



## April Newsletter



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## IT'S SAFE TO SAY

A message from our leader

We are heading into one of the busiest times of year for Alberta farms.

Grain farms will begin seeding in the next month or so and ranches will be planning for activities on the farm that involve more cattle handling like calving and branding.

This is an exciting time, when we are all optimistic for a great year ahead, it's also a worrying time for us in the safety world.

Busy times means more people on your farms and ranches, more activities happening and more stress. The months of May and June see higher rates of injury on farms and ranches.

I encourage you to take a moment to stop and refresh everyone on your farm team about best practices for moving animals and equipment. As you bring new people on for the season take time to ensure that they are oriented so that the farm team is all working with “common knowledge” (which is much better than common sense). Remember these people are the most valuable assets to your operation, so let’s keep them safe and healthy

Don’t forget all those COVID-19 practices you put in place last spring either. As the third wave is growing, we want to make sure everyone gets through this season healthy.

At AgSafe Alberta, we have several resources available to help you keep yourself, your staff and your family safe on the farm and ranch in the next couple months.

See below for quick reminders and tips around machinery and farm equipment safety, managing your fatigue (and that of your staff), keeping everyone on your farm focused on safety, and safe animal handling tips for branding and calving.

Good luck and stay safe!

Questions or concerns? We are always here to help you out. Contact our team anytime:

- General inquiries: [info@agsafeab.ca](mailto:info@agsafeab.ca)  
403-219-7901
- Hotline for incidence assistance:  
1-833-9AGSAFE

**Jody Wacowich**  
**AgSafe Executive Director**



# SAFETY MINUTE

## Best practices for grain farms and ranches in coming months

Right now you'll be getting ready to use some of your major equipment and machinery again after it's been parked for the winter. Farm equipment can be extremely dangerous – in fact machinery run overs are the leading cause of death on Alberta farms in the spring. See below for some best practices for farm equipment/machinery safety.

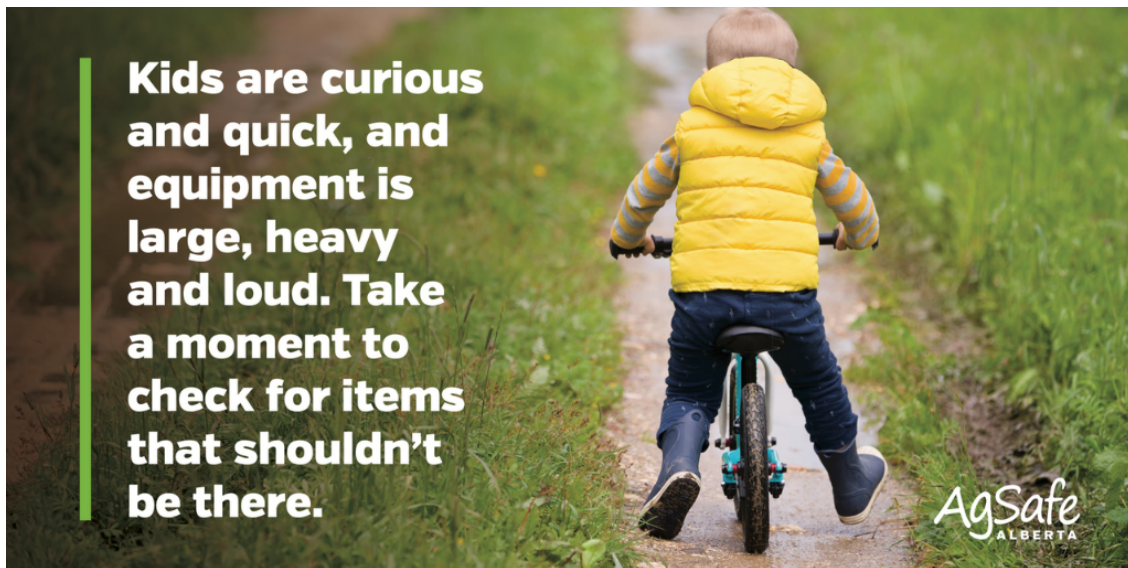
### Equipment/machinery management

- Keep any unnecessary individuals away from work areas, and if someone must approach a piece of equipment, ensure they know how to do so safely.
- Before using a piece of equipment, ensure that you fully understand how to operate the equipment, it's capabilities and what the hazards are.
- If that piece of equipment has been sitting for a long time, perform a quick visual check and key function tests on it to ensure that it is ready for use.
- One seat in a piece of equipment means one person only. Extra riders can be distracting and can be thrown out and run over if the equipment hits a bump.



- Know the condition of the terrain that you will be using the equipment on; identify deep ruts, steep hills and ditches.
- If a seatbelt is equipped, wear it! It will help prevent you from being bumped out and driven over.

- If the equipment does not have a cab, consider installing a Roll Over Protection Structure (ROPS).
- Follow the manufacturers recommendations for pulling equipment with the hitch and/or using the hydraulic lifts. Be mindful of the equipment's center of gravity, bucket position and hitch points.
- Use three points of contact when getting on and off equipment to prevent a fall; scrape mud off of the soles of your shoes to ensure good traction when climbing.



### Safely approaching equipment

- Always keep a safe distance away from the equipment.
- Only approach equipment if eye contact has been made with the operator and they have given you a clear signal (i.e., wave) to proceed.
- Walk cautiously on unstable ground, you don't want to slip and fall in mud with equipment working nearby as you may not be noticed.
- Wear high visibility clothing, such as a vest, as it will make you easier to spot, especially in low light situations.
- Once given the signal to approach, it is still important to stay out of blind spots.
- Never assume you have been seen by the operator or approach without a clear signal to do so.



**A big part of staying safe while moving equipment on public roads is staying visible in low light or dusty conditions.**

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### Stay visible while moving equipment

- Check that all of your indicator lights are working and not covered in dust.
- Ensure that you have visible, bright and clean slow moving vehicle signs.
- Use reflective tape and reflectors to increase visibility; red and white strips should be used on the rear of the equipment, and yellow reflective material on the front.
- Using warning flags at the widest part of the equipment to help other drivers identify its width.
- Move equipment during the day, as opposed to at dawn or dusk, where possible.
- Consider having someone drive an escort vehicle behind the equipment, as there are a high number of rear-end collisions resulting from motorists underestimating the size and speed of farm equipment.

For more information on how to safely transport farm equipment in Alberta, [click here](#).

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### Branding safety

We are also heading into branding season, which brings with it many safety concerns as well. See below some reminders about branding safety.

#### Before you get started:

- Review any necessary documentation, this may include hazard assessments, safe work practices, operator's manuals for the branding iron or squeeze chute, etc.





- Pre-inspect the branding iron for damage or weaknesses; if it is an electric iron, check the cord and plug for damage.
- Check the area for tripping hazards and remove them as necessary.
- Identify who the first aiders are and have first aid kits on hand.
- Ensure everyone involved is wearing appropriate PPE and clothing; for example, boots, gloves, long pants, eye protection, etc. Do not wear loose clothing, jewelry or leave long hair loose.



There are increased risks involved in branding when it is wet, such as:

- A hot iron will lose heat much more rapidly.
- A higher potential of slips, falls or accidental contact with the brand.
- Branding wet cattle increases the risk of scalding them.

Ensuring dry conditions is especially important when using an electric branding iron. Do not stand in, or allow the animal being branded to stand in, water or mud.

**It is wildfire season already, so if you are working with hot brands, have a means of fire suppression readily available and a plan in place.**

Safe work practices:

- Have a pre-job meeting with everyone who will be involved; ensure they are aware of the hazards, and are trained for what their role is in the process.
- Keep the branding iron in a safe place where it will not be knocked down or accidentally contacted.
- Work the animals calmly; avoid startling, spooking or exciting the animals.
- Keep a barrier between yourself and the animal where ever possible.
- Remain alert and watch the animal(s) being worked; look for signs of aggression and fear.
- If you identify an animal displaying dangerous or concerning behaviour, you may have to come up with a plan for how to handle that particular animal. Record its tag number should it need to be culled.



## Farmers Care motor vehicles video

[Watch Here](#)



## TAKE 11

*Reacquaint yourself with the fundamentals of farm safety!*

*Visit **Take11.ca** a campaign designed to help you make your farm safer in only minutes a day!*



## SAFETY FIRST, LAST THOUGHTS

Take care out there

A final reminder as we head into busy season – as a farm/ranch owner, YOU are responsible for the safety of everyone on your farm. As you welcome staff and workers onto the farm to help during the busy season, make sure you have safety information and refreshers ready for them. Ensure everyone knows how to operate equipment safely and knows your farm's safety plan and protocols.

[Browse our resources here](#)





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