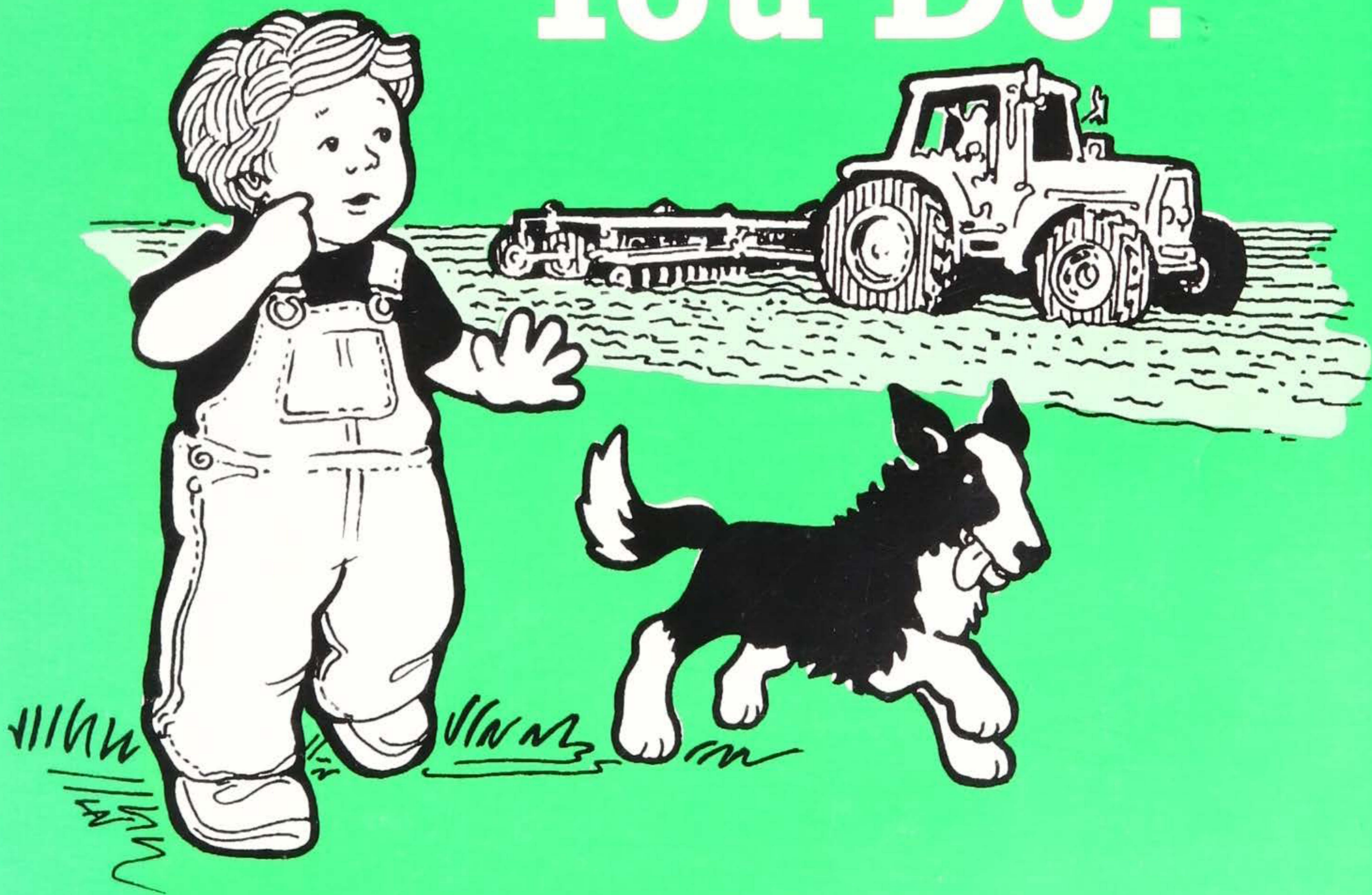


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Helping Children Understand Farm Hazards

# What Would You Do?



By Charles Schwab, Laura Miller, and Lynn Graham  
Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal



# What Would You Do?

**Helping Children Understand Farm Hazards**

A discussion guide for parents and  
their preschool and early elementary children  
to help them talk about farm dangers

By Charles Schwab, Laura Miller, and Lynn Graham  
Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal

What Would You Do? Helping Children Understand Farm Hazards  
By Charles Schwab, Laura Miller, and Lynn Graham with illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal

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# Table of Contents

<b>Farm Safety and Being Your Child's First Teacher</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How to Use This Book</b>	<b>14</b>
 <b>Chapter 1 : Animals and Livestock</b> (Understanding livestock, danger signals, wild animals)	<b>15</b>
 <b>Chapter 2: Electricity, Chemicals, and Other Farmstead Hazards</b> (Setting limits—safe places to play, safe things to drink and eat; dangerous places to avoid)	<b>25</b>
 <b>Chapter 3: Emergencies</b> (Calling 911 and following family emergency plans)	<b>43</b>
 <b>Chapter 4: Grain</b> (Staying away from grain wagons, piles of grain, bins, and ladders)	<b>53</b>
 <b>Chapter 5: Lawnmowers, ATVs, and Farm Machinery</b> (Being safe around lawnmowers, work areas, PTOs, ATVs)	<b>61</b>
 <b>Chapter 6: Tractors</b> (Saying “no” to tractor rides and safe ways to satisfy curiosity)	<b>73</b>
<b>Where to Go from Here</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Other Resources</b>	<b>83</b>

## Farm Safety and Being Your Child's First Teacher

*What Would You Do?* presents an engaging way for parents to talk to their children—even very young children—about potentially dangerous situations on a farm. We all know that farms are full of dangers. It would be impossible to “child-proof” your entire farmstead! But you can teach children about their environment, and how to spot and avoid situations that could result in harm.

A set of thoughtful and strictly enforced family rules, such as “No riders on tractors,” also can reduce a child’s risks on the farm. But rules can’t

cover all situations. It helps for children to discuss a problem in a safe setting—the living room, van, or at the dinner table—and hear a parent’s warnings and explanations.

### **Using “what would you do?”**

One way to talk about farm dangers is to engage in a “what would you do” exercise. This activity includes a real-life situation followed by the question, “What would you do?” Parents can adapt the situation to their farm, listen to their child’s answer, then reinforce important things to remember.

### **Farm safety for young children: A serious concern**

For children ages five to 14 years, unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death, accounting for 41 percent of the 8,330 total deaths in 1996. No central registry of farm injuries to children exists in the United States, but safety experts estimate that more than 100 children die and almost 22,000 are seriously injured each year. More than one-third of these deaths involve farm machinery, with the highest rate among children ages five to nine years of age.

### **The goals of this book**

*What Would You Do?* offers an excellent opportunity for parent-child interaction on some very important issues. This book covers a lot of topics, but parents are the best judge of how much information their child can understand, discuss, and remember. Parents also may not have time to discuss everything in every situation in this book, but that's OK. Each discussion, each activity brings families one step closer to safer living.

The "what would you do" scenarios are designed for children four to eight years old, an age when children are

beginning to explore their surroundings on their own. Scenarios are divided into six chapters, each focusing on different types of farm dangers. These dangers were chosen after reviewing the ways in which children from this age group are hurt or killed on farms.

### **About the scenarios**

The situations in this book are based on the characteristics of children ages four to eight years. The situations are not meant to be frightening, although some deal with life-threatening situations. While some children at this age become worried or afraid at any mention of danger, other children take lots of risks.



Chapter 1: Animals and Livestock



Chapter 2: Electricity, Chemicals, and  
Other Farmstead Hazards



Chapter 3: Emergencies



Chapter 4: Grain



Chapter 5: Lawnmowers, ATVs, and Farm Machinery



Chapter 6: Tractors

It is up to parents to decide which situations may cause their child to worry or become preoccupied. The scenarios are not meant to cause undue anxiety but to prevent risky behavior that leads to injury.

This book also uses situations that are very specific. Children in this age group cannot generalize from one situation to another, so discussing many situations will better prepare them to make good decisions. Notes with each scenario encourage parents to adapt the situation to their farm but to keep the discussion simple. The child should be able to relate each scenario to one family rule.

These situations often depict adults other than parents. Relatives or family friends may not have the same ideas about farm safety, or understand young children, and can unknowingly place your child in risky situations. These scenarios prepare your child to follow

The illustrations in this book show people doing things in safe as well as unsafe ways, or show unsafe conditions that may exist on a farm. Parents should use these details to talk about safety issues.

family rules, even when tempted to do otherwise.

Some of the situations place children in less-than-ideal circumstances. Children under age eight should not have the run of the farm, but they do explore so they may find themselves in areas that are off-limits. The intent is not to condone dangerous situations—like having unlocked pesticide storage areas, for example—but to recognize that oversights can and do occur, and that children need to know how to deal with them.





### **A closer look at this book**

Before you share this book with your child, we suggest that you review the rest of this chapter, especially “About Your Child” and “More on Farm Safety.” It also helps to understand how the book is organized to provide the information where you need it.

- **Chapter overviews for parents**

Read this section before you sit down with your child. The overviews have more information about each farm danger, especially as it relates to children four to eight years of age.

- **“What would you do” scenarios**

Each scenario has an illustration that tells a story. On the page opposite the picture are questions for children in large print and paragraphs for parents. Each scenario also has an “On My Farm” section for children who are able to print (or parents) to record their own family rules after discussing the “what would you do” situation.

- **Pointers for parents**

This section offers ways that parents can make the farm safer for family members and themselves. Look for this section in each chapter overview.

- **Family follow-up activities**

These are listed on the last page of each chapter. We encourage you to do the activities, keep this book handy, and refer to it often when you go over family rules. Children may enjoy devising their own scenarios in blank pages at the back of the book.

This book is not intended to be read in one sitting. Children in this age group enjoy “chapter” books, so discussion can take place one chapter at a time. This is an activity that parents can do regularly with their child, and talk about situations more than once. The material also can be adapted to each family’s needs. Families who raise livestock may want to focus on Chapter 1, for example.

We know that *What Would You Do?* can never replace age-appropriate supervision of children on farms. We also know that each child is different, and what may help one child may not help another. But we believe that all children have a right to a safe environment where they can learn, grow, play, and live. With that hope, we offer this resource.

*Charles Schwab  
Laura Miller  
Lynn Graham*

### **Ashley's story**

For a three-year-old, 10 minutes is a long time. Ashley was riding in a tractor cab with her father one warm afternoon while he finished some spring fieldwork. But Ashley was hot and ready to go home. "Just one more round," Ashley's father answered. But before he realized what was happening, the preschooler unlatched the door, fell out of the cab, and was caught under the back wheel.

Dave Lerch thinks his daughter was just trying to open a window, but her action cost Ashley the use of her legs. Both realize that tractor cabs are no place for riders; they also know how quickly things happen that can change lives.

Ashley uses a wheelchair, loves music, and wants to be a chemical engineer. She's still very interested in farm safety.



*Ashley Lerch  
Martelle,  
Iowa*

### **About Your Child**

No two children are alike. Each child grows physically, intellectually, and emotionally at his or her pace. A child's development also can be influenced in many ways. The key to creating a safe environment, however, is understanding basic developmental stages and where your child fits.

All parents are anxious for their child to develop and grow, whether taking that first step or driving a tractor. Although we want them to be responsible and mature, children under age eight have many limitations. They've learned so much since they were born, and may seem capable, but still are dependent on adults in many ways. As parents and guardians, we must remember that children also are anxious to please us.

Children under age eight want to do "adult-like" activities, but they aren't ready for adult responsibilities. We cannot rely on children in this age group to make good judgments.

This guide is designed for preschool and early elementary children, from the age of four years until they reach the age of about eight years. Development of preschool and early elementary-age children may be best viewed in two groups—those who are four and five years old, and those who are six and seven years old.

## About four- and five-year-olds

**They are adventurous.** Physically, they are great at running and climbing, and seeking out challenges. While a sense of adventure is a wonderful quality, it may cause them to make poor judgments and get too close to livestock or machinery, or explore abandoned buildings or pesticide storage areas.

**They are curious.** Four-year-olds like to experiment with water, mud, and grain. Five-year-olds want to know what things are, how they are used, and how they work.



**They are keen observers.** They pay attention and observe things closely. They watch adults to learn how to work locks or operate machinery. They like to do adult tasks, either pretending or actually doing.

**They often make poor decisions.** They have only a vague understanding of qualitative terms (most, some, few) and rely instead on perceptions and how things seem. Their decisions are intuitive rather than logical. An example would be asking a child to give the calf some feed, and the child fills the trough to overflowing.

**They want to be independent.** As they approach their sixth birthday, children are friendly and seek adult companionship. They like to help, and may offer to do tasks they cannot handle. Many times they appear overconfident, which can get them into unexpected and potentially dangerous situations.

**They have trouble with rules.** By age four, most children can follow a simple rule, provided it isn't too challenging to their self-control. On the other hand, they often cannot repeat what is said to them and cannot follow more than two or three directions at a time.

## **About six- and seven-year-olds**

**Their thinking changes.** They begin to manipulate ideas mentally. Seven-year-olds can be daydreamers, seesawing between fantasy and reality. They often are preoccupied, which causes them to not hear what is said to them (including instructions).

**They look at things differently.** They have limited depth perception but usually know the difference between left and right. However, they're often confused so judgments are still poor. They also cannot gauge the distance or speed of tractors and moving vehicles.

**They are becoming independent.** They may begin to question or rebel

against authority. They can manipulate rules to their advantage, conveniently "forgetting" a rule, or brazenly disobeying it. Six-year-olds are still self-centered and want to do things immediately if not sooner.

**They may begin to doubt abilities.** As they approach eight years, children often worry, sulk, and are pensive, wishing they were older, independent, strong, and brave. To "prove" themselves, they may take on tasks for which they are not ready.

**They begin to look at peers.** They want to do what everyone else is doing, so they easily can be tempted by friends or brothers and sisters to go beyond safe boundaries or break rules.

## **Farm dangers for preschoolers and early elementary children**

- Helping with chores
- Being a rider on tractors and machinery
- Playing with or near animals, and taking care of livestock alone
- Investigating farm buildings on their own or exploring grain storage areas
- Climbing on improperly stored tractor tires, ladders, or equipment
- Doing unsupervised activities beyond their ability

## About Rules

Teaching rules is not something parents do only once. Rules are learned gradually through repetition.

1. For young children, rules must be associated with concrete situations. Rather than "Stay away from animals," the rule could be "Never go in the cattle pen without Mom or Dad."
2. Make the rule as simple as possible, and use words you know your child understands.
3. Watch your child's face to make sure that he or she is listening and understands you.
4. For "never" situations, give the child at least one acceptable alternative. For example, suggest that the child find an adult to take them to see the horses, or tell the child where he or she may play.

5. Ask the child to repeat the rule. Give hints, if necessary.
6. Ask the child a question about the rule to check understanding. "What would you do if someone asked if you wanted to ride the tractor with him or her?"
7. Repeat the rule whenever the situation arises. For example, when a child notices cattle out of the pen is a good time to reinforce the family rule about being around livestock.

As children develop, rules still need to be associated with concrete situations, although five- to seven-year-olds are beginning to picture situations in their minds. Capitalize on their helpfulness by making the rule a "help to you" rather than an ultimatum. Since children may try to manipulate rules to their advantage, don't leave any "loopholes."

It helps to tell the reason for the rule and ask for your child's help in following it. End with the simply stated rule, such as "No seat, no rider on tractors." But before you get to that point, you might explain, "Tractors are the most dangerous thing we have on our farm. I worry that you might get hurt if you ride with anyone. It would really help me to know that you'll never ride ..."

Be specific when you make family rules. Avoid generalizations, such as "Don't play with tools." Instead, always name or identify the tool. Do not expect children to make qualitative judgments, as in telling them not to go "too near" the road. Point out physical boundaries such as a fence, sidewalk, or bush.

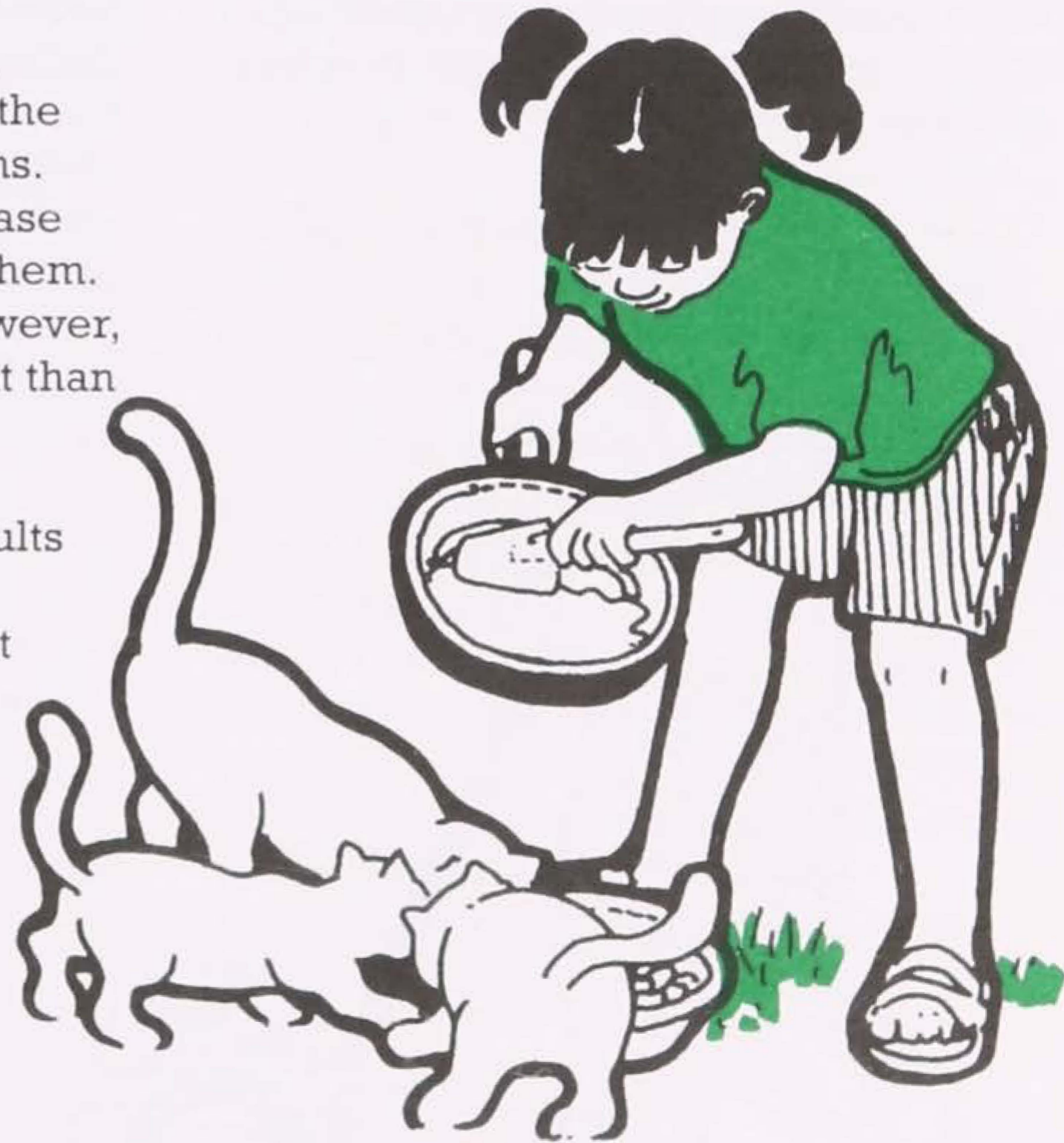
### **Empowerment**

Some children are rarely given choices or opportunities to make decisions. When faced with a questionable situation, they may go along with someone else because they lack the skill of making their own decisions. Siblings or other children may tease them, laugh at them, or threaten them. Children need to understand, however, that their safety is more important than being liked by others.

Some of these situations show adults or older children asking them to do something that may be against the family rules (e.g., Grandpa offering a tractor ride). Children may feel that adults always know best and that they should do whatever an adult suggests. All children need to know that if an adult suggests something that makes them uncomfortable or is against the

rules, they should say "no." Talking about these situations ahead of time is the best way to prepare your child for difficult situations.

Children also can practice making their own decisions, such as dressing appropriately for the weather, or selecting a healthy snack. Making frequent choices may help them make wise decisions when safety is an issue.



## Imitation

Children learn by watching and imitating what they see. Young children want to sit in the driver's seat and steer, or pretend to bake a cake. They want to do the things that other people do.

Unfortunately, imitation can lead to tragedy. Sometimes when the behavior is potentially dangerous, the child must be warned firmly and told to never engage in that behavior. For example, a child is told never to touch a stove top, yet many children are burned in spite of these warnings.



Some agricultural tasks—that children may want to later imitate—are best done when a child is not present. This would include mixing farm chemicals. The key is to not make the task secretive, which could entice a child to investigate. For example, a gun kept locked on a high shelf should be unknown to children. Some children, if they know a gun is in the household, will hunt for it just to see it again or to show someone.

Many farm tasks involve power tools. Children younger than seven years can't be depended on to always follow rules or act responsibly. Seeing an adult operate a drill may be so fascinating to a child that he or she wants to try it out, despite the family rules. It's best to operate power tools when children are not present.

### **Andy's story**

Five-year-old Andy Larsen thought he was following all the rules. He had just woke up from a nap and asked to help his grandfather unload a wagon of corn. "Not yet," his grandfather warned. "You go back to the swing set until I turn off the tractor."

The next thing that happened was Andy falling on top of the power take-off. No one really knows for sure, but Andy might have been trying to crawl in or out of the wagon, taking care to stay away from the PTO. He didn't think about the consequences; he was just trying to help Grandpa.

Andy lost his right leg below the knee and now wears a prosthesis. He runs, plays football and basketball, swims, and is not afraid to do anything. He tells his story at farm safety day camps, and is living proof that young children really are quick and unpredictable.



*Andy Larsen  
Spencer,  
Wisconsin*

### **More on Farm Safety**

A farm is a wonderful place for a family, but poses unique risks for children. Few occupations routinely expose children to an adult work environment. Children may stumble upon hazards while playing or exploring the farmstead, or as they watch their parents do chores or other tasks. Some families may, out of financial necessity, bring children to work sites for supervision rather than leave them home. And sometimes children may have chores of their own on the farm.

#### **Supervision and child care**

Children ages four to eight years are gaining independence but they must be properly supervised. Younger children in this group (four to five years) should be supervised where parents can glance up and see them periodically. Older children in this group (five to seven years) can be monitored from a close distance, where parents can check on them every five to 10 minutes (this is not possible for many farm tasks). All children, however, should be supervised when around livestock.



A child under age 11 should never be left alone with young children. A responsible child of 11 or 12 can supervise younger children if an adult is within hearing distance. During busy seasons, a common alternative is to find a relative to come to your home. Some families may need to arrange for paid child care, however, many farming communities lack child care programs, especially for drop-in or occasional use. Cost also may be prohibitive. A similar option is family child care homes, where a provider takes care of children in his or her home. For more information, contact your local extension office or human service agency. Regardless of the hassles and hardships, arranged child care should be seriously considered, especially for children under age eight.



### **Outside play areas**

Identify locations where children can play with minimal adult supervision. Designated play areas protect children by isolating them from the farm work environment. One play area might be the porch of the farm house and the surrounding yard. A fence will reinforce this division between work and play.

Even with these precautions, a farmstead is still enticing to children. You can make the designated play area more appealing by providing appropriate play items such as swings, a sand box, or playhouse.

Play areas should be away from livestock, farm equipment, and traffic. The area should be checked for poisonous plants and insect nests. Play equipment should be firmly anchored and on a level surface with sand, sawdust, wood chips, or other materials to break falls. Select either tire swings or swings with plastic or rubber U-shaped seats. Check equipment for entanglement, entrapment, or moving parts hazards.

### **Critical times**

The first step in prevention is recognizing when and where dangers are more likely to occur. Injuries and deaths are more likely to happen during times of change. For children, the change may be in their abilities. Parents may be unaware or unprepared to handle a young child's newly developing skills. A change in the environment (a different place, new furniture, or guests) or change in routine also may present new dangers or temporary distractions. Injuries happen when people are busy, tired, hungry, or in a hurry.

On the farm, tragedies are more likely to happen in summer and fall, or during busy planting and harvest seasons. More injuries occur in the late afternoon and early evening, and on Saturdays. These are times when child care is needed most.

### **Emergency procedures**

A few precautions may minimize the injuries or save a life. Telephones that can be programmed are helpful. Even three-year-olds can be taught to press a certain button in case of an emergency. Because most children under age eight are not good readers of unfamiliar words, use symbols on the phone list. For example, draw a small fire, police badge, or house for neighbor.

For older children and adults, post beside every telephone directions to the farm, and your own phone number. Also record other numbers to call in an emergency, such as a neighbor, the number for ambulance service, police, fire department, emergency room, doctor, poison control center, and parents' work or cell phone number.

Have first aid kits on hand, including ipecac syrup or activated charcoal (both of which induce vomiting in case of poisoning, used under the advice of a nurse or medical professional). Older youth and adults should have training in first aid and CPR.

### **Other resources**

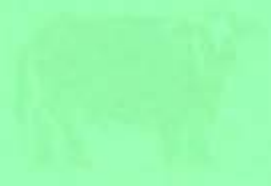
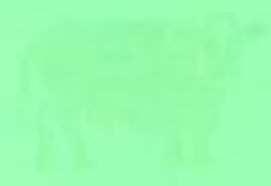
This book highlights only some of the safety precautions for farm families with young children. You may want to get more information from your county extension office, local hospital, or clinic. Many groups post valuable information on the World Wide Web, available free of charge. See the "Other Resources" chapter for a list of useful web sites.

## **How to Use This Book**

- 1. On your own, read each chapter overview.**
- 2. Look at the scenario with your child.**
- 3. Discuss the dangers.**
- 4. Together, create a rule appropriate to your farm.**
- 5. Record your family rule in the "On My Farm" space.**
- 6. Ask your child to repeat the rule.**
- 7. Do a family follow-up activity, listed in the chapter overview.**

The illustrations in this book show people doing things in safe as well as unsafe ways, or show unsafe conditions that may exist on a farm. Be sure to point out to your child which things are not safe, and suggest ways to make the situation more safe.

**Chapter One:**  
**Animals and Livestock**



## Animals and Livestock

Farms and ranches provide unique opportunities for children to grow up around animals, both domestic and wild. However approachable or tame, all kinds of livestock, pets, and wild animals must be treated with respect. Animals are linked to one of every five injuries on the farm, and are the most common cause of injury for children.

### About young children

Young children should not have independent access to livestock. Especially under the age of eight, children always should be supervised when near livestock, even when animals are in pens. Beginning about age five, children can be taught simple rules about livestock, such as how to treat animals, where to stand, and which animals to avoid. However, they may not remember or abide by these rules until age eight or 10.

Children also must be told at an early age that baby pigs, calves, kittens, and puppies are not soft, cuddly stuffed animals but living things that rely on instincts to survive. They will bite or scratch if they feel threatened, and do not understand humans, no matter how innocent or playful they appear. Mother animals are fiercely protective and territorial, and are more likely to cause injuries.

Livestock, as well as pets, also are unpredictable. You can never be certain whether a family horse or watch dog will accept a friendly pat, or turn around and bite that hand. Domesticated animals also form habits—they do the same thing at the same time every day. A change in their routine, or being around children who are unpredictable or noisy, can cause animals to act in unexpected ways or become easily frightened.

### An animal's warning signals

Young children may not notice or understand an animal's warning signals—a lowered head, arched back, laid-back ears, pawing the ground, making noises, or showing of teeth. Children ages four to eight only can think about one thing at a time, such as their footing, an animal, or what they're carrying. They also cannot be depended on to be calm and quiet around animals, or not to tease animals.

Animal safety is important because one of a child's first responsibilities often is caring for the family pet. This chore may evolve into feeding livestock, which have a tremendous size advantage compared to children. Injuries from crushing, biting, or kicking are common around animals.

*For more tips, see page 24.*



**W**hat would you do  
if you wanted to play with  
your kitten and it crawls  
under a fence?

What's on the other side of  
the fence?

How do mother animals  
protect their babies?

What if a ball or other toy  
lands in a livestock pen?

Discuss places where your child can and cannot go on the farm. Try to think of situations where your child could end up in a dangerous place. The family rule should stand, regardless of what else is happening.

Help your child understand that all mother animals protect their young in different ways. Mother pigs are aggressive, often biting or charging. Larger animals use their size and weight to shield offspring.

Make this "what would you do" discussion specific to your family pet or types of animals on your farm. This also might be a good time to talk about fences on your farm (electrified, barbed wire, or wooden) and their dangers.

**On My  
Farm:**

Write your  
rule here

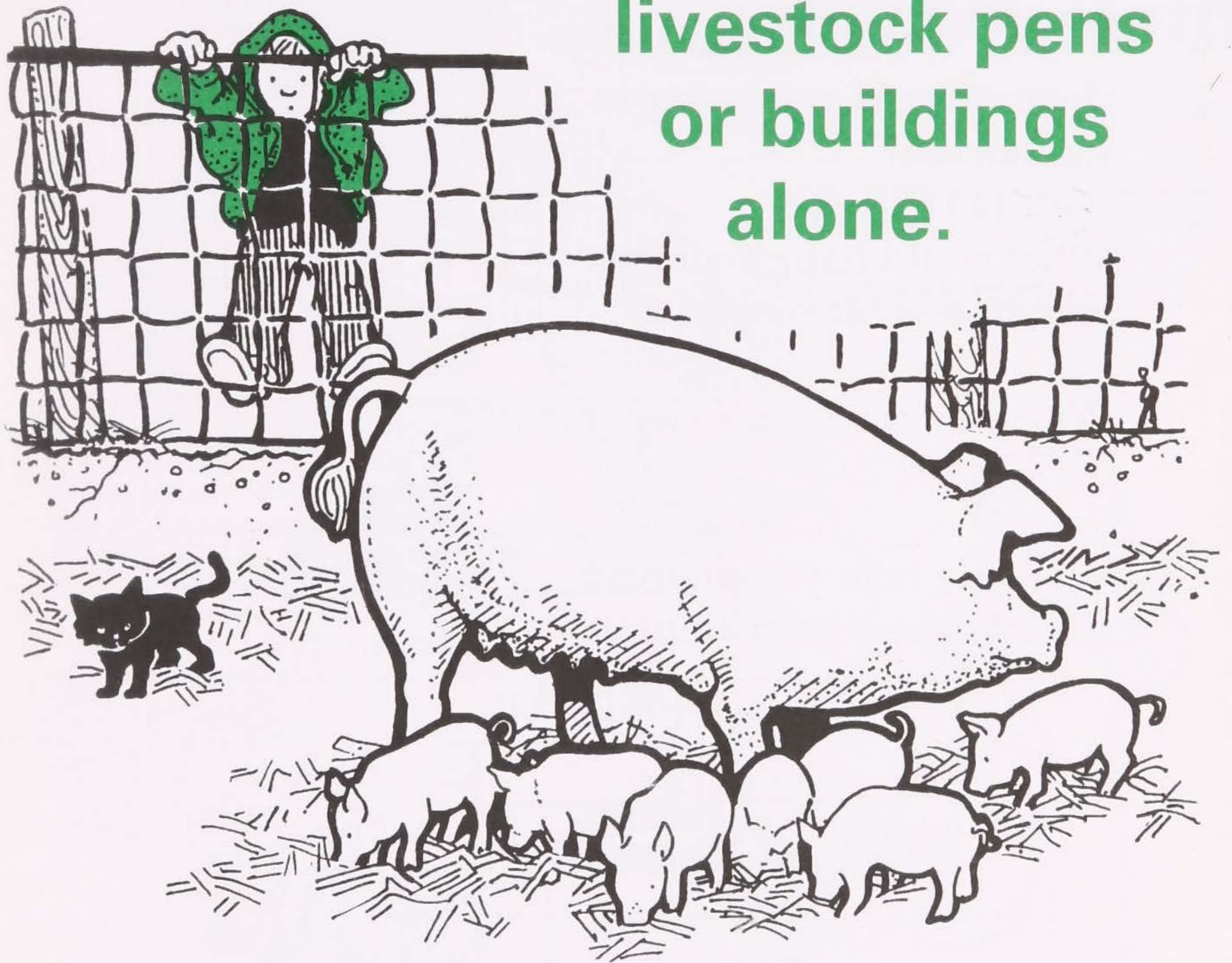
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**Never go into  
livestock pens  
or buildings  
alone.**





**W**hat would you do if your friend wants to pet the horses?

What could happen if you try to pet a farm animal?

Who else might ask to pet an animal?

Who can take you and your friend to see farm animals?

Discuss times when your child can and cannot be around livestock. To make this example specific to your farm, think of other animals or situations that might tempt your child, such as catching a baby chicken, or teasing the pigs. Also think of other children, such as siblings or cousins, who might make similar requests.

Help your child understand that visitors may not know the family rules or want to follow them. Reassure your child that it's OK to explain a rule or go to an adult, but that the family rule should be followed no matter what friends think.

Make sure your child knows who can take them to see livestock, and who on your farm is a "responsible person."

**On My Farm:**

Write your rule here

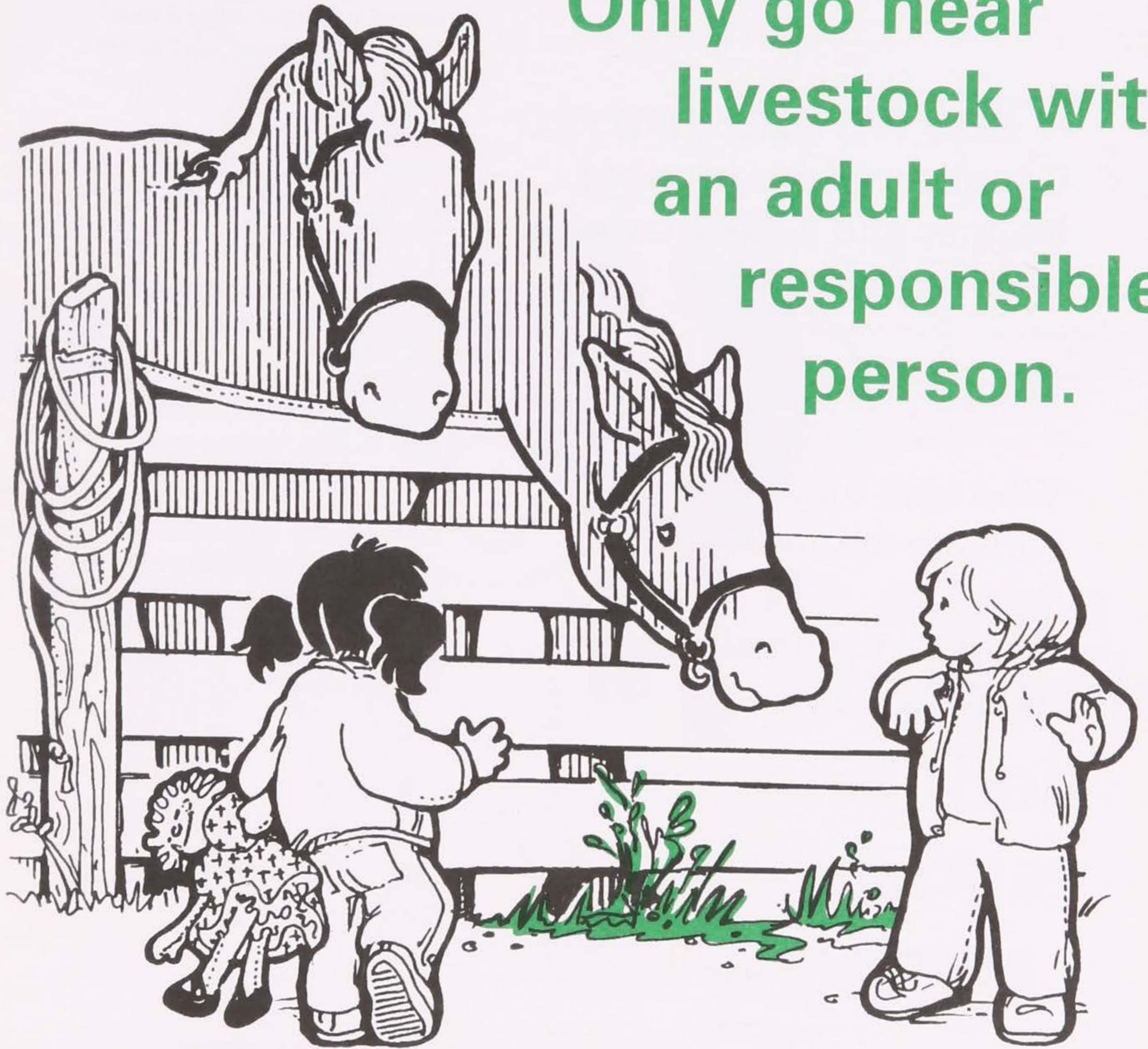
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Only go near  
livestock with  
an adult or  
responsible  
person.



**W**hat would you do if you were with your big brother and a cow starts coming toward you?

What is the danger?

Who else might you help with the animals?

What if an animal gets out of its pen?

Teach your child to look for an animal's danger signals and what to do. Common ones are:

- a lowered head,
- an arched back,
- laid-back ears,
- pawing the ground,
- growling or snorting, or
- showing of teeth.

Talk about an animal's large size as compared to your child.

Make sure chores are appropriate to your child's age, such as feeding from outside a fence.

Remind your child about going near livestock only with a responsible person. Your child also should tell an adult when an animal is not where it's supposed to be.

**On My Farm:**

Write your

rule here

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**Be aware  
of animals  
and their  
danger  
signals.**

**W**hat would you do  
if you found some baby  
bunnies?

What other stray or wild  
animals might you see on  
your farm?

How could you be hurt by a  
stray or wild animal?

Discuss stray animals such as cats or dogs, and wild animals such as squirrels, raccoons, opossums, and skunks that might carry rabies or other diseases.

Talk about what your child should do if a stray animal comes into the play area. Make sure your child knows what you mean by "stray" animal.

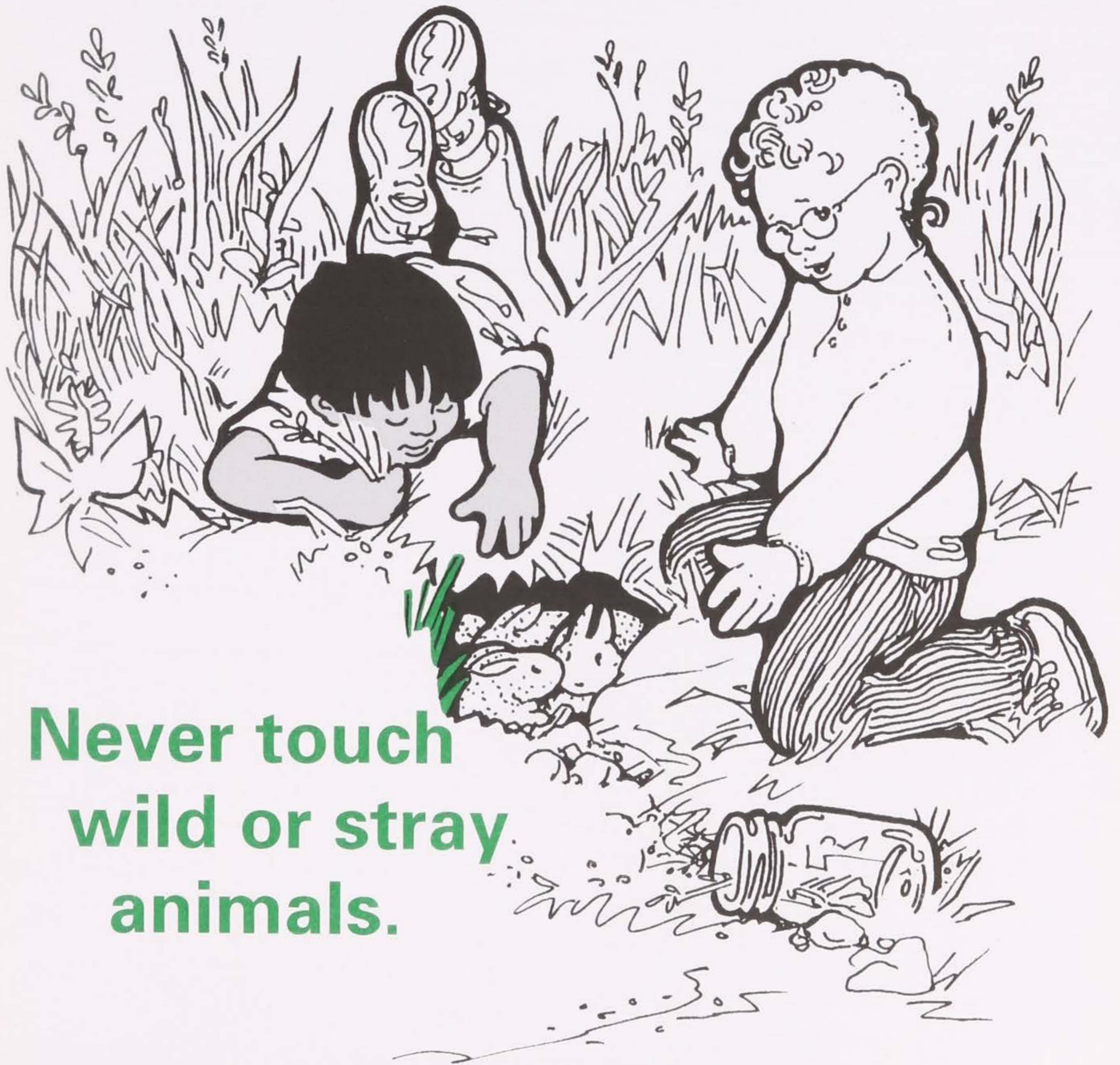
Help your child understand the possibility of getting bitten or scratched by a stray or wild animal, and what to do if that happens.

**On My  
Farm:**

Write your

rule here





**Never touch  
wild or stray  
animals.**

## **A word about rabies**

Since we share the world with animals, it shouldn't be a surprise that we also share some diseases. One familiar disease, rabies, is often feared because it is always fatal once symptoms begin. Each year more than 8,500 cases of rabies in animals are reported. Among domestic animals, dogs most often transmit rabies to humans. Among wild animals, skunks and raccoons are the most frequent carriers of rabies.

## **Family follow-up activities**

1. Draw a picture of an animal on your farm that you can be close to only if you are with a responsible person. Help write the family rule under the picture.
2. Act out these situations:
  - how a mother animal behaves when someone pokes at her babies,
  - what you say to a friend who doesn't want to follow the rules, and
  - a bull that is angry because someone is in the pen.
3. Find old magazines and cut out pictures of stray or wild animals that you might see on your farm.

## **Pointers for parents**

Provide proper supervision for your child around animals.

Be a good role model for your child when you are with animals.

Maintain good fences. Make sure gates to livestock pens are securely fastened.

Post "DANGER! Never Play Here" signs on livestock buildings and surrounding areas.

If your child cares for a family pet, consider his or her abilities and development when setting expectations.



**Chapter Two:**  
**Electricity, Chemicals, and**  
**Other Farmstead Hazards**





## Electricity, Chemicals, and Other Farmstead Hazards

A farm can be a wonderful place to raise a family. There are natural surroundings to explore and discover, and animals and machines to watch. But within these enticing new worlds lie many dangers. Key dangers in the home—from electricity, chemicals, and falls—are intensified on the farm. It may be fairly easy to “child-proof” a home but almost impossible on a farmstead. For example, a kitchen cabinet can be locked but a big attraction such as the hay loft can only be made off-limits.

### Electricity and your child

Electricity is always a danger for children. There are many sources of electrical dangers on a farmstead—overhead lines, electric fences, workshops with power tools, heaters and fans, grain dryers, portable

generators, and supplemental lighting systems including yard lights.

Children ages four to eight are curious about the world around them. They may begin to experiment to see how things work, or question why they work. At this age, however, they are not able to understand cause-and-effect relationships, such as why the electric fence snaps when a weed touches it. They may know not to touch an electric fence, but don't generalize that to include not touching the fence with a stick. They also have problems recognizing things out of context. They may not associate an overhead power line with a sparking wire entangled in a tree.

Show your child where overhead lines are located on the farm. Teach children to play away from them, and explain the special dangers of the lines coming in contact with ladders, kites, or sticks.

### Pointers for parents: Electricity

Avoid using power tools in front of children because they may try to imitate you later.

Unplug electrical tools and store out of children's reach.

Don't leave electrical boxes open. Make sure all electrical wiring and connections follow code.

Use locking devices on all electrical switches.

### **Pointers for parents: Chemicals**

Store all fertilizers and pesticides on a shelf in a locked area (include pumps, hoses, measuring devices, and rags used with these items and personal protective equipment). Post danger signs outside the area.

Order only the quantity of chemicals you will need for the current season, and have them delivered just prior to use.

Promptly dispose of empty or used containers in such a way that children have no access to them.

Always store a chemical in its original container and never leave out an open container. Keep fuel in an approved container.

Never use toxic products in front of children.

Find the number of your local Poison Control Center and post it beside every telephone in your house and on your farm.



### **Chemicals and your child**

At least half of the deaths from acute exposure to pesticides in the United States are to children under age 10. Chemicals can be especially deadly for children because of their light body weight. What may be mildly toxic for an adult could be fatal for a child. Children also explore their world through taste and touch, two major ways that chemicals enter the body. Young children cannot read warning labels, therefore improperly stored or used chemicals pose tremendous risks.

Dangerous substances for children on the farm include pesticides, fertilizers, and related items such as containers or protective gloves, goggles, boots, and overalls; fuels; treated seed; vegetation that is toxic or has been sprayed or treated; drain cleaner, dairy pipeline cleaner, and disinfectants; soaps, bleaches, starch, stain remover, and other cleaning products; and paints and related products.

Familiarize every member of your family with poison warnings, skull-and-crossbones, and signs that may be posted after an area has been chemically treated. Teach children never to touch, drink, or eat from an unknown container, and eat food from the garden or orchard only after it has been washed.

## Falls and your child

Falls from farm machinery and in farm buildings are a major cause of injuries for children under age nine (21 percent of all injuries for this age group). This isn't surprising because children are still developing motor skills at this age and most ladders, stairs, and other items for climbing are made for adults. The farm also has lots of places from which to fall!

The best family safeguard against falls and other hazards on the farmstead is for everyone to understand what areas are off-limits and why. A walkabout, or walking tour of the farm, is one way to accomplish this goal. A walkabout is a prepared tour of the farmstead to talk about and highlight areas of danger to children. During your walkabout you can leave a visible reminder of your discussion by posting a "DANGER! Never Play Here" decal. Organizations such as Farm Safety 4 Just Kids provide walkabout programs that list specific dangers and places to visit on a farm.

### Pointers for parents: Falls

Enforce a rule that children should not enter any farm building alone (or specify which buildings they may enter by themselves).

Lock access doors to silos and grain bins.

Place fixed ladders out of reach of children, or fit with a barrier. Store portable ladders away from children's access.

Fence farm ponds and manure pits.

Cap unused wells according to approved guidelines.

Always store dual tires and other heavy objects such as portable fencing in the flat position or fastened securely, not propped against a building or tree.

Never leave buckets on skid-steer loaders or front-end loaders in the raised position.



# What would you do

if your friend wants to play in the hay loft?

Why shouldn't you play in the hay loft?

Where else should you not play on the farm?

Make a list of places where your child can play on the farm. Make another list of places where your child should not play and discuss the dangers.

### When you're outlining hazards, don't forget about

- Roads, ditches, field entrances, work areas
- Outbuildings, storage sheds
- Wells (in use or abandoned)
- Pitchforks, hand tools, sharp implements
- Ropes in barns, other areas
- Power tools and workshops
- Trap doors
- Manure storage facilities
- Grain bins, silos, other storage structures
- Creeks, ponds, drainage ways, livestock tanks
- Fuel and chemical tanks

Talk about ways to say "no" to friends and others who may not know or want to follow your family rules.

**On My Farm:**

Write your rule here

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**Only play  
where you  
are allowed  
to play.**



**W**hat would you do if you were thirsty and find something that looks like Kool-Aid™?

What if it is poisonous?

What should you do if someone drinks something that might be poisonous, or you do not know what it is?

Is it safe to drink water from an empty glass you find outdoors? What about water from other places?

Talk about the poisons used on your farm and what they look like. Teach your child to stay away from treated grain (or empty sacks), colored pellets, and all kinds of medical supplies used for livestock. Explain why these items should never be touched, tasted, or smelled.

Talk about how poisons might be marked with a skull-and-crossbones or other symbol.

Discuss the dangers of drinking from items found outdoors. The container probably is unsanitary, and it may contain poisonous residues, infectious bacteria, or other unknown substances. Talk about safe ways to get drinks on your farm.

**On My Farm:**

Write your rule here

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**Do not drink  
anything without  
an adult's  
permission.**



**W**hat would you do if you were hungry and find some berries?

What if the berries are poisonous?

Should you eat strawberries when you are in the garden? Table scraps in a bowl for the dog? Or a candy bar that you find outside?

Discuss the dangers of eating something grown or found outdoors. The item could be poisonous, unsanitary, or treated with chemicals. It's important to tell an adult if someone has eaten or drank something that might not be safe.

Talk about always washing food that comes from orchards or gardens before it is eaten to remove dirt and unwanted residues.

If you have plants on the farm that are poisonous, talk about where they are found. For a list of common poisonous plants, go to page 86 in the Other Resources chapter.

**On My Farm:**

Write your

rule here

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**Learn where to  
get food that  
is safe to eat.**

**W**hat would you do if you wanted to float a toy in the cattle tank?

Why is this dangerous?

What other places have water that might be dangerous?

Where is a safe place to play with water toys?

Water is very enticing to young children, and safe water play offers many opportunities for learning. However, children need to be taught where it is safe to play with water. Discuss areas with water that are off-limits on your farm: ditches, drainage ways, ponds, creeks, and livestock tanks.

Talk about the difference between a puddle and a drainage way. Explain why rapidly flowing water after a storm can make normally dry and safe areas hazardous to children.

Also be aware of drowning hazards from buckets or other containers of water.

**On My Farm:**

Write your

rule here





**Play only  
in safe  
water.**

**W**hat would you do if you saw a power line on the ground?

What do power lines look like? Why are they dangerous?

Why should you never be near power lines with ladders, kites, or sticks?

Young children have problems recognizing things out of context. A child taught to stay away from overhead power lines may not see the danger of a power line that's on the ground or caught in a tree. Talk about what power lines look like—both overhead and on the ground—and where they are located on your farm.

Talk about the dangers of touching a power line, either with your hand or an object. Even a kite string can conduct electricity.

Tell your child that power lines are much more dangerous than an electric fence. A shock from an electric fence can hurt but it is not life-threatening, however, a power line can kill on contact.

**On My Farm:**

Write your  
rule here

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**Keep away from  
power lines.**

**W**hat would you do if you were looking for something to do and the tool shed door is open?

Why shouldn't you be in the tool shed by yourself?

What other places on your farm might not be a safe place for you to be alone?

Discuss buildings or areas that are off-limits on your farm. Use common names of buildings that are familiar to your child. This illustration also can be used to point out some of the dangers in off-limit areas, such as power tools, and items that can tip over or cause injury. Think of ways these hazards can be minimized if a child somehow gets into the area (by using high shelves, storing items in locked cabinets).

Talk about ways to know that an area is off-limits: posting "DANGER! Never Play Here" signs, using padlocks, or putting up a fence. Sometimes a walking tour of the farm is helpful.

**On My Farm:**

Write your

rule here

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**Stay out  
of unsafe  
areas.**





**W**hat would you do if you wanted to climb and you see a tractor tire by the barn?

What could happen if you climbed on the tire, or hid under it?

Where are safe places to climb on your farm?

Young children are intrigued by new and interesting challenges, which definitely includes climbing! On a farm this might include tractor tires (often improperly stored against a building), ladders, gates, fences, piles of boards, barrels, or stacks of hay bales. A parent's challenge is to provide safe places for a child to climb that are just as interesting. Tell your child where he or she can safely climb on your farm.

Talk about the dangers of falling, being hit by objects, or getting crushed by equipment that can tip over. This also might be a good time to talk about hidden hazards such as nails, pitchforks, or sharp objects in the grass, and nests built by animals or insects.

**On My Farm:**

Write your rule here

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Climb on play  
equipment,  
not farm  
equipment.



## Family follow-up activities

1. Act out these situations (make sure your child follows the family rule and expectation in each case):

- your cousin wants to see what's inside the storage shed,
- your little sister eats something out of the cat dish, and
- your dog runs into the machine shed while you're playing.

2. As a family, go outside and find all the overhead power lines on your farm. Talk about activities that are not safe in these areas.

3. Draw a picture of someone having fun in your safe play area on the farm.

4. Sign up for swimming lessons.

5. As a family, post "DANGER! Never Play Here" signs in areas that are off-limits. (Contact Farm Safety 4 Just Kids for these decals.)



6. Plan a time for your family to walk around the farm to identify safe places to play.



# **Chapter Three:**

## **Emergencies**



## Emergencies

The probability that a child is the first responder in a farm emergency is higher than many families care to admit. The type of work done on farms, their isolated location, and the lack of access to medical services makes it imperative that all family members know what to do in an emergency. For children ages four to eight, this action might simply be the ability to push a programmed button on the telephone that calls 911 or the local emergency response number.

This chapter is not intended to frighten children, although some of the examples deal with life-threatening situations. Parents should decide which situations may cause their child to worry or become preoccupied. Your decision depends on the type of relationship you have with your child, and the way in which you talk about difficult topics.

This chapter will help children recognize an emergency and learn about their family's emergency plan. Many children are taught what to do during fires or storms, but they might not recognize other potentially dangerous situations such as getting lost in a cornfield. Knowing how to get help and who to call may be the most important lesson you teach your child.

Keep in mind that the first hour after an injury occurs is the most important time to receive medical attention. Often called "the golden hour," this window of opportunity quickly closes on a farm when professional services are located some distance away, or the injured person is not found for a period of time. A minor injury complicated by exposure to weather, or a severe injury where blood loss occurs, can place an injured person in jeopardy.

Post a list of emergency telephone numbers beside each telephone in the house, workshop, barn, and other areas. For young children who cannot read, program the number into your telephone and make sure they know how to activate it.

Include written directions to your farm beside each telephone. If your child cannot read, give him or her other references, such as landmarks or names of neighbors. However, children must be taught their parents' full names and how to spell their last name.

*For more tips, see page 52.*



**W**hat would you do if your mom yells for help and no one else is around?

Why might your mom call for help?

Who else might need your help in an emergency?

Talk about what your child should do in an emergency. Make sure your child knows that he or she can really help by calling 911, or your local emergency response number.

Make sure 911 numbers are posted by every telephone or programmed into automatic dialing buttons. Think about other information that would be helpful beside the phone.

You also may want to discuss how to turn off machinery, and that it's important not to pull or move a person who's hurt. Adults, however, must make sure that a child trying to help an injured person is not placed in danger.

**On My Farm:**

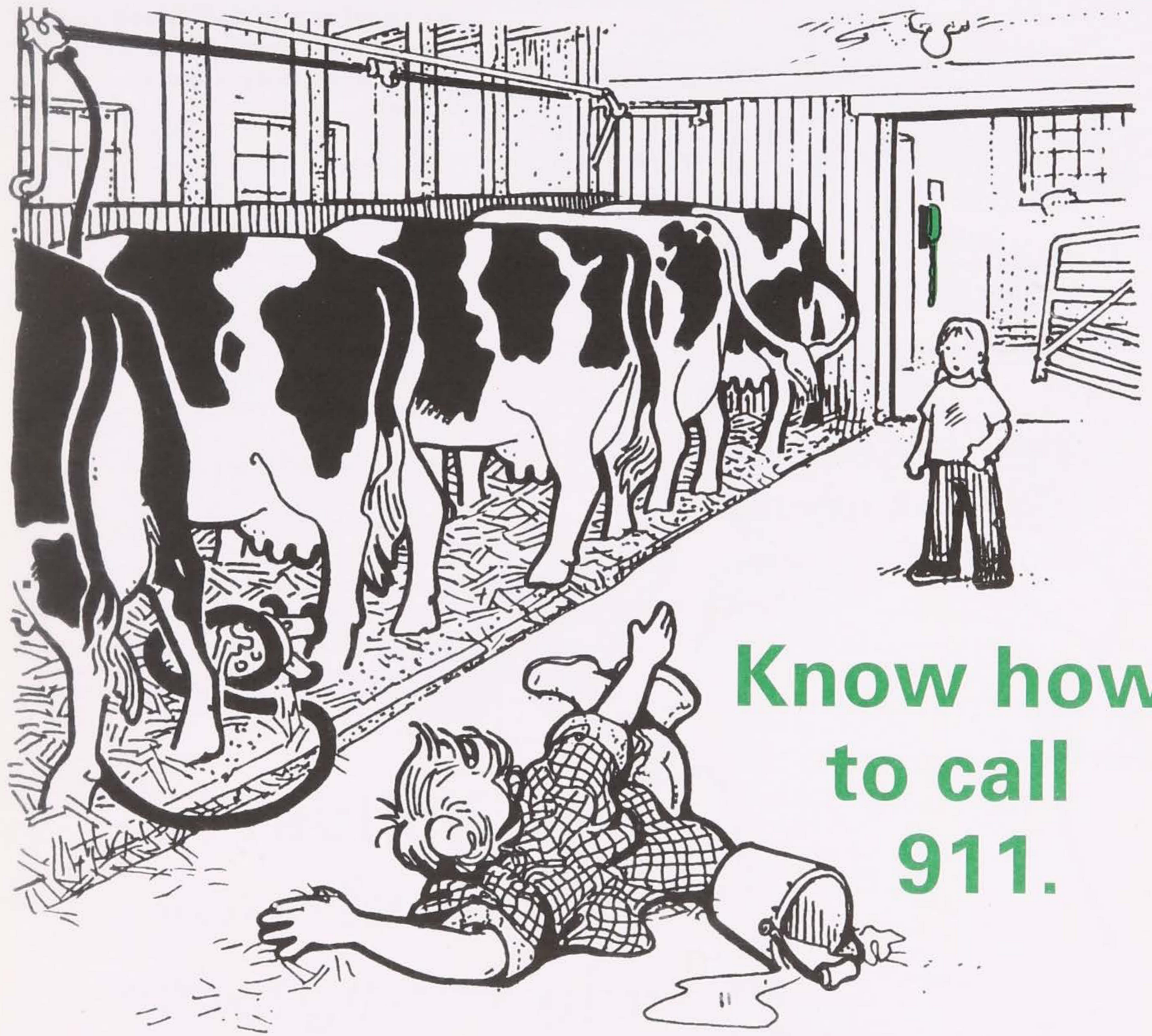
Write your  
rule here

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میں نے

**Know how  
to call  
911.**



# What would you do if a fire starts in the barn?

What is your family's emergency plan?

What if no adult or responsible person is around?

Talk about what to do if there's a fire, and how to call 911 or another emergency response number.

Discuss your family's plan for emergencies, such as deciding on a safe place outdoors for family members to gather in case of a fire. Talk about back-up plans, too, such as a neighbor to call when parents or other responsible people are not around.

Talk about what to do in other types of emergencies, such as

- coming home from school and no one is there,
- hearing an emergency message on the radio or television, and
- being in bad weather.

**On My Farm:**

Write your

rule here

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**Practice  
your family's  
emergency plan.**

**W**hat would you do if you are someplace you are not supposed to be and someone gets hurt?

What is happening in this picture? How might someone get hurt?

What if you are alone and get hurt?

Young children can make poor decisions, or not think about consequences until after something has happened. Help your child understand that telling an adult about an emergency or injury is more important than getting scolded for breaking a rule.

Teach honesty by always expressing your appreciation for truthful answers from your child. Decide, as parents, if you would ease punishment when a child admits to ignoring or disobeying a rule.

This also might be a good time to reinforce areas that are off-limits on your farm (see Chapter 2). Children should get help immediately when someone is injured by finding an adult or responsible person.

**On My Farm:**

Write your  
rule here

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**Do not be  
afraid to  
get help,  
even if you  
might get  
in trouble.**



**W**hat would you do if your little sister wanders into a cornfield?

Why are farm fields a dangerous place for children?

What fields are close to your house?

Discuss the danger of getting lost in a field. Young children can easily lose direction, they cannot be seen, and during harvest they could be hit by a combine or other equipment.

Tell your child never to enter a field, even to get a younger sibling. First, your child should yell to stop the sibling. If that doesn't work, the next action is to tell an adult or responsible person.

Talk about ways that your child can get attention of adults who are in a nearby field or building, or are working outdoors near the house. Special signals, understood by every member of the family, might include

- putting up a flag in a window,
- turning on the porch light,
- sounding an air horn, or
- calling someone on the citizen's band radio or cell phone.

**On My Farm:**

Write your

rule here





**Stay out of  
farm fields.**

### **Calling for help**

Children need to know the type of questions they could be asked after they dial an emergency response number. Parents can role-play this situation by reviewing answers to the following questions:

- Where is the injured person?
- What is your phone number?
- What kind of injury do you see?
- How many people are hurt?
- How is the injured person doing?
- What first aid has been given?

Tell your child not to hang up the phone after answering the questions. He or she should never call 911 unless there is an emergency.

### **Family follow-up activities**

1. Practice dialing 911, operating your family's citizen's band radio, or cell phone, or using the programmed buttons on your telephone to call for help. When you do this, make sure none of these devices is activated.
2. With an unplugged telephone, practice what you would say to an emergency responder. Parents can ask questions, and children can answer them. Repeat with another "emergency" and trade places asking questions.
3. Draw a picture of a field near your house. Write the family rule about not going into farm fields.
4. Practice your family's fire escape plan. Make sure it includes your house as well as farm buildings.

### **Pointers for parents**

Be prepared for an emergency. Sign up for a class in first aid and instruction in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Remain calm during an emergency. Be a good example for your child.

Make sure you have first aid kits in your home, tractor, barn, and workshop. Make sure your child knows where they are and can reach them. First-aid kits for farm use are different than general kits.

# **Chapter Four:**

## **Grain**





## Grain's awesome power

Did you know that 625 lb. of force is needed to pull a 160-lb. adult out of shoulder-deep grain? Many adults can't pull themselves out of knee-deep grain—something that can happen in about seven seconds with a high-capacity auger.

In most cases, people trapped in grain die from suffocation.

**Rules are a must!** Here are several to **always** follow:

1. Keep children out of wagons and bins, and away from temporary grain piles.
2. Never let children ride on or get into a wagon load of grain, or play on any grain surface.
3. Never leave an auger unattended while it is running, or a wagon while it is being unloaded.
4. Make sure bin ladders are accessible only by adults.

## Grain

Grain can be lethal within seconds, and its danger often is underestimated by adults. Likewise, before anyone knows something is wrong, a young child can get out of a busy parent's sight and into a wagon load of grain that's being emptied. Flowing grain is like quicksand, with tremendous force that makes rescue difficult if not impossible.

It is estimated that one-third of all entrapments and suffocations in flowing grain involve children under age 14. Children are shorter than adults and can be pulled under the grain surface quickly. They also do not have the strength to pull themselves free. Even adults are not strong enough to pull themselves out of grain, much less rescue a child.

A bin or wagon of grain may look like a giant sandbox to a child eager to explore the world. Provide safe alternatives for this kind of play such as a sandbox or a bushel of grain in a tub.

*For more tips, see page 60.*



**W**hat would you do if you saw your brother climbing up into a grain wagon?

What could happen if he fell into the grain?

Who else might try to climb into a grain wagon?

Talk about the dangers of being trapped in grain using language that your child feels comfortable with and can understand. Tell your child that people often cannot breathe when they're in grain, and that rescue is almost impossible.

It doesn't matter whether a grain wagon is being filled or unloaded, the danger of entrapment is high. Even adults can be trapped by just a small amount of grain.

Talk about places you find grain on your farm such as in a bin, gravity-flow wagon, semitrailer-truck, temporary grain pile, or in buildings. Your child needs to know that it's always important to stay out of grain, and that he or she should tell an adult or responsible person immediately if someone gets into grain.

**On My Farm:**

Write your  
rule here

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**Stay out of  
grain wagons.**

**W**hat would you do if you wanted to play and you see a large pile of corn?

What could happen to someone climbing on a grain pile?

Where might you find piles of corn?

Limited grain storage during harvest often results in temporary grain piles. A grain pile can be dangerous for a child, especially large piles at elevators. Sliding and shifting surfaces of the grain easily can cover a child. The larger the pile, the greater the likelihood that the side of the pile is unstable and could collapse without warning. These dangers are accelerated when more than one person is on the pile. Children must be kept away from large volumes of grain.

Talk about where grain piles might be found on your farm—in buildings, outside near grain bins, or in below-grade silo pits. Make sure your child knows never to play in grain.

**On My Farm:**

Write your

rule here



**Never play  
in grain!**



**W**hat would you do if your friend wants to climb the ladder on a grain bin?

What could happen to the person on the ladder?

Where else might you find ladders that you should not climb?

Children should be kept off grain bin ladders for several reasons.

1. These ladders allow access to grain and other areas that are very dangerous.
2. The distance between rungs makes climbing difficult for children.
3. Children do not have the upper body strength to climb vertical ladders, nor the balance to use rungs rather than steps.

The best practice is to restrict children's access to ladders by placing the first rung out of their reach, or installing a protective cover over lower rungs.

Remind your child about safe play areas and where they can climb safely on the farm. See Chapter 2 for more details.

**On My Farm:**

Write your

rule here

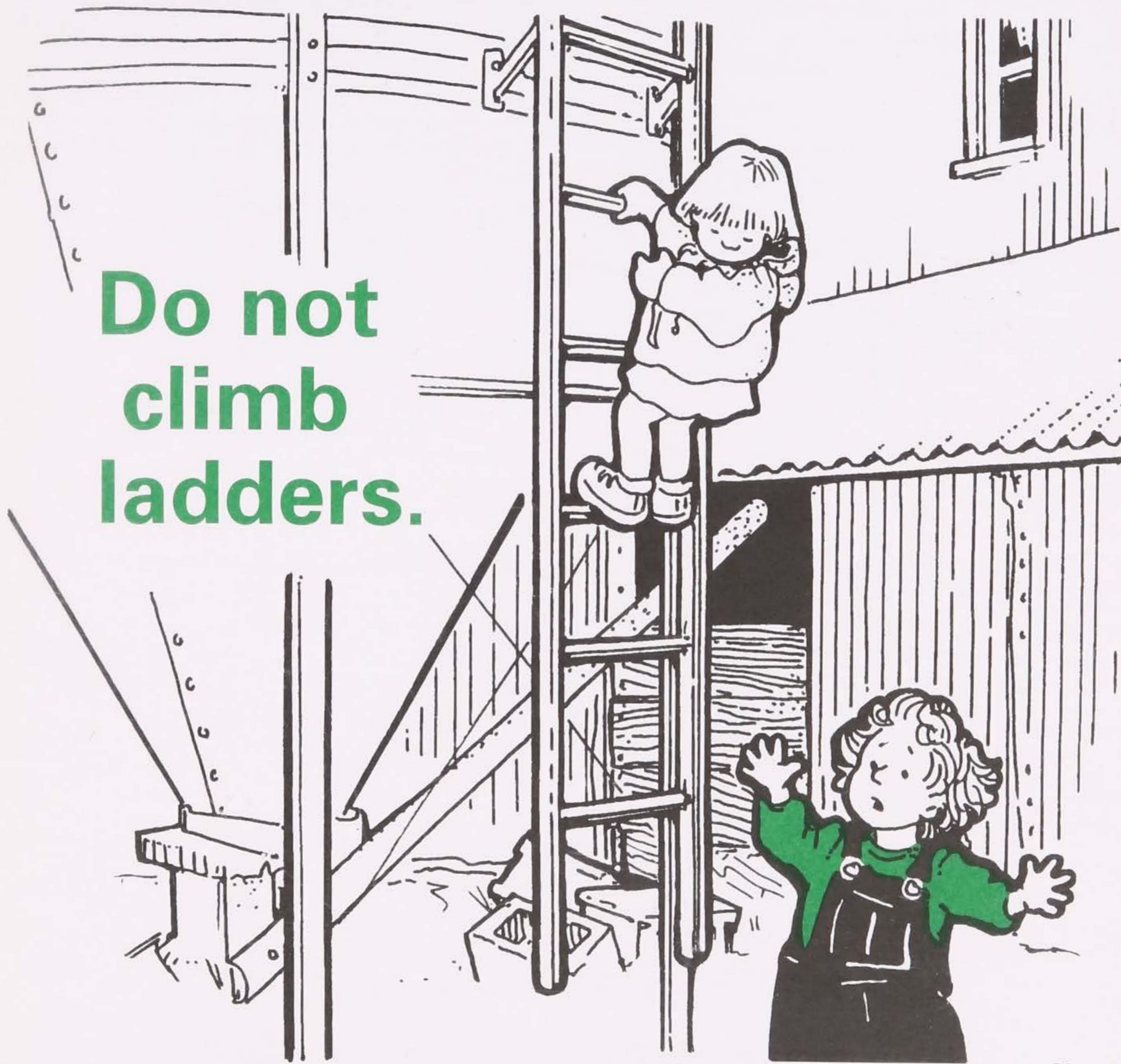
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**Do not  
climb  
ladders.**





## Family follow-up activities

1. Draw a picture of a grain wagon.  
Write the family rule underneath the picture.
2. As a family, put "DANGER! Never Play Here" decals on each grain bin and grain wagon on your farm.



3. Make a list of safe places on your farm to climb.

4. Act out how you would say "no" to a friend who wants to play in a grain wagon.
5. As a family, place a grain suffocation warning decal on grain bins and wagons.



Contact Farm Safety 4 Just Kids for these decals.

## Pointers for parents

Many adults do not understand the power of grain, so it's easy to see how children become victims of grain entrapment and suffocation. Just like other areas of risk management, always have a backup plan to keep everyone in your operation safe around grain.

Always check inside a grain bin or wagon before turning on an auger or opening the unloading gate.

Make grain wagon and bin access ladders difficult for children to reach.

Lock the doors and covers to all grain bins.

Restrict children's presence during filling and unloading operations.

**Chapter Five:**  
**Lawnmowers, ATVs, and**  
**Farm Machinery**



## **Don't let your child become a statistic!**

**Lawnmowers** kill approximately 75 people every year—one of every five deaths involves a child. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that 230,000 people are injured each year by lawn and garden tools, and more than 800 young children are backed over by lawnmowers.

**All-terrain vehicles (ATVs)** have come under stricter operating and equipment regulations in recent years. Even with these safety standards in place, an average of more than 20,000 children (under 16 years of age) are treated in emergency rooms for ATV injuries every year.

**Farm machinery** accounts for one-third of all farm-related deaths reported for children in the United States. The highest rates are in the five- to nine-year-old age category.

## **Lawnmowers, ATVs, and Farm Machinery**

Equipment used on farms is a deadly match for the skills, judgment, and physical size of a child. Even more incredible is the high rate of childhood death and injury from farm equipment (see sidebar), considering the fact that children usually are only bystanders!

### **About young children**

Many tragedies begin with a child's innocent attempt to get the attention of an adult who is operating equipment, or when a child enters a work area. The child doesn't consider the consequences, and may not even see the equipment in the area. The child also doesn't understand that the adult may not even be aware of someone else's presence because of sight limitations or noise generated by farm equipment.

One way to avoid this situation is for the family to work out safe ways to get the attention of family members who are working outdoors. It could be a signal as simple as turning on the porch light, raising a flag out the window, or dialing a cell phone number (Chapter 3 has more details).



**W**hat would you do if you were playing in the yard and your sister starts to mow the grass?

Where should you be when someone is mowing?

Why do you need to pick up your toys in the yard?

Lawnmowing can require a lot of time and effort on the farm. That's why it's important for everyone to know and follow the family rules about lawnmowers and other lawn care equipment. Children need to know that lawnmowers and weed trimmers are dangerous tools, even though they can be safely operated by older brothers and sisters.

Talk about where your child should be when someone is mowing. Help your child understand what happens when the lawnmower runs over something. Things shoot out from the lawnmower very fast in any direction, and can cause serious injury.

Name things that can be dangerous if left in the grass. Children can help by picking up these items before mowing begins.

**On My Farm:**

Write your  
rule here

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**Go inside when  
someone is  
mowing.**



**W**hat would you do if you were standing next to a PTO and someone turns it on?

What is the danger?

What can get caught in a PTO?

Too often adults assume that children know more than they do, especially when it comes to important topics. Make sure your child knows what PTO stands for (power take-off), and what a PTO looks like. Talk about the equipment on your farm that uses PTOs, such as augers or grinders.

Children need to know that PTOs move very fast and are as powerful as the tractor that runs them. Items that first catch in PTOs include fingers, feet, hair, shoelaces, ties on hoods and sweatshirts, and clothing.

Never expect a child to know how close is "too close." Tell the child to stay in a specific location, such as by the barn, when a PTO is running.

**Parents must set clear and safe boundaries.** This is not an easy task!

**On My Farm:**

Write your  
rule here

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**Stay inside  
safe boundaries\*  
away from PTOs!**

\*Boundaries must be set by adults.



**W**hat would you do if your cousin offers you a ride on the ATV?

Why is it not safe to ride with someone on an ATV?

Who else might offer you a ride?

Discuss family rules about all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Here are three reasons why it's not safe to be an extra rider.

1. ATVs are built for only one person—the operator. (The large seat is for the operator, who needs space to safely operate the ATV.)
2. Riders can distract the operator and get in the way of the safe operation of the ATV.
3. Riders are first to bounce off an ATV in rough areas.

ATV rides may be offered at a friend's house, but your child needs to know that family rules about ATVs apply everywhere.

The bicycle rider is wearing a helmet (a good practice), but bicycle helmets do not provide enough protection for ATV operators. ATVs require specialized safety gear.

**On My Farm:**

Write your rule here

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**No extra  
rider.**

## **Family follow-up activities**

1. Before the lawn is mowed, walk around the yard as a family and pick up objects in the grass.
2. Create a message or signboard that can be placed in a specific window to get an adult's attention who is working outdoors on the farmstead.
3. Act out saying "no" to relatives, friends, and neighbors who offer you a ride on an ATV.
4. Draw a picture of a tractor with a PTO. Write the family rule underneath the picture.

## **Pointers for parents**

Parents can be good role models for their children, especially in their attitude toward safety. Demonstrate a healthy respect for farm equipment by following these precautions at all times (not just when you're being watched).

### ***In general***

Know the location of everyone in a work area.

Never leave equipment unattended while it is operating or running.

Read through the safety section in the equipment manual; train new operators.

### ***Lawnmowers***

Make sure safety devices (such as the operator presence switch) work.

Mow only after picking up in an area.

Keep children indoors while you mow; never bring infants or toddlers with you when you mow.

### ***ATVs***

Never allow riders on an ATV.

Wear appropriate helmet, goggles, and clothing when you operate an ATV.

### ***Farm machinery***

Always replace equipment guards and shields.

Look for and remove secondary hazards (spilled grain, mud, or debris).

Never step over a PTO.

**Chapter Six:**  
**Tractors**



## Tractors

Many tragic deaths of children on the farm are associated with tractors. The situations that lead to serious injury and death can begin innocently.

- *A child thinks she can be seen when she runs toward her father as he drives into the farmyard.*
- *A tractor ride gets bumpy and the child falls off.*
- *A child, playing hide-and-seek in a work area, is run over without the tractor operator even knowing anyone's around.*

Some tractor injuries have multiple causes and would require several steps to prevent injury. However, tractor injuries and fatalities of young children can be prevented—most occur when children ride on tractors.

### **Tractors are your farm's biggest danger**

Tractors and machinery are involved in three out of four farm injuries to children, and some of the most severe that require hospital treatment.

### **Riders, the biggest danger**

The practice of allowing children to ride on tractors is the most dangerous tradition passed down in farm families.

#### **Riders are never safe on tractors for these reasons:**

1. Riders that fall off the tractor immediately face a second hazard, being run over by a tractor wheel.
2. On uneven terrain, riders are first to bounce off the tractor (especially true for children due to their light body weight).
3. Riders can distract the driver or bump into controls.
4. Rollover protective structures are not designed to protect riders.

Another misconception is that tractor cabs keep riders safe. **This is not true!** A cab is designed to protect **only** the tractor operator; it does not prevent a rider from being thrown from the cab and run over. Doors might not latch, windows pop open. And if the tractor overturns, the rider can be thrown or crushed against the frame; there is no protection for a rider.

Don't mar what could be a wonderful family memory by the death of a child who falls off a tractor.

*For more tips, see page 78.*



**W**hat would you do if you really wanted to see the inside of the new tractor?

What could happen if you were alone and climbed into the cab?

What if you see your brother sitting on a tractor?

Children ages four to eight are curious, so it's easy to see why tractors attract their attention. Children also are interested because adults spend a lot of time and place a lot of value on tractors. Playing with farm toys also builds a child's interest.

Make sure you talk about the dangers (unintentional operation, falling hazards, and their location in other unsafe areas). Think of times or situations when your child can see the inside of a tractor when the engine is not running.

You also may want to assure your child that some day he or she can operate a tractor. Tell your child that operating a tractor is a big responsibility that requires training and physical and emotional maturity.

**On My Farm:**

Write your  
rule here

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Stay off  
tractors.





## Pointers for parents

- *Follow the "No Rider" rule.*

Discuss your "No Rider" rule with your child. Tell your child why you cannot allow riders on the tractor. Post decals on fenders to remind everyone about the rule.

- *Don't allow children on training seats.* Some tractors are designed with a training seat, which is not intended for joy rides. These training seats can be used to train new employees in safe operation of tractors, and are meant only as an instructional tool. There still are risks associated with riding on a tractor using a training seat.

- *Satisfy curiosity in other ways.*

Give your child a "tour" of the tractor when it is turned off and you are with your child. It may make it easier to keep the "No Rider" rule.

- *Talk about family rules with others.*

Relatives, especially grandparents, and neighbors need to know how you feel about this issue. Others may not understand (or want to abide by) your rule so it's VERY important that you tell them!\* Children also need to feel comfortable about saying "no" to an adult who offers them a ride on the tractor.

## Family follow-up activities

1. Draw a picture of a tractor on your farm. Write the family rule underneath the tractor. (You may want to send this picture to a grandparent or relative.)
2. Contact Farm Safety 4 Just Kids for "No Rider" decals. Put a decal on each tractor used on your farm. Consider giving decals to relatives who live on a farm.
3. Act out saying "no" to relatives, friends, and neighbors who offer you a ride on a tractor.

### \* **Saying "no" with style**

Here are two polite ways to say why your child cannot have a tractor ride:

*"I know we gave tractor rides when I was growing up and I was lucky to not be injured, but now we know the risks of being an extra rider. I don't want my child to be that one who gets hurt or killed as an extra rider on a tractor."*

*"Our child is very bright and will learn how to drive a tractor quickly when he or she is the right age to safely be instructed."*

**Where to Go from Here and  
Other Resources**



## Where to Go from Here

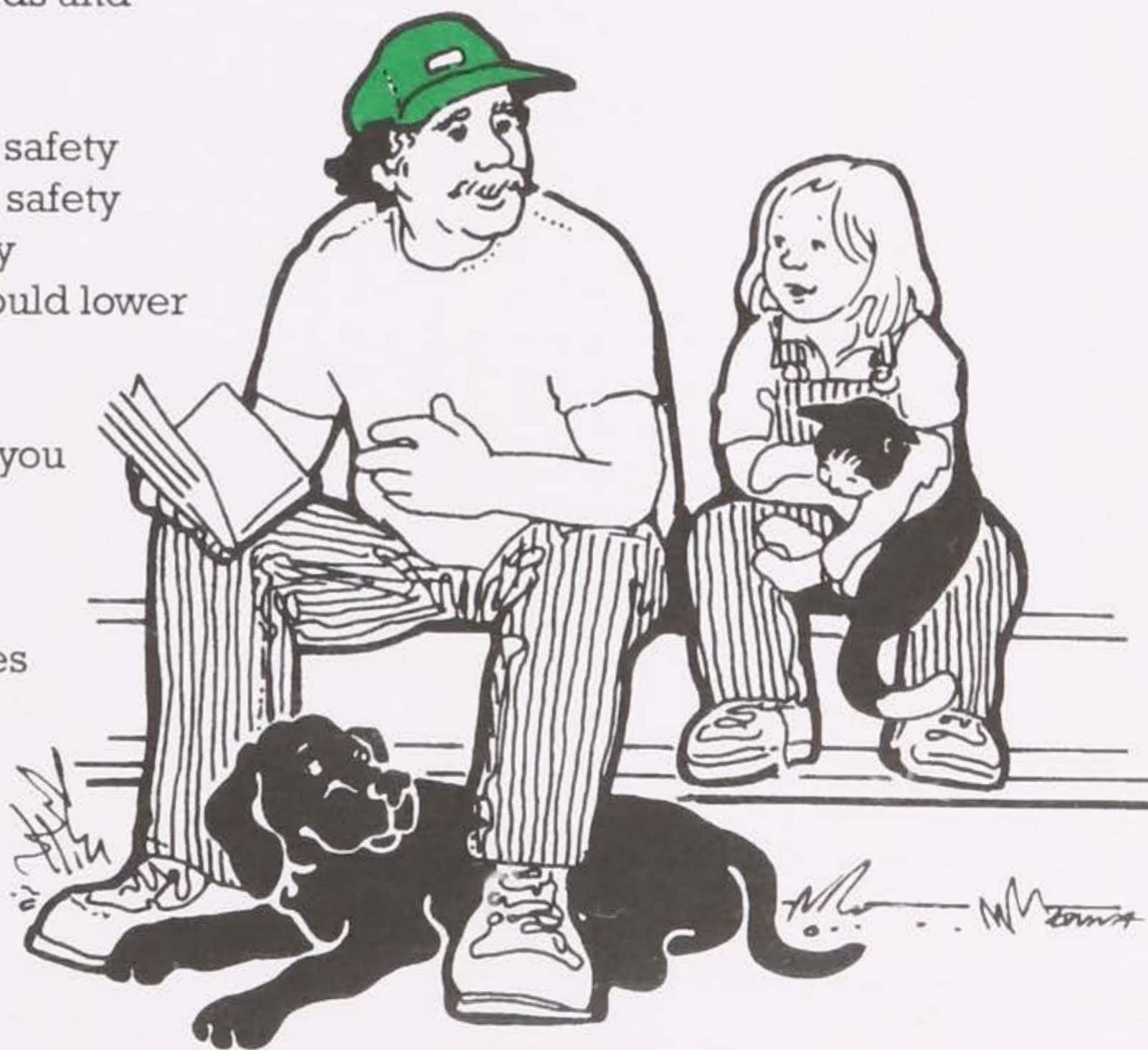
By using the structured dialogue, information, and imagery in this book, you have started an important discussion with your child about how to be safe on the farm. This is merely a safety foundation for your child and you will need to continue building on it year after year. Remember that safety is a life-long process of learning about hazards and making good choices.

How do you know your effort in safety education is working? Effective safety education produces good safety attitudes and behaviors that should lower the number of injuries. **The reward for being safe is that nothing happens!** That means you and your child are not experiencing injuries.

After this page are several pages where you and your child can carry on the "what would you do?" activity.

Create your own situation, then draw a picture to explain the family rule that addresses the situation.

Remember that the most important part is the interaction and discussions you have with your child. Enjoy the activity and always be safe!



**W**hat would you do

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?

**On My  
Farm:**

Write your

rule here

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**W**hat would you do

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**On My  
Farm:**

Write your

rule here

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**W**hat would you do

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**On My  
Farm:**

Write your

rule here

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## Other Resources

Like other life skills, safety is not learned in one discussion, book, class, or farm safety day camp. It is an attitude developed over time in which a child can understand various hazards and make good choices.

As parents guide their child toward a good safety attitude, they may need additional resources to help them understand the various stages of growth and the different environments

where their child lives and plays. On the next two pages are selected groups and organizations with information that parents can use to educate their child.

To find appropriate topics, look for the icon in the left-hand column beside the organization. These icons correspond with topics covered in each chapter of this book.

Resource list updated March 2007

### Look for these icons

Organizations on the following pages were selected because they offer helpful information about topics in this book, shown by these icons:



Animals and Livestock



Electricity, Chemicals, and  
Other Farmstead Hazards



Emergencies



Grain



Lawnmowers, ATVs, and  
Farm Machinery



Tractors





**American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC)**

3201 New Mexico Avenue

Suite #330

Washington, DC 20016

Phone: (202) 362-7217

[www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org)

The AAPCC will help you locate the nearest Poison Control Center.



**American Red Cross (ARC)**

2025 E Street, NW

Washington, DC 20006

Phone: (202) 303-4498

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

This not-for-profit organization provides support during emergencies and assistance in locating local chapters.



**Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)**

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Phone: (202) 720-7441

1400 Independence Ave. S W stop 2201 [www.csrees.usda.gov](http://www.csrees.usda.gov)

Washington, DC 20250-2201

CSREES can help you find your local extension service office.



**Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM)**

6737 W. Washington St. Suite 2400

Phone: (414) 272-0943

Milwaukee, WI 53214-5647

[www.aem.org](http://www.aem.org)

AEM has information about agricultural equipment and safety resources.



**Farm Safety 4 Just Kids (FS4JK)**

110 S. Chestnut Avenue

Phone: (800) 423-5437

P.O. Box 458

[www.fs4jk.org](http://www.fs4jk.org)

Earlham, IA 50072

This not-for-profit organization has farm safety resources targeting youth.



**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

500 C Street SW

Phone: 1 (800) 621-FEMA(3362)

Washington, DC 20472

[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

FEMA has information for emergencies appropriate for adults and children.



**National Food and Energy Council (NFEC)**

P.O. Box 309

Phone: (937) 383-0001

2333 Rombach Ave.

[www.nfec.org](http://www.nfec.org)

Wilmington, OH 45177

This not-for-profit organization has information about electrical safety.

**National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA)**

1250 Eye Street NW Suite 1003

Phone: (202) 289-0873

Washington, DC 20005-3922

[www.ngfa.org](http://www.ngfa.org)

NGFA has information about grains and grain handling including grain safety issues.

**National Network for Child Care**[www.nncc.org](http://www.nncc.org)

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service/USDA

The NNCC shares information from universities about children and child care.

**National Safety Council (NSC)**

1121 Spring Lake Drive

Phone: (630) 285-1121

Itasca, IL 60143-3201

[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)

NSC is a not-for-profit organization that can locate first aid classes and resource materials for safety.

**Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI)**

341 S. Patrick Street

Phone: (703) 549-7600

Alexandria, VA 22314

[www.mow.org](http://www.mow.org)

This group has safety information about lawnmowers and other outdoor power equipment.

**Temple Grandin's Web Page**

Department of Animal Sciences



Colorado State University

[www.grandin.com](http://www.grandin.com)

Fort Collins, CO 80523-1679

This site has behavior information for animals and links to other animal-related sites.

**U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)**

4330 East West Highway

Phone: (301) 504-7923

Bethesda, MD 20814

[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

This not-for-profit organization issues warnings for consumer products.

## Know which plants and flowers on your farm are poisonous\*

Common name	Scientific name	Poisonous part of plant
<b>Houseplants</b>		
Dumbcane	Dieffenbachia species	All plant parts
English ivy	Hedera helix	Leaves, berries
Oleander	Nerium oleande	Leaves, flowers, twigs
Amaryllis	Hippeastrum hybrida	Bulb
<b>Flowers</b>		
Foxglove	Digitalis species	Leaves, flowers, seeds
Lily-of-the-valley	Convallaria majalis	Leaves, flowers, fruits, roots
Sweet pea	Lathyrus species	Seeds
Larkspur	Delphinium species	Seeds, young growth
Daffodil	Narcissus species	Bulb
Hyacinth	Hyacinthus orientalis	Bulb
<b>Native plants</b>		
Mayapple	Podophyllum peltatum	Leaves, flowers, stems, roots, unripe fruit
Black nightshade	Solanum americanum	All parts
Pokeweed	Phytolacca americana	All parts
Water hemlock	Cicuta maculata	All parts
<b>Woody plants</b>		
Hydrangea	Hydrangea species	Leaves, flowers, buds
Rhododendron, Azalea	Rhododendron species	Leaves, twigs
Buckeye	Aesculus species	Seeds
Wisteria	Wisteria species	Seeds, pods

\*Common names may vary by region.

The type of poisoning listed above is by ingestion. Note that some plants, such as poison ivy or poison oak, are poisonous upon contact and can cause skin irritations or other reactions.

This information was obtained from *Poisonous Plants of the United States and Canada*, and *Human Poisoning from Native and Cultivated Plants*.

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Permission to use the two real-life stories in this book was provided by Ashley Lerch and Andy Larsen and their parents. Permission to reproduce Ashley's photograph on page 5 was obtained from Lifetouch Portrait Studios Inc. Permission to reproduce Andy's photograph on page 11 was obtained from Lifetouch National School Studios Inc. The warning decals on pages 42 and 60 were developed by Farm Safety 4 Just Kids, who granted permission to reproduce them for this project.

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File: Engineering 6; Health & Safety 2-2





**W**hat *Would You Do?* presents an engaging way for parents to talk to their children about farm dangers. This book includes illustrations of 24 real-life scenarios, each showing a different type of hazard and that asks the question, "What would you do?"

No central registry of farm injuries to children exists in the United States, but safety experts estimate that more than 100 children die and almost 22,000 are seriously injured each year.

*What Would You Do?* is designed for children four to eight years old, an age when children are beginning to explore their surroundings on their own.