



Good health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia.

MEDIA RELEASE

20 JULY 2015

One death a week on our farms is still one too many

This year's theme for National Farm Safety Week (20-24 July) is *Safe farms are productive farms*. It is an opportunity to encourage farmers, agricultural employees and others involved with primary industry to make occupational safety part of their workplace and family culture.

"Fatalities on farms are almost always avoidable," said Gordon Gregory, CEO of the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA). "The commonsense approach to safety on farms must be embedded in people's thinking and behaviour - not pursued reluctantly as something that just has to be done. And appreciating that a safe farm is also a more productive one should help with this," Mr Gregory said.

Tragically, there have been twenty-four deaths on Australian farms to 30 June this year. The NRHA is pleased to support Farm Safety Week and encourages all those involved with farming to be aware of the commonsense approach.

It has four elements: identify hazards and fix them as soon as possible; have clear procedures for activities that are particularly risky; make sure everyone - including visitors and particularly kids - understands the procedures; and have an emergency plan in case there is an accident.

Life on the land is a great and rewarding life, but it is not without inherent risks and dangers that people must be aware of, and take steps to avoid. There has been a significant reduction in farm fatalities over the last twenty years, with the number falling from 146 in 1994 to 54 in 2014. This is good news, but with one death per week on our farms, we can still do better.

Having safer farms is especially important for children, who make up twenty percent of all fatalities, with many more suffering serious injury", Mr Gregory said.

"In partnership with Children's Healthcare Australasia, the NRHA is hosting the *Caring for Country Kids* Conference in Alice Springs next year and making farms safer for children will no doubt be part of the considerations."

Information on the free safety induction app and Farm Safety Week can be found at www.farmsafe.org.au or by contacting the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety on (02) 6752 8210.

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The National Rural Health Alliance is Australia's peak non-government organisation for rural and remote health. Its vision is good health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia.