

Reminder for farmers to keep visitors safe this summer

Britain's workplace regulator, is calling on farmers to do all they can to make sure those visiting their farms are kept safe and healthy.

It is the time of year when some farmers consider hosting "open farm" events, perhaps as part of [Open Farm Sunday](#), happening on Sunday 9 June 2024. Open farm events allow members of the public to visit participating farms and witness farming first hand.

Both visitors and farmers can find these open days informative, engaging and rewarding, however farmers also have a legal duty to make sure visitors are kept safe and well.

Wayne Owen, an inspector from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) says many of the measures farmers must put in place are easy to apply.

"Events like Open Farm Sunday provide the chance for the public to get an insight into this really important industry," he said.

"However, it is important that farmers understand the risks on their farm and ensure that visitors are protected from them.

"As well as safety risks from things such as moving vehicles and animals, there are also potential health risks that the farmers will need to control.

"By following some simple steps, both farmers and the public can get as much out of these visits as possible."

In a bid to assist in identifying and controlling risks to visitors, the Access to Farms industry group has produced an [Industry Code of Practice](#) (ICOP) which is available to download free from the [Access To Farms](#) website. As well as guidance on how to control risk, the ICOP includes a useful checklist for farmers to use. There is also a shorter summary guide, and a guide for schools planning to take pupils to farm events.

HSE was consulted in the production of the ICOP. It provides sensible, proportionate and balanced advice to farms on how to comply with health and safety law and keep visitors safe and well.

Key components of a well-managed open farm event include:

- Making sure the event is risk assessed and well planned.
- Ensuring that the farm and farm staff understand the risks on site, including zoonotic risk (i.e. risks from diseases or bugs carried by animals).
- Providing visitors with enough information on the risks and the controls in place (e.g. the importance of properly washing hands after touching animals, before eating or drinking, and before leaving site).

- Controlling visitor access to animals.
- Supervising visitor contact with animals. Providing separate clean areas for petting of animals. Preventing visitors going into the pens with animals.
- Providing suitable facilities for washing hands (normally this will be hot and cold water, liquid soap and paper towels) and directing visitors to use them after petting animals, before eating food, before and after using any play equipment, and before leaving site.
- Hand washing gels are not an acceptable substitute for washing facilities.
- If visitors are allowed to consume food or drink on site, providing separate clean eating areas, near hand washing facilities.
- Good prominent signage on site giving important information to visitors (but don't rely on signage alone to give those important messages).
- Ensuring that visitors are not exposed to other risks on the farm e.g. by fencing off high risk areas or activities and keeping people away from traffic routes and moving vehicles.

By following these principles farms can hold safe and enjoyable open farm events.

Notes to Editors:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.
2. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.