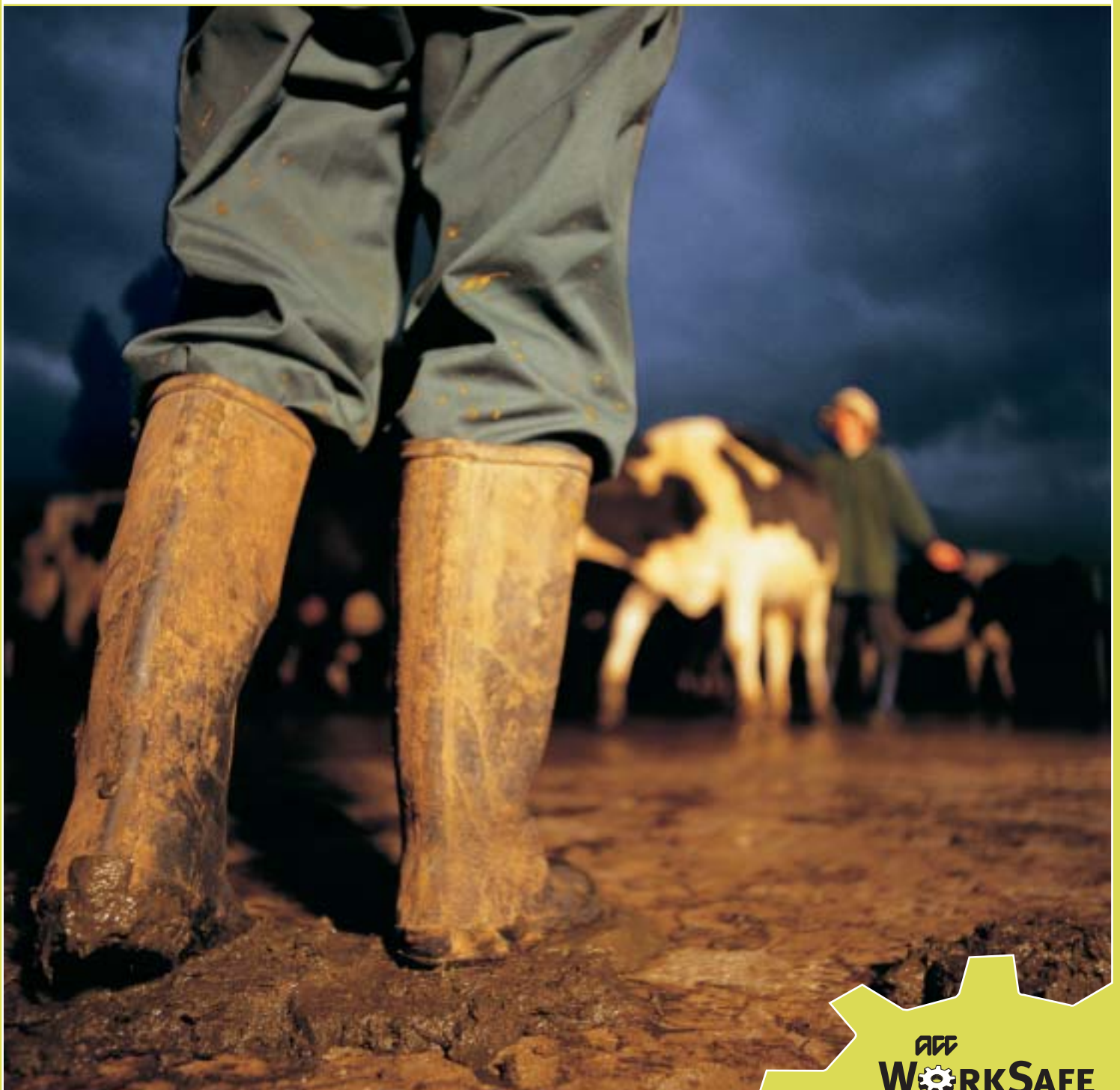




Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls

 AROUND THE FARM



→ SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

The farming industry accounts for most new injury claims received by ACC.

According to recent ACC claim data, slips, trips and falls make up about 19% of dairy industry injury claims.

The common causes of slips, trips and falls on farms include slippery paths, ladder mishaps, falls off steps, falls from roofs and getting on and off machinery.

What causes most slips, trips and falls in farming?

- Slippery surfaces – wet or icy weather conditions, water from sluicing, effluent, mud and manure. A change in weather can bring about unexpected changes in the surface conditions.
- Unexpected change to surface friction – like when you move from a surface with good slip resistance (eg, rubber matting) to a surface with a lower slip resistance (eg, wet, smooth concrete or polished wood).
- Speed – walking quickly or running.
- Footwear with non-grip or loose soles.
- Obstacles – a step or rise of as little as 9-10mm can cause a trip, eg, pipes or cables in the yards, and rough ground.
- Poorly designed steps – too high or insufficiently deep, or in poorly lit areas, eg, in and around the pit.
- Unsuitable or unstable ladders, and inappropriate use of ladders – eg, overreaching or carrying loads up or down.
- Falls from vehicles and equipment – eg, on slippery metal steps, when dismounting from vehicles onto rough ground, passengers falling from off-road vehicles.
- Falls from heights – eg, during maintenance, or from a shed roof.

Reducing the risks of slips, trips and falls on the farm

- Provide dry walking and working areas – eg, covered outdoor work areas.
- Use non-skid strips/surfaces on:
 - wet working surfaces – eg, catwalks in yards. Attach chicken netting securely to planks to provide non-slip surfaces
 - surfaces likely to get slippery – eg, woolsheds. Tongue and groove rimu is strong and slow wearing, provides good grip and does not splinter.
- Use slip-resistant shoes with good grip – eg, a large heel-to-surface contact area, and rubber soles and heels. Replace boots regularly – before the tread wears out.
- Provide handrails on steps, and make sure steps have the same rise and depth, visible edges with a good tread and no protrusions.
- Maintain the work area and equipment – eg, woolsheds. Check roofs are not leaking onto the boards (these become particularly slippery when wet). Look for protruding nails, screws and bolts sticking out – you should pull out, screw in or trim up.
- Provide adequate lighting, especially where there are steps, kerbs or obstacles – eg, in deer sheds. (Although deer are calmer when handled under reduced lighting and in covered sheds, lighting needs to be sufficient to allow handlers to work safely.)
- Slopes should be gradual, wide and slip-resistant.
- Visual cues like coloured strips alert people to changes in surface friction or level.
- Carry out regular housekeeping and clear up obstacles and spills as they occur, particularly in hazardous areas – like steps and slopes, and areas with regular foot traffic, eg, packing sheds and loading docks.

- Allow extra time when the conditions are slippery – eg, if it is wet or icy.
- Don't rush, especially on rough terrain or in poor weather conditions.
- Keep entrances and exits clear of clutter.
- Check your path is clear of obstructions before carrying loads.
- Ensure you can see over and around your load.

Reducing the risk of falls from heights on the farm

Use a harness or some sort of fall protection on roofs or in trees, etc. There are legal requirements for fall protection if working at heights greater than three metres.



LADDERS

Maintaining ladders

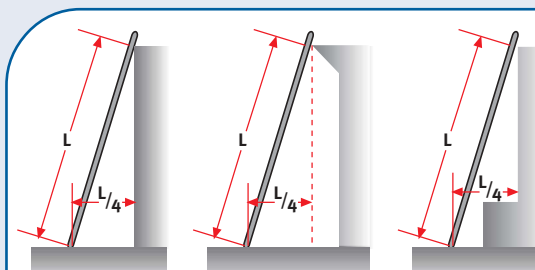
Inspect ladders regularly, and check for:

- bent or twisted stiles
- worn or split rungs or steps
- loose, bent or disconnected braces
- damaged or missing locking bars, rivets or non-slip feet.

Tag a defective ladder until it is repaired or replaced.

Using ladders

- Stand ladders on a level and firm base.
- The correct angle for a ladder is one (1) unit of measurement out at the base for every four (4) units of height.
- Secure the ladder at the top and bottom as soon as it is placed.
- Ladders should project at least one metre above any landing place.



- Maintain three points of contact when ascending or descending ladders – ie, two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.
- Work should be carried out from at least three steps down from the top of the ladder.
- Tools and other items should not be hung from the steps or rungs.
- Never overreach sideways – always get down and move the ladder. As a guide, your belt buckle should remain within the stiles of the ladder at all times.
- Ensure external ladders on silos start at a height unable to be reached by children.
- Fixed access ladders above six metres in height and steeper than 75 degrees should be fitted with cage guards or hoops and straps from a height of 2.5 metres.

→ Where cage guards or hoops are not possible on fixed access ladders, a fall-arrest system should be used.

USING MOBILE MACHINERY

- The climbing, walking and working surfaces of mobile machinery should be non-skid.
- Keep steps clean and dry.
- Do not allow passengers on mobile machinery unless there is an approved seating position fitted – eg, on tractors.

- There should be suitable hand-holds on each side of steps and ladders, and suitable foot- and hand-holds wherever someone could slip.
- Always face the machine when climbing on or dismounting and maintain three points of contact.



→ Further resources for the farmer...

visit → www.acc.co.nz/injury-prevention

or call → 0800 THINKSAFE (0800 844 657)

