

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

FS605
February, 1992

Accident Proofing Farms and Stables¹

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Accident-proofing your farm is one of the most important tasks you will ever do. It takes a lot of time, effort and planning to ensure that family, employees and visitors will be less likely to be injured or killed because of the safety measures practiced. Orientate visitors on what to expect on the farm, and do not leave visitors unsupervised.

Unfortunately, no matter how well you and all those directly involved in farm operations prepare, train and follow safe farm operation procedures, the farm owner or manager always runs the risk of unwanted visitors. There are numerous reasons, legal and illegal, as to why people wander onto farmland. Most people trespass for recreational or non-farming purposes such as; hunting, fishing, swimming and picnicking; all of which usually take place without permission of farm management. It is in the best interest of farm management to dissuade unwanted visitors. Unwanted visitors are a liability.

This fact sheet will provide farm owners and managers with information and ideas that will help management identify and eliminate attractive nuisances and also help lessen the chance of unwanted visitors becoming injured on your farm.

- Signs should be posted around the perimeter of the farm, and at all trails or roadways leading onto the property, stating that trespassing for any reason is not permitted. The signs will discourage persons from infiltrating farm property without prior approval. Check with state and local authorities regarding type of signs and proper distance between the signs.²
- Fences around the perimeter of the farm are ideal, but are often cost prohibitive. If fences are present, they should be in good repair. When wire or cable is used for a gate closure, especially across a roadway, the wire or cable should be clearly marked with flags, a sign or reflective markers.
- Livestock fencing should be secure, in good repair and of adequate type and height for the livestock it is housing. If electric fence is in use, the fence line should be marked with warning signs. Gates should always be closed and secured with a chain and hook, and preferably with a padlock in areas where pastures are not in direct sight of actively occupied buildings.
- Do not pasture animals such as stallions or bulls in areas that are readily accessible to the public. Stud pastures should be visible to an employee active area of the farm and fencing should be adequate to house such animals.
- Ponds, wells, large stock tanks, drainage pits and lagoons should all be fenced with locked gates to prevent entry to these areas. If fencing of a pond or waterway is not feasible extra effort should be made to prohibit the use of an attraction i.e., boat or dock. If possible remove and secure all boats out of the

1. This document is FS605, a series of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Publication date: February, 1992.
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water. Boats left in the water should be chained to a secure post. Access areas to docks and dams should be fenced with a locked gate to prevent entry onto these structures. Have rescue devices by ponds or water sources in case of an emergency.

- Electrical switch boxes should be locked. High voltage areas need to be securely fenced.
- Machinery buildings should be kept locked if possible. If a locked storage area for machinery is not available, a special effort must be made to ensure that keys are always removed from the ignition, brakes are locked on and wheels blocked. Do not invite temptation from neighborhood children by leaving All-Terrain-Vehicles (ATVs) or similar vehicles available for use without permission or supervision.
- Hazardous passageways, hay drops, manure pits, etc. should be properly fenced and maintained safely. Doors to haylofts should be secured and not readily accessible to the public.
- Warning or Hazardous Area signs should be posted in all areas where a potential hazard exists such as; Loading/unloading zones, or regions where augers or high amounts of electricity are found.
- Chemical storage areas should be kept locked and warning signs posted to alert emergency crews to the fact that the area is used to store chemicals should an incident occur. (Refer to Rutgers Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet FS320, "Storage of Pesticides & Their Containers, for more detailed information).

- Care should be taken that all holes, pits and quarries be properly filled, covered or fenced.
- Do not leave ladders or any other climbing device in fruit orchards or other hazardous areas that may encourage people to climb.
- Should you allow hunting on the farm by yourself, family, friends or an organized gun club several precautions need to be taken. It is important that everyone is familiar with firearm safety and hunting rules and etiquette. Hunters should be advised of property boundaries and the proximity of all surrounding structures (houses, schools, barns), roadways, riding/hiking trails and public grounds such as a park). Hunting stands in trees should not be readily accessible to children who may come across them and try to climb up into the stand.

Take the time to walk around the farm and note areas of possible problems. By correcting these obstacles you are taking an active part in helping to reduce the number of unwanted visitors, injuries and law suits that can occur on your property.

REFERENCES

1. National Safety Council/Farm Family Insurance. *Your Farm Safety Is No Accident*. 1990.
2. New Jersey Statutes Annotated. Title 23-Fish and Game Laws. 1991.