Christa Hartsook 00:00
Welcome to the small farms podcast, a production of the small farms program at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. This is Episode 12, where I interview Alyssa Dick agritourism specialists for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. And we're talking about farm safety. I'm Christa Hartsook, Small farms program coordinator, and we hope you enjoy the show. Alisa, welcome to the show!

Alyssa Dick 00:26
Hi, Christa. Thanks for having me.

Christa Hartsook 00:29
Today we're talking about farm safety. Why is that so important?

Alyssa Dick 00:33
Very important because agriculture ranks amongst the most hazardous industries and those working on a farm or acreage are at a very high risk for fatal and non fatal injuries. Farming is also one of the few industries in which family members are also at risk for on farm injuries. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, about 1,000 Farm related injuries receive medical attention yearly. Because of this, we need to all stay up to date on our farm safety knowledge.

Christa Hartsook 01:02
Perfect. Are there some main safety concerns we really need to be mindful of on an acreage or small farm Alyssa?
Alyssa Dick 01:09
Definitely, such as farm equipment, chemicals and animals, which can all be safety concerns.

Christa Hartsook 01:16
Let's talk about ATVs first. I know a lot of people out there have ATVs, they're utilizing them with their family. We need to make sure we're following safe riding habits. What does that include?

Alyssa Dick 01:27
Having the right protection is one of the most important things and can make the rider feel more comfortable and reduce the chance of injury. All body parts need protection, especially the head. Make sure to wear an ATV specific helmet, long sleeve shirts and pants, gloves and boots. Also, even though ATV seats are large, they're built for only one rider. The seat allows the driver room to move on operating the ATV. And what many people don't know is that ATVs are intended for off road use only. They are not designed for operation on highways and may be difficult to control on paved surfaces. Make sure to check out your state laws at www.atvsafety.gov. In Iowa no passengers are allowed on the ATV unless it is designed to carry more than one person.

Christa Hartsook 02:19
Okay, Alyssa, it's summertime and I know on a lot of small farms or acreage is there some baling or maybe some mowing, you know, ditch work going on with tractors? Obviously, that can cause some safety concerns. What does good tractor safety look like?

Alyssa Dick 02:34
Yes, well first, farm machinery, including tractors is the leading source of fatalities on the farm in the United States, and families have had a dangerous tradition of allowing children to ride on tractors, but you should never allow a rider on the draw bar, fender, lap, or a loader bucket. Riders face the hazard of being run over as they're the first to bounce off the tractor. A rider can also distract the driver or bump controls. Learning about power takeoff safety is one of the first lessons that should be taught on the farm. Power take offs are used on the farm to transfer power from the tractor to another implement, such as a grain auger, manure spreader, mower, or feed grinder and they're found on most tractors. An entanglement can occur in the drive line between the tractor and the implement and can cause some of the most serious injuries on the farm. Never step over the PTO even if it's not running. Make it a habit of walking around it at all times. Do not wear jewelry or loose clothing and always tie back long hair. Some more general tractor safety tips include: not letting children play on or in any tractor, never stand behind a
tractor backing up to hitch machinery, know how to shut off tractors, never approach a tractor operator without them knowing you're in the area, and discuss how you get the attention of a tractor operator with your family.

Christa Hartsook  04:00
Awesome and what happens if, you know, an owner operator is taking that tractor on the road?

Alyssa Dick  04:06
Yes, tractor share the roadways with other vehicles especially during planting and harvest seasons. Tractor drivers need to be aware of the other vehicles and take special precautions to prevent collisions. Before traveling on public roadways, conduct a pre ride inspection on the tractor and any implements you may be towing. Make sure you have plenty of fuel, all lights and signals work properly. Adjust all mirrors and have a slow moving vehicle emblem on display. Be aware of buildup of traffic behind you and traveling and always look in your mirrors to be aware of your surroundings.

Christa Hartsook  04:45
That's great information. Alyssa, I know that we have animals on our small farm and I know a lot of our listeners do as well. What practices should we be following to keep ourselves, our kids, our animals, and then maybe any potential visitors to our farms safe.

Alyssa Dick  05:02
According to National Safety Council, 17% of all farm injuries involve animals. In comparison to humans, animals see in black and white, have difficulty judging distances, have extremely sensitive hearing, are frightened by loud noises and frequency sounds, and are very protective of their young. Even though an animal may look friendly, all animals need to be treated with respect as they can be unpredictable. Teach children to be alert when around livestock and do so yourself. Gases produced by animal wastes can also be dangerous to children and adults. Those unaware of the dangers can become incapacitated before they even know they're in danger. Toxic gases especially in confined spaces, such as manure pits, silos, and grain bins can pose hazards to humans and animals. If possible, avoid entering a manure pit at all times, even if the pit has been emptied. Ventilate the pit and buildings during agitation of waste. Never enter a pit during agitation and when repairing a waste storage area wear an oxygen mask and tank.

Christa Hartsook  06:10
All good information. Summers not only the time for gardens, lawns, and landscapes to grow, but obviously we're going to have additional weeds and maybe some insect problems. If we are out and about and applying herbicides or pesticides, what do we really need to read and watch for in those instances?
Alyssa Dick  06:30
Chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and fertilizer can enter the body by breathing, absorption through the skin, eating or drinking, injection such as cuts or needles, and eyes. 97% of all chemical spraying exposure happens through contact with the skin. When using pesticides, always check the pesticide label and see what personal protective equipment is required by law. Each container label has specific requirements for personal protective equipment based on the ingredients in the chemical. To prevent chemical hazards lock all chemicals away from young children, heed all warnings listed on chemical labels, store all chemicals and original containers, and if chemical exposure takes place, seek immediate medical attention. Another important prevention method is safe laundry practices, which is something a lot of us may not think about. Protective clothing during chemical application will be contaminated. When the clothing enters the house, that contamination can expose others in the household by washing machine residue to other clothing, direct contact, or indirect contact by placing garments on furniture, floors, and counters. Some general safe laundry tips are: wash personal protective equipment separate from family members, use hot water when washing, and rinse washing machine before washing other clothing. If you suspect someone has been exposed to a chemical, call for help as soon as possible by either calling 911 or the poison control center. After you call for help be sure the victim is breathing, get victim away from area and to fresh air, remove contaminated clothing, if chemicals in the eye rinse eye for 30 minutes with cool water, cover victim with a blanket and make sure the chemical label stays with the victim so that medical professionals can see it.

Christa Hartsook  08:32
All right, and finally Alyssa, what about just basic general first aid, you know accidents are going to happen. We should have some basic first aid kits available, but we're really should they be located and what should they include?

Alyssa Dick  08:46
So having more than one kit is very important. Consider developing several kits to specific hazards and potential injury. A first aid kit may look different in the barn compared to one on our tractor. And pack items for individual needs. Make sure your emergency kit contains personal medical information and supplies for those with medical conditions. Such as someone allergic to bee venom needs appropriate items included. Name and phone number of family doctors for everyone should be included. Always include emergency numbers. A card should tell you how to contact an ambulance, hospital, or fire department, and have written directions about how to get to the farmstead, field, or work area. You also need to check your kit every three months. Inspect for expired supplies, replace items that are dusty, and make sure supplies fit the season.

Christa Hartsook  09:44
Awesome. Thank you so much. Alyssa. Are there other resources or places that we could go for more information?
Alyssa Dick  09:50
Definitely. Farm safety for just kids is a great website with information, activities, and resources all related to farm safety. There are also multiple publications on the extension store that are free to download.

Christa Hartsook  10:05
Thanks so much for being on the show, we appreciate it!

Alyssa Dick  10:09
Yes, thanks for having me!