



Farmsafe

AUSTRALIA

Media Release – Farmsafe Australia’s Inaugural Safer Farms Report

Farmsafe Australia has released their inaugural Safer Farms 2020 Agricultural Injury and Fatality Trend Report.

As part of Farmsafe Australia’s \$1.9M revitalisation project, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, the Safer Farms Report kickstarts a new era of farm safety education and awareness campaigns from the national body.

With the tagline ‘Safer Farms, Safer Farmers’, the report highlights injury and fatality trends over the last 18 months, as well as provides a 10-year comparison of the statistics. A snapshot of the common agents of injury and fatality is also included, and it is no surprise that quad bikes top the results.

Chair of Farmsafe Australia, Charles Armstrong, has been advocating for quad bike reform for many years, noting that quad bike fatalities are no longer an emerging trend, but a consistent issue. “I have spent much of my advocacy career lobbying for mandatory crush protection devices due to the alarming rate of injuries and fatalities that were occurring on farm.” Mr Armstrong explains, “In the report, we point to 9 quad bike deaths in the last six months but since writing, the number has risen to 12. That is higher than 2019 and we are only halfway through 2020.”

The ACCC has recently mandated the fitting of OPDs to all new quad bikes and directly imported second-hand quad bikes. The new standard comes into effect on 11 October 2021.

The Safer Farms Report highlights other areas of concern such as the prevalence of fatalities involving males over the age of 50 and children under the age of 15. The report also provides insight into the difficulties related to making farms safe and addresses the need for a shift in the safety messaging to address established cultural farm behaviours. Farmsafe Australia will be considering these trends in future campaigns and is committed to increasing their communications.

New Executive Officer, Stevi Howdle, is passionate about reshaping the message and the way it is delivered. “We need to make good on our founding commitment to making Australian farms safer places to live and work,” she says, “We need to communicate directly with our farmers about safety and we need to be consistent about the messaging we are putting forward.”

“We have a lot of work ahead of us,” says Mr Armstrong, “but the new Farmsafe Australia is up to the challenge.”