

OH&S GUIDANCE SCHOOL VISITS TO DAIRY FARMS FOR FARMERS

The information in this document is intended as a general guide only, it is not intended to be comprehensive concerning its subject matter and you are urged to seek further advice.

In particular, your State's Education Department will have specific policies and procedures for you to comply with when hosting a visit to your dairy farm by a school group. For further information on farm safety generally, please go to farmsafe.org.au.

This document and a separate OH&S Guidance document for farmers can be on our Dairy Australia web page dairyaustralia.com.au. You should review both documents before the visit. Visits to dairy farms are recognised as being an enjoyable experience for all age groups, especially children. Schools are encouraged to visit farms so children can learn about rural life, dairy farming and become familiar with the animals on the farm.

Australian dairy farmers have an obligation under law to provide a safe and healthy workplace and must consider the health and safety of any visitors, especially children, to their farm. Safety does not just mean falls or accidents, exposure to bacteria such as E.coli O157* can be the most serious concern.

Please see below for information that you may find useful when hosting a visit to your farm:

DON'T

- Don't let visitors drink unpasteurised or raw milk.
- Don't let visitors walk through calf rearing pens.
- Don't let visitors taste animal foods.
- Don't let visitors drink from taps unless they are clearly marked 'drinking water'.
- Don't leave keys in unattended farm vehicles.
- Don't let visitors drive any farm vehicles.

Don't let visitors ride in trailers.

Don't let visitors climb on fences, farm machinery or vehicles.

DO

Ensure that you have reviewed and complied with your State Education Department's and the visiting school's policy and procedures on safety for outdoor activities.

Consider whether or not the visiting school or your State Education Department require a risk assessment prior to the excursion being undertaken.

Ask the appropriate staff member from the visiting school if they require you or your staff to have a 'Working with Children' Check.

Brief visiting teachers/organisers on your safety rules prior to the visit so they can brief the children in advance.

Ensure that you have a fully equipped first aid kit.

Ensure your farm business has extensive and up to date public liability insurance.

Make sure you provide hand washing facilities for visitors to use before and after contact with animals. Water, soap and paper towels are essential.

Lock away all chemicals.

As soon as the visitors arrive, brief them on the following important points:

- Safety rules for the visit.
- Areas visitors should be aware of and avoid from a hazard point of view such as electric fences, vehicle paths, chemical storage areas, dangerous machinery, lakes and rivers.
- Point out the location of the toilets, hand washing facilities and meeting points in case of an emergency.

Ensure visitors only consume food and drink after thoroughly washing their hands with water and soap. Food is to be consumed in areas designated for eating and drinking.

Ensure visitors are supervised at all times and no one leaves the group unattended.

* There have been a number of outbreaks of E.coli O157 in Britain and Canada recent years. Some young children have died as a result of E.coli O157 infections that have been linked to farm visits. You may wish to refer to the internet or your nearest library for more information on E.coli O157.