



How to Keep Kids Safe Around Farm Animals

Byline: Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

Spring is finally here, bringing tulips, daffodils — and baby farm animals.

Few things are cuter than baby animals, so it's understandable that they're a source of lots of excitement for kids. However, even the friendliest animals can be unpredictable or become aggressive when scared or threatened. That's particularly true with protective mothers, who may kick, bite, or charge if they think their young are in danger.

While kids are often fascinated by farm animals — especially adorable newborns — it's important to remember that things could potentially turn dangerous without the right safety precautions.

Here are some precautions to help keep farm animal encounters enjoyable and safe for everyone.

Supervision is crucial

Supervision is key to protecting kids around farm animals. Never leave children alone around livestock, even animals that are typically friendly.

Having a designated safe play area, away from livestock, machinery, and other work areas on the farm, is also essential for keeping children safe. However, remember that safe play areas are not a replacement for adult supervision.

Teach kids to never enter livestock enclosures without supervision and show them how to exit quickly if needed. If possible, install latches on pens at a high level to prevent easy access.

Safe behaviour around animals

Livestock spook easily, so it's important that any kids who will be near farm animals understand how to behave around them. With any young farm visitors who are inexperienced with livestock, let them know that farm animals don't act the same as their cat or dog at home.

Teach children and youth to approach animals slowly and to not go near the hind legs of large animals like horses and cows. Explain that animals have much better hearing than humans, which is why it's important to use quiet, calm voices around them. Sudden loud noises or movements are a surefire way to startle livestock.



Signs of aggression

Animals have strong territorial instincts. So even animals that are often good-tempered can quickly become aggressive if they feel threatened, startled, or protective.

Any children or youth on the farm, especially those helping with tasks, need to know the warning signs of animal aggression or fear. These signs can include:

- Baring teeth
- Pinned back ears
- Pawing/stomping the ground
- Rapid tail movement
- Head shaking
- Loud noises

Remind kids to be careful around animals that are eating, sleeping, or with their young, to avoid stressing the animal or triggering aggression.

Working with livestock

Kids who grow up on a farm often start helping with tasks from an early age. However, it's important to have them only do age-appropriate work.

In agriculture, children and youth are at greater risk of injury compared to other industries. Assigning youth work that goes beyond their developmental level and abilities significantly increases the risk of injury or worse.

The [Ag Youth Work Guidelines](#) can help determine appropriate farm tasks for kids and youth. The guidelines outline ability requirements, hazards, protective strategies, adult responsibilities, and supervision by age.

It's also essential that any youth working with farm animals wear proper protective clothing, such as work boots and gloves.

Safe farm animal experiences start with respect and awareness. Teaching young ones early on about livestock safety helps keep kids and animals alike safe, healthy, and happy.

For more information and resources on keeping kids safe on the farm, visit www.kidsfarmsafe.ca.

About Kids FarmSafe Week

Kids FarmSafe Week is an annual public awareness campaign hosted by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association to promote the safety and wellness of children and youth on



Canadian farms. Now in its third year, Kids FarmSafe Week takes place May 11-17, 2026, and is presented by BASF Agricultural Solutions Canada Inc. More information can be found at www.kidsfarmsafe.ca.

About the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and safety of farmers, their families and agricultural workers. CASA is funded in part by the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. For more information, visit www.casa-acsa.ca.