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## AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Down on the farm: Don't let children fall victim to injuries

Whether your family lives on a farm or you are just visiting, spending time on farms can be a wonderful opportunity for children to meet animals and learn about agriculture. But the animals and heavy equipment also can be dangerous. It is important for you to learn about and follow precautions to keep your children safe on farms.

Studies show that agricultural injuries tend to be more serious than other kinds of injuries. In fact, farming is one of the most dangerous activities in the country for adolescent workers.

One study reports that 26,655 agricultural injuries occur every year among youths up to age 19 in the United States. In addition, 503 children died from farming accidents between 2001 and 2006, according to the journal *Pediatrics*.

While the number of agricultural injuries in the United States has been going down, injuries associated with all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and horses are rising. Most farm injuries are not work-related.

To protect your children from agricultural injuries, follow these safety precautions from the American Academy of Pediatrics and other organizations:

- Keep children away from dangerous equipment and water hazards by fencing in play areas.
- Make sure children know what areas of the farm are unsafe.
- Check equipment regularly to ensure safety features are working properly.
- Do not allow extra riders on tractors, mowers or ATVs.



- Never let children play on equipment, even with adult supervision.
- Do not let children younger than 16 years of age operate farm vehicles. Allow youths ages 16 to 18 years to operate farm vehicles on public roads only if they have a motor vehicle license and are graduates of a state-approved tractor and farm vehicle safety training program.
- Make sure seat belts are always used on tractors.
- Limit young children's access to large animals.
- Teach children not to run or speak loudly around animals.
- Make sure children wear equestrian helmets while riding horses.
- Encourage children to ask for help when they encounter problems.

— Hilary Rasch

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