

# Agriculture sector

Our priority plan for the agriculture sector covers farming and related services, with a particular emphasis on dairy, beef, and sheep farming. Around a quarter of WorkSafe's targeted frontline activities will be in agriculture because of the high rate of acute harm and the range of serious risks in this sector.

Agriculture accounts for around 25% of serious acute harm in Aotearoa New Zealand while having only 6% of employment. There is persistent harm associated with farm vehicles, especially in dairy, beef, and sheep farming. There are also serious risks from working with machinery, agrichemicals, and farm animals, in difficult and sometimes remote environments.

The distance, terrain, and seasonal variation in farming make it harder to ensure our workplace assessments are in the right place at the right time. We will use data and intelligence to target our assessments, focusing on serious risks such as

vehicles, machinery, and hazardous substances. We will respond to notifications about serious risk or harm and be clear about when we will take action.

Farming is a way of life for many people in Aotearoa New Zealand, and health and safety must be part of this way of life. WorkSafe will influence health and safety culture by working with organisations that are trusted by farming communities. We will contribute to the implementation of the Safer Farms 'Farm Without Harm' strategy by sharing data and insights and aligning our assessment and enforcement activity with the priorities of Safer Farms.

## WorkSafe's priorities

Priorities	Why	Objectives
<b>Reinforce the sector-led 'Farm Without Harm' strategy</b>	Being clear on our role in the system, and doing that well, will support the efforts of Safer Farms and other agricultural sector leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WorkSafe and sector partners have a shared understanding of the highest priority actions and who will lead</li> <li>- Improved trust and confidence in WorkSafe among our sector partners</li> </ul>
<b>Target interventions in the areas of highest harm or risk</b>	Targeting the actions only we can take will make effective use of our resources to influence better outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses make a change after interaction with WorkSafe</li> <li>- Investigations and prosecutions are targeted to maximise their deterrent effect</li> </ul>
<b>Work through trusted sources of influence to promote better health and safety practices</b>	Agricultural health and safety messaging is most effective when disseminated through trusted channels to improve reach, supported by targeted enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved understanding of health and safety responsibilities</li> <li>- Improved risk management practices</li> </ul>

## Top harms

- A vehicle rolls or crashes
- A worker is hit by a falling object
- A worker is caught or trapped in machinery
- A worker is hit or bitten by an animal
- A worker is exposed to substances hazardous to health including welding fumes and toxic chemicals.

## Key risk factors

- Low maturity safety culture
- Poor work organisation and planning practices
- Poor hazard identification and risk management practices
- Environmental risk factors such as weather, terrain, and temperature
- Job stressors influenced by weather and economic factors
- Poor selection, use, and maintenance of machinery and vehicles

## Partner concerns

- Insights and information about what WorkSafe is seeing
- Greater collaboration with WorkSafe on shared priorities
- Vehicle-related harm
- Risk identification and management capability
- Health and safety culture and leadership

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## What WorkSafe will do:

Priority	Initiative	Initiative description
<b>Reinforce the sector-led 'farm without harm' strategy</b>	Share WorkSafe data and insights with Safer Farms	Share WorkSafe data and insights with Safer Farms, including fatalities, notifications patterns, and what our inspectorate sees, so they can influence change through their channels.
	Tailor our communications to better connect with and influence farmers	Tailor our communications and maximise our influence at times when farmers may be more alert to our messages, for example during seasonal high-risk periods, when harm occurs, or when we successfully prosecute or agree to an enforceable undertaking.
	Give certainty to the sector through a clear and credible enforcement position	Establish our enforcement position for the agricultural sector, clearly communicate our expectations, and follow through with action consistent with our position.
<b>Target interventions in the areas of highest harm or risk</b>	Target management of substances hazardous to health	Undertake workplace assessments targeting the farms with highest exposures to substances hazardous to health, including dusts, fumes, infectious biological material, and toxic chemicals. Assess compliance with storage and use requirements for hazardous substances. Prioritise response to notifications related to substances hazardous to health. Where we find poor practice, take action aligned to the sector enforcement position.
	Target vehicle and machinery safety	Undertake workplace assessments targeting farms with highest risks of harm from vehicles and machinery. Prioritise response to notifications related to harm from vehicles and machinery. Where we find poor practice, take action aligned to the sector enforcement position.
	Build understanding of effective interventions in agriculture	Investigate and compare intervention approaches to identify the most effective ways to engage and enforce in agriculture.
<b>Work through trusted sources of influence to promote better health and safety practices</b>	Influence through organisations and events where rural people meet and seek advice	Target the organisations and events where we can most effectively reach businesses and workers at greatest risk of harm. Work with these organisations and events to deliver education and training, and share tools and resources, targeting management of vehicles, machinery, and hazardous exposures.
	Target delivery of tailored programmes to reach workers at greater risk	Deliver our equity-focused programmes, build our understanding of workers at greatest risk of harm, and explore how WorkSafe can influence the relevant risk factors.

## How we will track our progress

### During Year 1 we expect to see

- Agreed sector priorities for guidance and information sharing.
- Kōrero on lessons learned from Te Kawa a Ahuwhenua.
- Workplace assessments targeted to agriculture in line with our planned resource distribution, delivered in a nationally consistent way.
- Continued enforcement and investigations in accordance with our current policies and protocols.

### During Year 2 we expect to see

- Two-way information sharing between WorkSafe and agriculture sector partners.
- Clearly communicated expectations for agriculture businesses.
- Consistent focus on key risk factors in our workplace assessments, enforcement, and investigations.
- Exploration of opportunities for equity-focused programmes in agriculture.