



# Farm Safety Action Plan



**April 2014-March 2017**  
Taking the next steps to safer farms





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## Foreword

Farming is a vital part of the Northern Ireland economy providing employment to nearly 47,800 people across 24,500 farms. (DARD June 2013 Census)<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately this sector has consistently held a poor safety record with figures showing 67 work-related fatalities in the last 10 years (2004-2013); five of these were children under 11 years old. This represents a disproportionate number of deaths, across all age groups, compared to all other industries.

The Farm Safety Partnership was launched in May 2012 by Ministers Foster and O'Neill. It brings together key stakeholders with an interest in farm safety in Northern Ireland (See Appendix 1).

Since its formation, the Partnership has been working tirelessly to combine resources and work closely with the farming community to develop a culture of safety-first on local farms. Its core aim is to drive up

health and safety standards and significantly reduce work-related deaths, injuries and illnesses on farms.

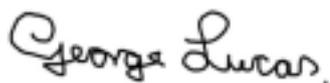
All of the members are committed to promoting key farm safe messages and to continue to do all they can to inform, influence, coerce, enforce, motivate and advise rural communities. However, the Partnership recognises that the real power to make a difference to the terrible safety record ultimately lies with farmers themselves.

The most recent research shows that a growing number of stakeholders are saying that accidents are not inevitable; they are avoidable. This is encouraging evidence of a welcome change in perception. However, whilst improvements have been made to promote the farm safe message, more work is needed to ensure that farmers do not make the decision to take an uncalculated risk but rather "Stop and think SAFE." Therefore it is vital that all partners work together to sustain a safe environment for farming communities to live, work and play.

<sup>1</sup> FDARD June 2013 Census



As Chairman of the Farm Safety Partnership, I am pleased to introduce this Action Plan and call upon all stakeholders with a direct or indirect link to farmers and farming families to do whatever they can to contribute to the overall aim of the Partnership



**George Lucas, Chairman of the Farm Safety Partnership**

Since the Farm Safety Partnership was officially launched in May 2012, all partners have been working tirelessly to give advice and guidance to farmers which has helped them take the effective steps to improving safety on their farms. More and more farmers are beginning to recognise that accidents on farm are preventable and that even simple, practical and inexpensive measures can make a huge difference. However, more work needs to be done to keep farm safety at the forefront of everyone's mind every day. We all need to make farm safety a priority if we are to put a stop to farm accidents and fatalities and the terrible heartache they cause to farm families.



**Harry Sinclair, President, Ulster Farmers' Union**





## Introduction

The Farm Safety Partnership was established in May 2012 specifically to address the poor record of health and safety within the agriculture industry in Northern Ireland as exemplified by the unacceptable numbers of farmers losing their lives as a result of workplace accidents over recent years.

The Partnership produced its first Action Plan to cover the period from November 2012 to March 2014. It worked to change perceptions and create awareness of the importance of farm safety practices within rural communities.

As part of the continuous development work of the Partnership, this further Action Plan covering April 2014 - March 2017 is intended to reflect both the current and ongoing efforts of all the partners. In addition, it will identify new areas for action over the period of the Action Plan to ensure a sustainable foundation for a safety-first culture.

Throughout the course of this Action Plan, we will continue to highlight the four key dangers - Slurry, Animals, Falls and Equipment (SAFE) and promote the need for farmers and their families to stay vigilant. We will continue to change long held perceptions and advocate best practice procedures across both organisations and individuals within the farming community.

In doing so, the Partnership recognises that there are no “quick fixes” available to address what has proved to be such an intractable subject in many countries the world over.

## Progress on ‘2012-14 Action Plan’

Since its launch in 2012, the Partnership has worked to deliver on all 42 actions listed in the Action Plan. Successful completion of 39 actions was noted whilst the three remaining actions have been transferred to the new Action Plan as they remain in developmental stages.

### **Some of the key actions have included;**

- The development and airing of the ‘Stop and Think Safe Media’ campaign on television, radio and in the press. Campaign analysis has indicated that 96% of the farmers sampled have seen the campaign. An encouraging change in perceptions was noted with 93% of respondents stating that they identified with the content and aimed to change daily practice as a result. However, further work is needed to create a tangible shift in behaviour across the agricultural industry.



- Over 2000 farmers have received advisory visits by HSENI Inspectors which have focused on highlighting the key risks observed on their farms and the practical measures which can be taken to manage the risks.
- Farm Safety presentations have been held in 90 rural primary schools for key stage 1 and 2 children during 2013 and 38,500 farm safety calendars were distributed to children in rural primary schools in the autumn of 2013. The calendar comprised of the winning entries from the primary school poster competition held earlier in 2013.
- DARD has developed a suite of training materials designed to improve standards of health and safety, which have been deployed in a number of areas.
- Over 3,000 farmers have attended the Focused Farm Safety Events run by DARD. Farmers who have attended this training have responded very positively about the benefits of learning about farm safety from farmers who are actively involved in farming safely.
- Since November 2012, CAFRE have held 1,027 events attended by over 17,500 farmers. In addition to the main topic of the event, farm safety material has also been made available.



- All CAFRE education courses contain a high level of farm safety and in addition, since the introduction of the Farm Safety Partnership, all students completing their work experience on farms, receive a specific Farm Safety Pack containing key safety messages for them to adopt.
- Over the three Tranches of the Farm Modernisation Programme, DARD has provided some £4.6m of financial support for items that promote safer working on farms.



## Facts and Figures

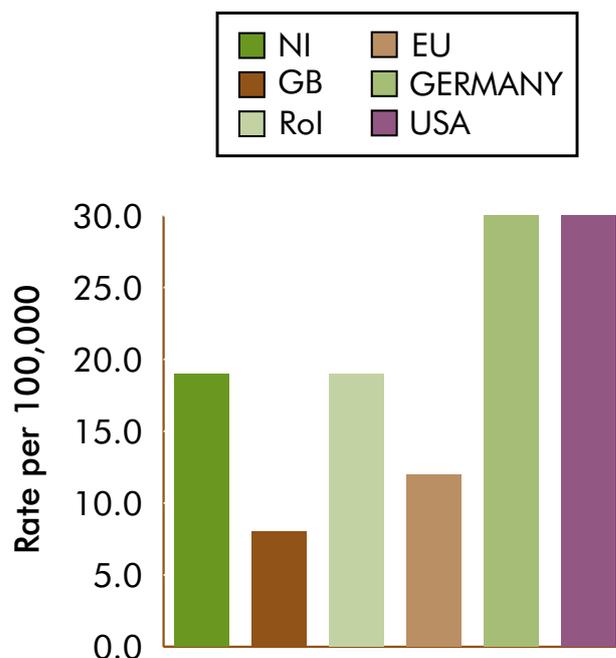
Farming remains a vital part of the Northern Ireland economy providing employment to nearly 47,800 people across 24,500 farms. 55% of farmers work their farms on a full-time basis, while the remainder seek employment outside the farm to supplement income.

Unfortunately, the sector has a poor safety record with 29 work-related fatalities between January 2009 and December 2012. This represents a disproportionate number of deaths compared to other industries. In the same period there were eight work-related fatalities in the manufacturing sector, six in construction and eight in other work sectors employing significantly more people. Therefore in that four-year period, the agricultural industry accounted for 57% of work-related fatalities in Northern Ireland.

In 2013, there were four deaths which was a significant improvement on the previous two years, however it is clear that continued effort is required to further improve the situation and prevent any further tragic deaths in the industry.

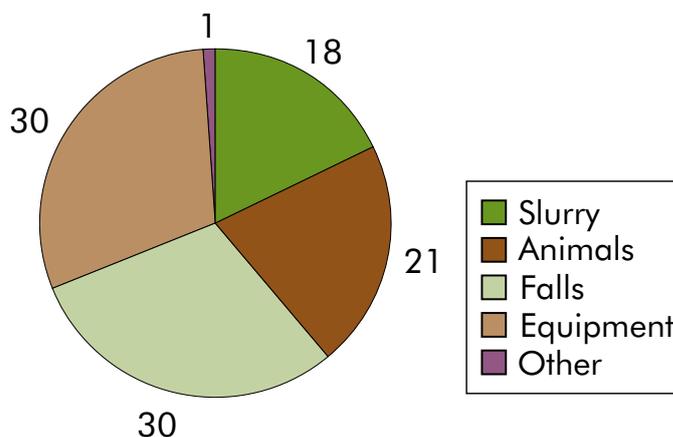
As noted at the launch of the first Action Plan, the poor safety record of the agriculture sector is not unique to Northern Ireland and in some respects Northern Ireland performs better than some other countries. Recent figures show Northern Ireland to have similar levels of fatalities within the farming industry to RoI. When compared to GB, Northern Ireland has regrettably more fatalities but better figures than Germany and the USA. However, all partners agree that the figures are still too high.

Fatal Accident Rate (five-year average by country)



However, Northern Ireland's Fatal Accident Incidence Rate has been increasing dramatically in recent years, reaching a peak in 2011/12 at 25.45 per 100,000 workers.

Analysis of incidents since January 2009 has shown that fatal accident causation remains linked to four main issues namely, animals (21%), falls (30%) equipment (30%), and slurry (18%).



## Aims and Objectives

It is the firm belief of the Farm Safety Partnership that by working together, a sustainable reduction in injury rates in the Northern Ireland Farming Industry is achievable.

The aim of this plan is **“To influence future behaviour so that farmers, their families and their employees are capable, motivated and able to work safely to reduce accidents on farms”**.

- Capability relates to an individual’s capacity to work safely in terms of knowledge and skills.
- Motivation, the processes that energize and direct safe behaviours are also critical to good decision making and includes habits and emotional responses, as well as analytical decision-making.

- Ability relates to the factors that lie outside the individual’s control that make the behaviour possible or prompt it, for example, having suitable equipment, infrastructure or appropriate societal expectations.

This Action Plan is designed with a series of interventions, each of which addresses one or more of these requirements.

Building on the progress made in the first Action Plan the Partnership has identified four key areas of work below. Three are continuations from the previous plan with the addition of ‘Assistance and Enablement’. The aims and objectives of the groups remain broadly similar to those set out in the first Action Plan.





## **Key Area 1: Provision of Information and Promotion of Safe Working**

Objective 1: To ensure that straightforward, appropriate information is produced in ways that are understandable, easily accessible and deemed to influence the farming community.

Objective 2: To ensure that information is effectively communicated through a wide range of channels with the aim that every person involved with farms and farming is made aware of the key risks and how to reduce/remove these risks.

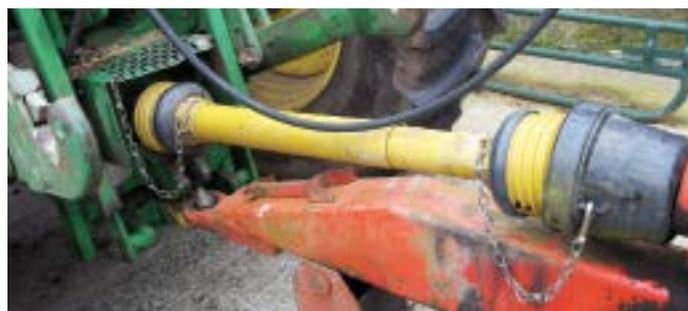
Objective 3: To ensure that there is a clear understanding that:

- accidents and ill health are avoidable;
- there are positive benefits from the proper management of health and safety on farms; and
- there are negative consequences for poor health and safety management and practices.

## **Key Area 2: Training and Education**

Objective 4: To ensure that appropriate, specific and accessible health and safety training is designed, provided and reviewed to meet the needs of the farming community.

Objective 5: To promote the inclusion of relevant health and safety messages in other agricultural training and educational activities.



## **Key Area 3: Motivating Good Practice and Discouraging Poor Practice**

Objective 6: To ensure that, where possible, good health and safety management and practices are incentivised.

Objective 7: To ensure that poor practice is not rewarded and is penalised where appropriate.

## **Key Area 4: Assistance & Enablement**

Objective 8: To provide access to support and services which will assist and encourage safe working on farms.

Objective 9: To encourage the wider community to promote and facilitate farm safety.

## Action Plan

### Key Area 1: Provision of Information and Promotion of Safe Working

Ref	Action	Targets
1.1	Continue and expand upon the farm safe <b>Information and Promotion Programme</b> through advertising, media, events and other communication channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a sustainable approach to the use of advertising, media, promotions and events to maintain high recognition levels for Farm Safety messages.</li> <li>• Reach minimum-60% of identified target audience through multimedia channels. Issue media releases and articles to inform of relevant safety messages at key times of the year.</li> <li>• Further develop digital media channels - Explore possibilities of further organisations carrying clear link to HSENI 'Stay farm safe' website.</li> <li>• Publish farm safety messages via social networking channels, develop existing and new network opportunities to promote events and strategic messages at key times of the year.</li> <li>• Capitalise on existing and new "one-to-many" contact opportunities through continued promotion of farm safe messages through the annual programme of events in the farming calendar.</li> <li>• Research, identify and engage with key political, corporate and strategic stakeholders.</li> </ul>
1.2	Develop and deploy ' <b>Spread the Message</b> ' pack and training to increase the coverage of Farm Safety through talks and events by increasing availability of speakers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train and equip 18 ambassadors by September 2014.</li> <li>• Deliver 180 talks and presentations by the end of the Action Plan.</li> <li>• Publish and distribute 10,000 farm safety packs.</li> </ul>



Ref	Action	Targets
1.3	Deliver a series of seasonally relevant <b>'Farm Safety Spotlight Weeks'</b> to capitalise on existing 'one-to-many' contact opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Run nine Farm Safety Spotlight Weeks by the end of the Action Plan.</li><li>• Develop and participate in an International Farm Safety Week by the end of the Action Plan.</li></ul>
1.4	Develop, with the assistance of farmers, a suite of <b>Visual Safety Guides</b> demonstrating safe working methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and publish six 'Visual Guides' on key farm safety issues by the end of the Action Plan.</li></ul>
1.5	Develop a Farm Safety <b>'Nudge Programme'</b> <sup>2</sup> and integrate within a Farm Safe Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and implement a programme to identify and utilise nudges to influence safe farm behaviours over the term of the Action Plan.</li></ul>

<sup>2</sup> A 'nudge' is a feature of a person's context that encourages them to behave in a predictable way. In the context of health and safety, nudges can potentially be designed to increase the likelihood that a safe course of action is chosen over other options.



## Key Area 2: Health and Safety Training

Ref	Action	Targets
2.1	Continue to deliver and further develop a <b>Farm Safety Awareness Programme</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,500 persons per year attending or completing on-line Farm Safety Awareness sessions.</li> <li>• That over 75% of farmers attending courses have indicated that they are more aware of the risks presented and subsequently plan to change work practices and behaviours.</li> <li>• To conduct six Safety and Health Awareness events regionally by March 2017.</li> </ul>
2.2	Continue to deliver and further develop the <b>Child Safety on Farms Programme</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct 240 Primary School Farm Safety Presentations by March 2017.</li> <li>• Attend 15 Be Safe or equivalent<sup>3</sup> Child Safety events, delivering key Farm Safety Messages by the end of the plan.</li> <li>• Run three Farm Safety Calendar Competitions and publish three Farm Safety Calendars, one in each of the three years of the programme with appropriate partners.</li> <li>• Explore potential avenues to deliver key farm safety messages to key stage 1 - 4 pupils and where possible engage all viable opportunities to deliver the messages.</li> </ul>
2.3	Identify, develop and promote a suite of <b>Accredited Farm Safety Training</b> programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a Farming Sector training needs analysis by December 2014.</li> <li>• Identify accredited training opportunities and promote and publicise during the period of the Action Plan.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Dependent on available events.





## Key Area 3: Motivating Good Practice and Discouraging Poor Practice

Ref	Action	Target
3.1	To develop and deploy a simple resource (' <b>Making it Safer</b> ') to allow farmers to risk assess their farms and identify simple solutions to manage risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To develop and deploy an online and paper-based risk management tool by March 2015.</li></ul>
3.2	Develop and deliver a <b>Farm Safe Awareness Programme</b> to farm ' <b>Development Groups</b> ' to encourage co-operation sharing and knowledge transfer between small groups of farmers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To deliver Farm Safety Awareness to all participating Development Groups by 2017.</li></ul>
3.3	Identify and utilise ' <b>Farm Safety Champions</b> ' to promote and encourage good farm safety management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify three Farm Safety Champions by September 2014.</li><li>• Ensure that Farm Safety Champions have adequate training, published materials and ongoing support to effectively communicate the Farm SAFE message to the farming community.</li><li>• Create a range of opportunities for Farm Safety Champions to speak publicly.</li></ul>
3.4	Develop and Implement a <b>Farm Safety Awards Scheme</b> to recognise excellence, good practice and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop an award scheme with the first awards being presented before October 2015.</li></ul>
3.5	To continue to conduct a series of ' <b>Advisory Inspections</b> ' on the key SAFE message or targeting specific risks to farm businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver 3,000 farm advisory visits by the end of the Action Plan.</li></ul>
3.6	To develop a suite of agreed positive and negative <b>incentivisation options</b> which can be employed to progress key aspects of farm safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By July 2014, agree a suite of incentivisation options between Partners which can be used to promote, encourage and ensure appropriate health and safety management on Northern Ireland farms.</li></ul>

## Key Area 4: Assistance & Enablement

Ref	Action	Target
4.1	Promoting safety through <b>Grants</b> by implementing a system to ensure that safety is a key cross-cutting component of Rural Development Programme grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By January 2015, design in safety as part of agreed grant award criteria for farm schemes under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.</li> </ul>
4.2	Develop and implement an ' <b>Advice &amp; Support Scheme</b> ' to provide a suite of easily accessible advice and support services to assist farmers to properly manage health and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By January 2015, identify key advice sources and explore providing a 'one-stop-shop' to provide a range of advisory services.</li> </ul>
4.3	Develop an <b>Affiliate Scheme</b> to encourage businesses and organisations to support the aims of the Farm Safety Partnership in Northern Ireland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By June 2015, launch a Farm Safety Partnership Affiliate Scheme.</li> </ul>





## Implementation and Monitoring

The FSP Steering Group made up of senior representatives from each of the partners will continue to provide strategic leadership for the Partnership and FSP action teams, monitor the implementation of the Farm Safety Action Plan, review the effectiveness of the plan and make recommendations for future work.

Reporting to the Steering Group, the action will monitor the delivery of the actions within the four key areas and continue to act as a conduit to ensure sharing of information and, where appropriate, resources, and to co-ordinate activity. The teams will be made up of appropriately experienced staff from each of the partners and, where necessary, other persons with relevant skills and expertise seconded unto the team. The action teams will also identify issues or opportunities around the delivery of the actions and produce plans to address issues and capitalise on opportunities.

Based on structures put in place to oversee the successful delivery of the previous Action Plan, the Farm Safety Partnership (FSP) Steering Group has modified the remit of the delivery teams to manage the new Action Plan, as detailed below.

### Research & Data Gathering

There will be an ongoing need for research and data gathering in a range of areas to assist the Partnership to develop, implement and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and programmes. Research on specific areas of work or issues will be commissioned as required by the Partnership based on need and available resource. This will be co-ordinated by HSENI with assistance from all partners under the oversight of the FSP Steering Group.

There will also be a need to repeat the Farm Safety Survey, which was run in early 2014, in the final year of the new Action Plan to assess the effectiveness of the interventions and identify future needs.



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## Appendix 1: Membership of the Farm Safety Partnership

The members of the Partnership at the time of the publication of this Action Plan are as follows:

- Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI)
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)
- Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU)
- National Farmers' Union Mutual (NFUM)
- Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU)
- Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association (NIAPA)



## Contact Details

### **Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)**

Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Ballymiscaw  
Belfast  
BT4 3SB

Helpline: 0300 200 7852  
Web: [www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk)

### **Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU)**

475 Antrim Road  
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BT15 3DA

Tel: 028 9037 0222  
Web: [www.ufuni.org](http://www.ufuni.org)

### **Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI)**

83 Ladas Drive  
Belfast  
BT6 9FR

Tel: 028 9024 3249  
Helpline: 0800 0320 121  
Web: [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)

### **NFU Mutual (NFUM)**

Harvester House  
4-8 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 86E

Tel: 029 9081 8604  
Web: [www.nfumutual.co.uk](http://www.nfumutual.co.uk)

### **Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU)**

475 Antrim Road  
Belfast  
BT15 3BD

Tel: 028 9037 0713  
Web: [www.yfcu.org](http://www.yfcu.org)

### **Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association (NIAPA)**

15 Molesworth Street  
Cookstown  
Tyrone  
BT80 8NX

Tel: 028 8676 5700  
Web: [www.niapa.webs.com](http://www.niapa.webs.com)

## Current Press Advertising Campaign:

**BEFORE YOU MIX SLURRY,  
STOP AND THINK!**

Remove all stock, open all doors  
and stay out for at least 30 minutes  
after mixing starts.



**STOP AND THINK  
SAFE**

SLURRY ANIMALS FALLS EQUIPMENT

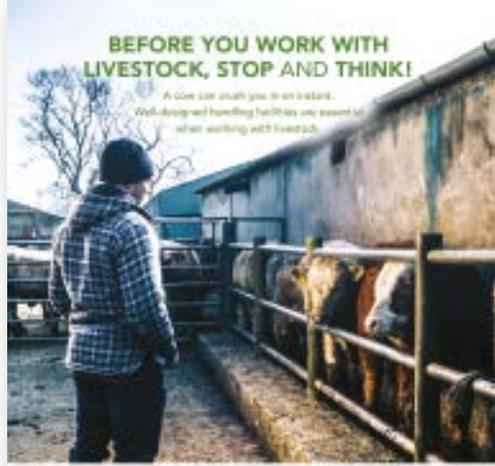
For more advice on farm safety,  
visit [hse.gov.uk/farmsafe](http://hse.gov.uk/farmsafe)

**hserni**

Health and Safety Executive  
Department for Work and Pensions

**BEFORE YOU WORK WITH  
LIVESTOCK, STOP AND THINK!**

A cow can crush you in an instant.  
Well-designed handling facilities are essential  
when working with livestock.



**STOP AND THINK  
SAFE**

SLURRY ANIMALS FALLS EQUIPMENT

For more advice on farm safety,  
visit [hse.gov.uk/farmsafe](http://hse.gov.uk/farmsafe)

**hserni**

Health and Safety Executive  
Department for Work and Pensions

**BEFORE YOU WORK AT HEIGHT,  
STOP AND THINK!**

You can fall off or through the roof of a building.  
Always use the correct equipment when carrying out roof work.



**STOP AND THINK  
SAFE**

SLURRY ANIMALS FALLS EQUIPMENT

For more advice on farm safety,  
visit [hse.gov.uk/farmsafe](http://hse.gov.uk/farmsafe)

**hserni**

Health and Safety Executive  
Department for Work and Pensions

**BEFORE YOU WORK WITH  
MACHINERY, STOP AND THINK!**

Broken, damaged or badly fitting guards  
can be just as dangerous as no guard at all.



**STOP AND THINK  
SAFE**

SLURRY ANIMALS FALLS EQUIPMENT

For more advice on farm safety,  
visit [hse.gov.uk/farmsafe](http://hse.gov.uk/farmsafe)

**hserni**

Health and Safety Executive  
Department for Work and Pensions



## Notes

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## Notes

# Adult and Child Fatalities from 2000-2014



Adult



Child

2000-2001	
2001-2002	
2002-2003	
2003-2004	
2004-2005	
2005-2006	
2006-2007	
2007-2008	
2008-2009	
2009-2010	
2010-2011	
2011-2012	
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2014-2015	

