where available is read and understood.				
Hydraulic equipment is supported with adequate prop during maintenance or repair, for example, jack stands.				
Machinery, PTO’s and moving parts are stopped before attempting to carry out maintenance or free any blockage.				
Passengers are not carried on machines unless designed to do so and restrained safely.				
The controls for the safety of children and young persons set out in this document are applied to machinery.				
Loads are stable and well secured.				
All trailers comply with Road Safety Authority (RSA) requirements.				
Appropriate PPE and workwear is worn when operating machinery for example, quad helmet when driving a quad.				
Ground conditions on slopes are assessed prior to machine work on steep ground.				

Additional machinery controls used

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Livestock

Livestock is the second leading cause of fatal accidents in Agriculture. Of primary concern are freshly calved cows and stock bulls. The risks with these animals include being crushed or gored when animals are being moved, separated or released. Those at risk are the farmer and those who may gain access to farm animals.

### Livestock

Livestock Risk Assessment	List the types of livestock (bulls, cows, rams etc.) on the farm				
<i><b>I will ensure that:</b></i>					
Pens, fencing, crush(es) and skulling gates and other handling facilities are adequate and allow safe animal handling.					
Gates can be securely closed.					
Fencing is adequate to contain stock.					
Facilities for loading and unloading animals are adequate.					
A calving gate (which provides operator protection) is used for calving cows.					
A physical barrier is established when handling calves with freshly calved cows.					
A bull pen which prevents direct contact with the bull is provided when the bull is housed.					
When outdoors the bull has a chain/rope attached to the ring.					
A safe means of escape is available in the calving pen/bull pen.					
All visible defects in livestock facilities are rectified. (List defects on control sheet).					

Safety Practices					
Persons handling livestock, especially a bull, are competent and fit.					
A vehicle is used when herding if a bull is running with the herd.					
Signs warning of the presence of a bull are displayed beside public places.					
Adequate assistance is in place when carrying out animal handling operations.					
Aggressive animals are culled without delay.					
Suitable PPE and gloves are worn when handling animals.					
List additional livestock controls identified					

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Farmyard and Buildings/Work at Height

Fall from heights are the third leading cause of fatal accidents on Farms. Of particular concern is falling through fragile roofs from ladders and falling bales. Collapsing walls or earthen drains also cause many deaths. Drowning in slurry and gas poisoning continues to be a significant cause of farm deaths.

### Farmyard Buildings Maintenance & Construction

Farmyard, Buildings	List Farmyards and Farm Buildings				
<b><i>I will ensure that:</i></b>					
Farmyard and farm buildings are tidy and kept in good repair.					
Where construction work planned Farmer/Client appoint in writing a project supervisor if work is going to last more than 30 days or more than 500 person days; more than one contractor or particular risk involved					

All maintenance work is planned and only undertaken by competent persons.					
Loader buckets or similar are not used for work at height.					
A Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) is considered for all maintenance work at height that includes integrated operator controls.					
If not using an MEWP, safe means of access to heights is used for example, stairs, work platform, ladder secured and footed					
If not using an MEWP, work on roofs is only undertaken after risk assessing & implementing controls, training provided, roofing ladders/crawling boards, harness worn etc.					
Fragile roof signs are in place where appropriate and Perspex sheets not painted over					
Construction regulations are followed for buildings under construction and other building maintenance work on the farm.					
Bales are securely stacked.					
Suitable fire safety equipment is available.					
Sensor lighting installed for work in dark /winter mornings/evenings					
Swinging doors can be secured or replaced with sliding doors.					
Exits onto public roads are safe.					
All visible defects in the farmyard and buildings are rectified. (List defects on control sheet)					
<b>List additional farmyard and buildings controls identified</b>					

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Slurry Handling

In Ireland, over 40 million tonnes of slurry are stored, handled and spread as fertilizer each year. This presents two significant safety and health risks. Gas poisoning from slurry gases and drowning in slurry or water, have caused Many farm deaths over the years.

Drowning is by far the most common stated cause of death involving slurry. Where possible, fence off all water and slurry hazards and take a cautious approach when working near slurry tanks, water tanks, ponds, rivers or lakes.

## Slurry Handling

<b><i>I will ensure that:</i></b>	<b>Answer</b> ✓ X or N/A
Open slurry/water tanks are fenced to a height of 1.8 meters and secured (including gates) to prevent access.	
Access (agitation) points to slatted tanks are kept secured and built to current safety standards including safety grid to prevent falls /drowning	
Slurry agitation/spreading is planned to take account of weather forecasts choosing a windy day if possible.	
Livestock are removed from sheds and pets are controlled before slurry agitation starts.	
All doors and sheeted gates are opened to maximize ventilation.	
During slurry agitation buildings and high-risk areas are cordoned off to prevent access.	
Persons will stay away from agitation area for 30 mins after commencement.	
During slurry agitation and spreading agitation points are guarded and where possible safety grids are fitted.	
Manhole covers are replaced as soon as possible.	
Slurry gas warning signs are in place at agitation points.	
Entry into an underground slurry/effluent tank is never undertaken without full risk assessment and safety controls in place.	
Condition of slats is checked for damage regularly.	
Work is carried out upwind of agitation with no reliance placed on slurry gas monitors.	

List additional Slurry Handling controls identified

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Harvesting

Harvest is the peak time for farm fatalities to farmers, family members and contractors. Time pressure is often an added risk factor particularly with increased workload during spells of good weather. The practice of working long hours at harvest time, extending over several weeks with little time for rest, increases the risk of accidents.

Tractors, harvesters, farm vehicles and other machinery are the main causes of fatalities at harvest time. Incorrect handling, transport and storage of bales are also a significant contributor to fatalities at harvest time.

### Harvesting

<b>Harvesting Risk Assessment</b>	List all machinery used on the farm				
<i><b>I will ensure that:</b></i>					
The harvest is carefully planned and machinery prepared & guarded to prevent any accidents or injury.					
All persons, including family members not directly involved are kept away from the harvest, particularly children.					
All involved with tractor and machinery operation are competent and supervised during the work.					
Adequate rest breaks are planned for and given to all operators during the harvest.					
All machinery is pre-checked before use and any safety defects identified are rectified. (Immediately where possible)					
Regular maintenance is carried out to prevent breakdowns.					
All safety guards, particularly PTO guards, are kept in place at all times.					
Extra care is taken with machinery with exposed moving parts and crop intake points.					

All blockages and stoppages are dealt with by following: 'Engine off, Handbrake on', safe working procedures.					
Passengers are not carried unless a suitable passenger seat is provided. (Driver under instruction or training)					
All persons are kept well away from operating mowers, mulchers and hedge-cutters due to risk of projectile stones and blades.					
All operators and/or contractors are made aware of any electrical lines, phone lines, uneven surfaces and slopes.					
No machine is overloaded.					
RSA rules are adhered to on the public road.					
I communicate the high risk of accidents to all operators and /or contractors during harvest time.					
Good communication is maintained between operators of all machinery in the harvesting process.					
Silage pits are not overfilled and their fill height must not put machinery operators at risk.					

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

Harvesting (Continued)

Harvesting (continued) Risk Assessment	List all machinery used on the farm				
<i>I will ensure that:</i>					
Operators on silage pits are sufficiently capable of carrying out their role safely and prevent overturns or collisions.					
No person goes underneath the silage cover due to risk of smothering and/or gassing.					
The sides and ends of earthen embankments are retained at a safe angle.					
Sighting rails are re-installed and maintained along silage walls.					
Silage pits are designed to Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine specifications.					

Bales are loaded, transported and stacked carefully to ensure they do not roll or fall.					
Safe means of tying down loaded bales is planned and carried out.					
Stacks of bales are stacked safely and not positioned near overhead power lines.					
Bale handling equipment is parked correctly following the “SAFE STOP” procedure, to eliminate risk of crushing or spiking.					
The controls for the safety of children and young persons set out on page 7 are applied to harvesting machinery.					
<b>List additional Harvesting controls identified</b>					

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Workshop / Repairs / Timber

Farmers use an array of workshop tools and equipment for maintenance and repairs, such as welders, grinders, generator, chainsaws and power washers. This equipment may pose a risk due to entanglement in moving parts, heat, explosion, being struck by metal particles and sparks. These may cause injury to the person using the equipment or those who may be in the area.

### Working with Timber

The major causes of timber related deaths are untrained chainsaw operators and being struck by falling trees or branches.

Chainsaw injuries involve serious cuts and lacerations to the limbs, neck, head and body, so specialized protective clothing is necessary. Chainsaws also produce noise in excess of 100 decibels so hearing protection must also be worn.

Workshop / Repairs / Working with Timber

<b>Portable and Fixed Equipment Safety Assessment</b> (Examples: Portable equipment – angle grinder, welder, power washer; Fixed equipment – air compressor, hoist) <i>I will ensure that:</i>	List the portable and fixed equipment used on the farm				
The equipment is only operated by competent operators.					
All safety devices are in place and are in working order.					
Manufacturer’s operation manuals are available and used.					
Correct Personal Protective Equipment as specified by the manufacturer is used.					
Tyres are inflated in a safe manner standing clear of the danger zone.					
Tyres are changed in a safe manner by competent persons.					
All visible defects in portable and fixed equipment are rectified. (List defects on control sheet)					
<b>Chainsaws</b>					
The chainsaw is fitted with a full range of safety devices including a chain brake and a chain catcher.					
The chainsaw is only used for work the operator is competent and trained to do.					
Timber to be crosscut is adequately secured and supported.					
Tree felling is only carried out by a competent person who has appropriate certified training in tree felling operations.					
All work with the chainsaw is carried out safely wearing correct personal protective equipment. (Helmet with visor, hearing protection, chainsaw gloves, chainsaw trousers, boots etc.)					
<b>List additional portable and fixed equipment controls identified</b>					

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Electricity

Where electrical equipment is not to the correct standard or is not well maintained there is a risk of electrocution. Those at risk include the farmer and anyone entering the farm that may come in contact with faulty electrical equipment or overhead cables.

### Electricity

<b>Electricity Safety Assessment</b>  <i>I will ensure that:</i>	List all the areas where electrical circuits are installed				
Electrical installations are inspected periodically and maintained by a competent electrician.					
Electrical fittings are of damp proof and dust proof standard necessary. (I.P. Rated)					
All circuits are protected by a Miniature Circuit Breaker (trip switch) or fuse of the correct rating.					
A main fuse protects the total electrical installation.					
All sockets are protected by a 30 milli Amp RCD device on 230/400V circuits and checked monthly.					
110V portable electrical equipment is used in building work.					
An electrical welder is supplied by a 32 Amp welding socket.					
All extension leads/ cable reels are fully uncoiled when in use.					
Adequate lighting is provided in each area of the farmyard and farm buildings.					
Electric fences are adequately earthed and operated in a safe manner.					
All visible defects in electrical installations are rectified without delay. (List defects on control sheet)					
<b>Electricity Networks</b>					
Contractors and suppliers coming onto the farm are made aware of overhead power lines and other installations.					
High machinery and loads only travel under overhead power lines where there is adequate clearance.					

Contact ESB Networks to shroud low voltage power lines free of charge on your farm and reduce the risk of accidental contact during work. Contact 1800 372 757					
<b>List additional electrical controls identified</b>					

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Chemicals

Chemicals pose a risk by different routes including inhalation, ingestion and absorption.

The risk posed by the chemical depends on its chemical properties, particularly its toxicity. The ill health effect caused by chemical exposure ranges from irritation, allergy, poisoning or even death. Chemicals are at their most dangerous when in concentrated form. Those who are at risk are those who use the chemicals and those who may be exposed to the chemicals while they are on the farm.

- Trained Persons
- Equipment in working order
- Locked storage
- Use Proper PPE

Know the symbols:

- Acute Toxicity- Life threatening even in small amounts and brief exposure
- Serious long-term health effects
- Corrosive- Causes skin and eye burns
- Skin and eye irritation. Adverse health effects. Damage to ozone layer
- Flammable- serious fires if exposed to sparks, flames, heat
- Oxidising- causes or intensifies fire, increases fire risk
- Explosive- sensitive to fire, heat, vibration and friction
- Container explodes if heated. Very cold liquid burns when touched.
- Toxic to aquatic environment

## Chemical Safety Assessment

<b>Chemical Safety Assessment</b>  <i>I will ensure that:</i>	List all the areas on the farm where chemicals are used (including veterinary products)			
All chemicals are kept in locked stores.				
All chemical containers are correctly labelled.				
Chemicals are handled and used by a competent person.				
Approved training as a Professional User in Pesticide application is undertaken.				
Sprayer is tested in accordance with regulations.				
All hazard warnings are read, understood and followed.				
All controls recommended by the manufacturer in the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) are followed.				
All equipment using chemicals, for example, sprayers, milking machines are maintained in safe working order.				
Protective clothing and equipment recommended by the manufacturer is used.				
All PPE is cleaned and stored safely after use.				
Washing of skin takes place before eating, drinking or smoking.				
Triple rinsing (where appropriate) and safe disposal of all chemical containers takes place.				
Water is readily available to wash chemicals off immediately.				
Children are told about the dangers of chemicals and kept away.				
Records of chemicals in stock are kept up to date.				
Emergency action for very hazardous chemicals is known.				
Only trained competent workers wearing protective gloves and glasses should be permitted to carry out work with liquid nitrogen				

List additional chemical controls identified

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**

## Health of Farmers

Working on the farm can affect your health. In many cases the effects on health build up over time. Of particular significance in farming is the ill health caused by manual handling, dust or spores, infections and noise. Also, one exposure to some dusts and spores can cause sensitization and severe long-term health effects.

### Manual Handling

About a third of all reported injuries are due to poor manual handling. Most manual handling accidents result in back injury. Lifting heavy loads results in arthritis of joints, particularly hip and knee joints. Damage is also caused to tendons, ligaments and muscles.

Injuries can result from manual handling due to the work itself, the load, the work environment, or the individual's ability or method of lifting. Twisting your spine while lifting or carrying a load is particularly dangerous.

### Dust and Spores

Dust and spores cause very severe illness. Sources of dust and spores include mouldy hay, straw or grain, compost used in mushroom growing, poultry feathers and droppings and dust in intensive livestock houses. Exposure to these materials can cause both short-term effects (including irritation, bronchitis and breathlessness), and long-term effects (including asthma, chronic bronchitis, shortness of breath, weight loss, farmers lung and sensitisation).

Sensitisation is very serious as even small exposures in the future will cause the health effect. Always wear the proper PPE.

### Infection

A range of serious illnesses can be caught from animals and contaminated material. Bacteria, viruses and fungi can cause illness if exposure occurs. Infection can arise from swallowing or by penetrating the skin. Contamination through cuts or broken skin is the most likely source of infection. Contact with materials contaminated with rat's urine can cause Weil's Disease, which is potentially fatal. Other examples of infections include Leptospirosis, Bovine TB, Contagious Pustular Dermatitis, Lyme Disease and E. coli (including the potentially fatal 0157). PPE, covering cuts and washing will protect you from infection.

## Noise

Exposure to noise above a certain level (80dB) over extended periods causes hearing damage. As a general rule, if the noise is such that it is difficult to hear someone talk in a normal voice, noise levels are at damaging levels. Tractors, animals, chainsaws, and machinery can all produce noise levels which can over time permanently damage your hearing. Where noise cannot be eliminated earmuffs will protect you from hearing loss.

## Stress/ Personal Health

Farming as a lifestyle in many ways is positive to wellbeing, however, stress can arise. The main causes of stress among farmers are uncertainties due to markets, farm prices and farm policies; financial worries, excessively long working hours, poor working conditions, poor health and isolation. Stress and poor health are associated with high accident levels. A recent Irish study showed that farmers have a poor health profile. Stress can lead to disease of the circulatory system. It is important to recognise signs of stress and ill health and to seek professional help.

## Health of Farmers

Health Risk Assessment	List areas/activities where risk is high				
<b><i>I will ensure that:</i></b>					
<b>Preventing Back Injury</b>					
Mechanical aids are used to reduce manual handling.					
Where possible the size and weight of the load is reduced before manual handling.					
All loads are assessed before lifting.					
<b>Dust and Spores</b>					
Generation of dust and spores is kept to a minimum.					
Adequate ventilation is provided.					
A suitable dust respirator (P2 or P3) is used where dust or spore levels cannot be fully controlled.					
<b>Preventing Infection</b>					
Hand washing facilities with soap and towels are available in the farmyard.					
Suitable gloves are worn when handling potentially infectious animals or material.					
Cuts and abrasions are covered with a waterproof plaster.					
A vermin control programme is in place.					
<b>Noise (List areas/activities where the risk is high)</b>					
Where possible noise is eliminated or minimised.					

Ways of reducing noise exposure have been considered.					
Suitable hearing protection is always worn where there are high noise levels.					
<b>Stress/ Personal Health &amp; Safety</b>					
A regular health check by a health professional is undertaken.					
Protection from the sun is used.					
Covering all wounds, cuts and scratches with waterproof dressings					
Good personal hygiene - regularly washing hands and work clothing (separate to other family members' clothing)					
Fatigue is more than feeling tired. It is a decline in mental and/or physical performance generally due to insufficient sleep. This reduces ability to carry out farm work safely and effectively.  Are most demanding tasks implemented when I'm most alert and rested					
Attention is given to the importance of proper sleep, diet and exercise.					
Advice is sought for health-related conditions.					
A First Aid Box is readily available on the farm.					
A charged mobile phone is carried when working alone.					
<b>Additional identified controls</b>					

**Note: If a Safety Control Measure is missing, indicate this on your Action List page.**





# There is a way to Farm Safely

## Further Information and Guidance:

Visit our website at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie), telephone our contact centre on 0818 289 389 or email [contactus@hsa.ie](mailto:contactus@hsa.ie)

Use BeSMART, our free online risk assessment tool at [www.besmart.ie](http://www.besmart.ie)

Check out our range of free online courses at [www.hslearning.ie](http://www.hslearning.ie)

Our Vision: To deliver healthy and safe working lives and contribute to productive enterprises

Health and Safety Authority

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