



'Farm Safety and Health Talk' with guest speaker WorkSafe Inspector – Julii Gaunt

12/05/2022 Notes by Simone Lansdell, Dryandra Women in Farming Branch Secretary.

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Thank you to the Wagin Women in Farming Branch for organising and inviting other branches to share in the 'Farm Safety and Health Talk' given by WorkSafe Inspector Julii Gaunt.

Julii was engaging and passionate about safety on farms sharing several anecdotes from her lived experiences with safety on farms both personally and professionally. Julii understand the day-to-day pressures on farmers and advocates for our farming enterprises as far as her position allows.

Having listened to Julii, I no longer have a "fear" of WorkSafe and will be taking an opportunity into the future of inviting an inspector from WorkSafe onto our property to ensure that we have adequately addressed safety within our farming business.



You are not a family farm, you are a business.

You are not farming the same as 100 years ago or generations before you. You need to move with the times. Have you upgraded seeding and harvest equipment over time or do you still have a blacksmith shop and Clydesdale horse out the back?!

Agricultural Safety and Health Checklist

Safety is a big issue. Start small, review the [Agricultural safety and health checklist](#) and involve other family members/employees in this task. Break it down – maybe do one or two pages of the document over a few lunch breaks.

Make a Calendar to Address Safety

- What policies and procedures do you need in place in your business?
- If you are aware of non-compliance it needs to be addressed in a timely/reasonable manner e.g. 6-12 months
- Risk Assess – clarify with an expert in the field e.g. tractor mechanic, boiler maker/engineer. Are they willing to sign off/approve modifications? Ultimately, it could be a magistrate making a decision.
- Areas to initially focus on could include high risk areas of things that can kill you:
 - Moving vehicles
 - Guards on PTOs, augers etc
- Signage – start with a cheap kit such as what [Australian Wool Innovation](#) provides for \$25.00
- If you have purchased or are using a safety policy manual from a HR or Safety business, follow up with them to ensure you understand what all the policies/procedures mean and if they are applicable to your business. You may have to answer why you were not following your own policies/procedures. You need to make policies/procedures specific and applicable to your business.

Evidence

You need to be able to provide something in court – a conversation or verbal agreement is not going to cut it. If you have nothing you have nothing in your defence. Diary is suitable way to document.

Department of Commerce online

- Various checklists and readings relevant to farm safety available E.g. Guidance Note [Falls prevention in the agricultural sector 2011](#)

Manuals/Manufacture Instructions/Modifications

- Use ALL equipment according to manufacture instructions and comply with Australian Safety Standards. E.g. the dummy seat in the tractor or header is not there for children. It will often be labelled for instructor/training use.
- No back yard bodged up welding jobs and modifications to plant and machinery – see below

Modifications to Equipment

The expert below refers to old legislation but is still largely applicable and is taken from WorkSafe [Safe use of tractors with attachments](#)

The OHS Regulations provide more information about how OHS legislation should be followed. For example, suppliers of machinery must provide adequate information to the purchaser at the time of supply, covering its safe use combined with any limitations concerning operating conditions. This includes the designer and manufacturer's specifications, the manufacturer's operator instruction manual on safe use, maintenance requirements, the designer and manufacturer's specifications for a safe workload and any compatible implements. The OHS Act also places responsibility on farm machinery designers, manufacturer's and suppliers to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the tractor and attachments are safe and without risk to health. If farmers have modified machinery, the same responsibility may apply to them.

- *As a designer of an alteration to a machine, the farmer assumes responsibility for any consequences that occur as a result of the alteration. The tractor should remain functional, stable and structurally sound and the farmer should consult with the machine manufacturer before altering plant.*
- *One example of poor practice on farms is welding extensions onto hay forks to stop additional bales from falling back onto the tractor or operator. This destroys the forks which will need to be replaced. Farmers should make enquiries with the tractor manufacturer or agent to determine whether extension slippers that fit over the existing forks are appropriate. The increased carrying-capacity could mean the tractor and other components are overloaded.*
- *A farmer makes up a carry-all platform for the three-point linkage of a tractor to carry tools and supplies. Ensure the carry-all equipment undergoes appropriate load testing and the load is within the rated capacity of the three-point linkage and tractor to ensure the tractor remains stable. If an employee is injured because a component on the carry-all fails, the farmer assumes responsibility for any consequences of the design and manufacture under the OHS Act as the designer and manufacturer.*
- *A farmer sells a tractor with modifications to another farmer for use on a farm. If the tractor is subsequently involved in an incident and someone is injured as a result of the modification's failure, the farmer who sold the tractor has duties under the OHS Act as a supplier and may be held accountable.*

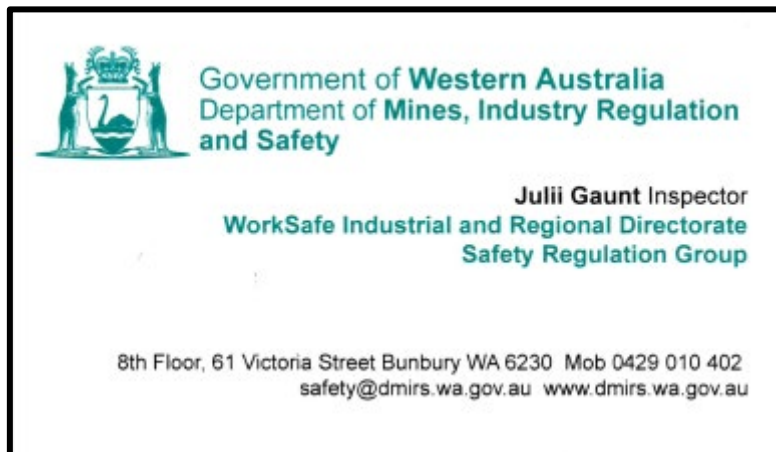
Inductions | Staff | Contractors | Family | Farm Visitors

- Address what to do in an emergency, avoid putting fear into employee saying things like "you're operating close to a million dollars' worth of gear – don't stuff up" They will be more concerned about fear of stuffing up than being safety aware.
- Induct your contractors on farm. It is then up to the contractor to induct their employees.
- Shearing Contractors: Ask contractor to inform you if there are new staff and if they have been inducted. Ask for a list of any incidents or issues to be addressed. Provide contractor with information such as contact phone numbers, nearest hospital. Try to get these details in writing such as an email (ask for a read receipt).
- Complete the [Safe Sheds – The Shearing Shed Safety Program](#)
- Make sure that all safety policies and procedures are signed off by employee/visitor with their legal name. E.g. John Smith not the name they are known as on the footy field. They could write John Smith known as Smithy
- Conduct training and assessment in inductions and document this
- Driving/Operating Plant & Machinery – Do you have the correct licences? E.g. Car, Forklift? Train on the job Teach Observe Supervise – Assess competency – Document this!! Chat with previous employer regarding competency. What gear did they operate? Diarise conversation.
- Although you may view family/visitors as guests partaking in recreational activities on your property, a magistrate may deem that family/visitors are in a workplace. Always think worst case scenario and plan/risk assess/document accordingly.
- Underage drivers – document training they have received, have a written agreement with your kids, they must wear a seatbelt, this is the speed they are allowed to travel, these are the vehicles they can operate, this is where they are allowed to drive etc.

What happens when an inspector visits your property?

- You must comply with their verbal and written requests
- A WorkSafe Inspector will usually provide an Improvement Notice – documenting what needs to be done with a timeframe to complete or a Prohibition Notice stating that a particular practice or activity needs to cease immediately.
- Potentially insurance premiums could be reduced if you can show your insurer that you have had a WorkSafe Inspection and can demonstrate your business is low risk. Could be worth asking the question at your next review.

LINKS TO INFORMATION PROVIDED



Agricultural Safety and Health Checklist

https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/agricultural_health_safety_checklist_0.pdf

Q Fever

<https://www.qfeverfacts.com.au/>

<https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/~media/Files/HealthyWA/New/Q-fever-factsheet.pdf>

Guidance Note 'Falls prevention in the agricultural sector' 2011

https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/falls_prevention_in_agriculture.pdf

Safe Sheds – The Shearing Shed Safety Program

<https://www.wool.com/globalassets/wool/people/shearing-sheds-and-sheep-yard-design/shearing-shed-assessment-manual.pdf>

Australian Wool Innovation

<https://www.wool.com/people/shearing-sheds-and-sheep-yards/safe-sheds/shed-safety-signage-kit-order-form/>

Safe use of tractors with attachments

https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/safe_use_of_tractors_with_attachments.pdf