

August a peak period for farm injuries

Farmers are being reminded of the risks posed by livestock and vehicles during calving as historically the number of injuries on dairy farms rocket up in August.

Although there are relatively few incidents causing injuries on farms in June, this number doubles in July and then more than doubles again in August. Dairy farmers in particular are more likely to be injured by cows in August than in any time of the year.

The two main injuries are to the lower back and neck, and the two main causes are being kicked, stood on or bitten by animals, or muscular stress from lifting or carrying.

In addition, uneven ground, sharp objects, motorbikes and quads, and fences or railings are involved in injuries to the neck and shoulders, as well as back sprains, ankle strains and eye injuries.

Al McCone, WorkSafe Agriculture Programme Manager, says the calving season means dairy farmers are working long hours in the dark, cold and wet.

“Farmers are dealing with stropky animals, and doing lots of lifting and carrying. With this work comes a lot of risk. We’re encouraging farmers to think about the things that cause injury during this time of year and think about how to deal with them before they happen. It’s a good idea to ensure everyone on farm does the thinking.

“Check everyone involved is capable of working with cows, or is partnered with someone who has good stock sense and experience. It’s far better to prevent an injury than to cope with the loss of a worker or family member for a few weeks. A worker sent home with a back injury means someone else has to do that job. This could mean hiring extra staff, or getting your existing staff to work longer hours to get the job done.

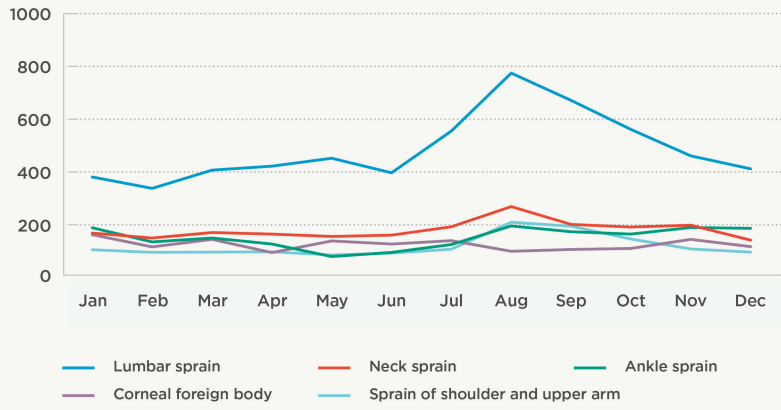
“Get people to practice good lifting techniques - whether picking up calves, or buckets, or bags of powder. It is also good practice to minimise the distance when carrying heavy loads across uneven ground. If people are doing the same tasks over and over again, take a break and stretch your back, shoulders and neck.

“As it is a busy time, eating a proper meal and drinking water is the last thing you think about. But it’s important to get the right nutrition and to stay hydrated so that you don’t get fatigued as quickly.

“These simple steps will go a long way to keeping you safe and keeping you farming.”

For more information on staying safe on farms, go to www.saferfarms.org.nz

ACC CLAIMS DAIRY WORKPLACE INJURIES 2008-2015 BY MONTH BY TOP 5 INJURIES



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