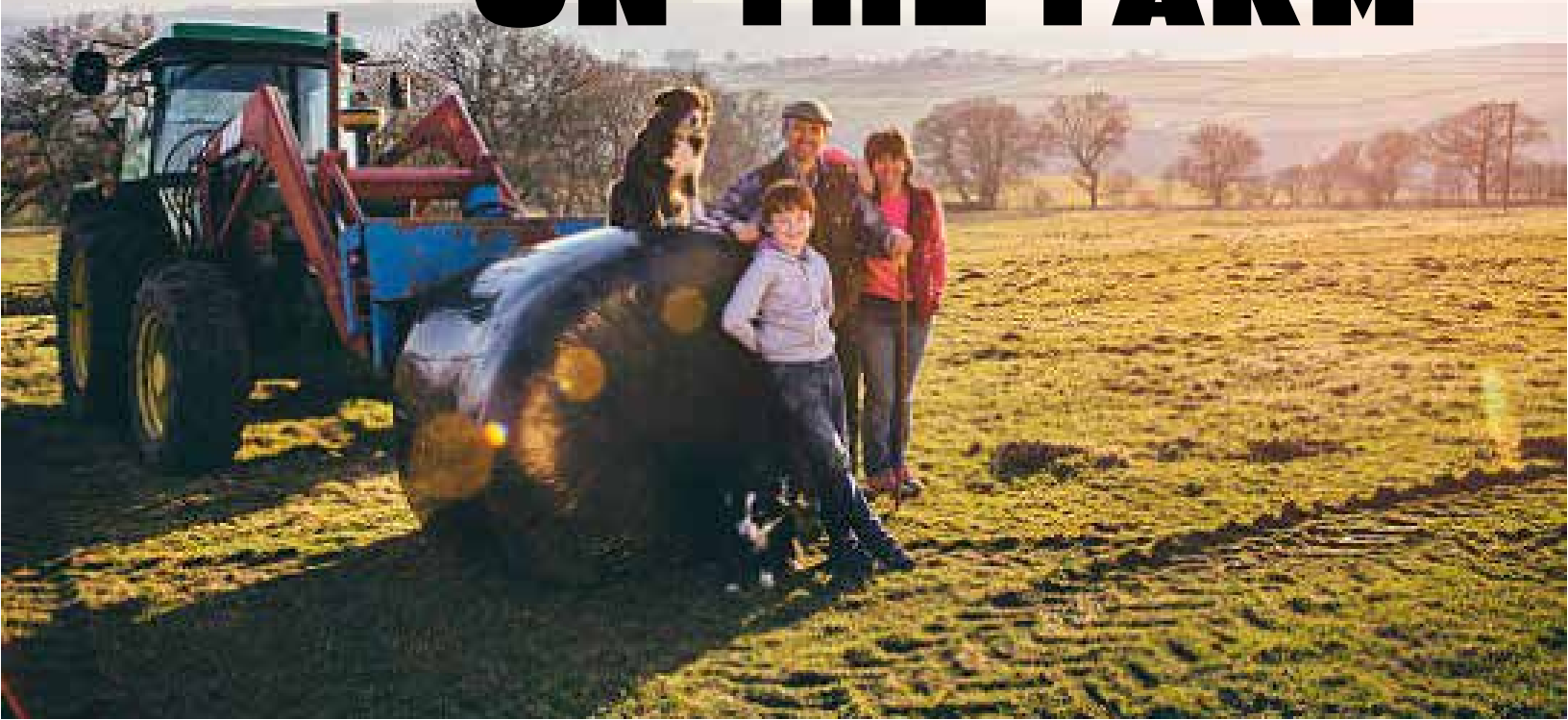


THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN **ON THE FARM**



Keeping kids safe on the farm is critical if the family hopes to keep the farm in the family in the future. Most farms are kept from generation to generation in the same family.

The best way to keep your children safe is to have a specifically designated play area in your farmyard. Too often, the entire farm is considered a safe play space by both children and parents. By limiting your children's play area to a specific location you greatly increase the safety zone and decrease their exposure to farm dangers.

Injuries involving children can be prevented through attention to details, and a sound understanding of fundamental safety principles.

Keep children away from farm machinery

More children are killed or injured on the farm due to machinery than any other cause. Many of these tragedies occur when an operator starts a machine without knowing a child is in the area. In others, the neglect is more obvious; for example, when a child falls

from farm equipment or off a tractor fender.

Hazardous Materials

Farm chemicals can be quite dangerous. Make sure children do not have access to dangerous equipment or chemicals. If children, especially small children, get their hands on them, the results are often tragic. The same can be true with more commonplace items such as gasoline and matches.

Farms use pesticides and other chemicals to produce high quality food and fibre. Chemicals should be stored in a cabinet, room or building that can be locked. Keep chemicals in their original containers and properly labelled. Never throw chemical containers or small leftover amounts in the garbage or otherwise accessible to children. Properly dispose of them according to environmental requirements. This is a good practice for everyone, not just the farmer.

Buildings and other structures

Buildings are usually designed to be safe. However, poor design or disrepair can lead to serious consequences. Children should only be allowed in buildings when accompanied by an adult. Grain bins should be off-limits to children.

Gravity wagons

All work areas should also be off-limits to children. You should know where children are before starting to unload a wagon. Older children who are helping out should be made aware of flowing grain hazards.

Livestock

Even good-tempered animals may become dangerous. Toddlers can be knocked down and trampled by cattle that would hardly notice the child's presence. The quietest animal can become dangerous if it or its offspring feel threatened.



Educate children about safety

Teach children about the rudiments of safety, such as which areas of the farm are off-limits. As they get older, kids can learn why certain things are dangerous. When children begin helping with farm work, proper training is essential. Adults should keep a child's limited strength and experience in mind. It is especially easy to assume that the safe way of doing something is obvious. For a child, safety has to be explained and always enforced. Little children simply don't understand many of the factors pertaining to safety

Make safe choices

Children often repeat the actions that they see, and farmers and their workers should always consider the safe choices when working. Setting a good example can make a life or death difference. Remember, if you farm safely, so will they. Take this opportunity to become more safety conscious. Be aware of the ordinary hazards of daily life, and be prepared for the unexpected. Know what to do in an emergency. As a farmer, you have a responsibility to act safely to protect yourself and the children around you.

