

Egg farm fined after worker trapped in running conveyor machinery

- Worker's clothing was trapped in machinery.
- HSE investigation found no fixed or interlocking guarding had been installed.
- HSE guidance on safeguarding machinery is available on its website

A poultry and egg production company has been convicted after a worker suffered serious nerve damage when his clothing became entangled in conveyor belt machinery at a farm near Banff.

On 15 October 2024, a 36-year-old man was working at Mains of Auchenbadie Farm during a routine cleaning operation.

During his shift, the employee heard an unusual noise coming from an egg collection conveyor. Without stopping the machinery, as he had been trained to do, he climbed into the confined space between the two manure conveyor belts to investigate. His clothing was caught in the in-running nip between the pressure roller and the underside of the upper manure conveyor belt. His colleague used an emergency stop button to halt the machinery and the emergency services were called to free him.

The employee was taken to hospital where he was found to have suffered nerve damage in both arms. It took three months for full function to be restored to his right arm. He returned to work in February 2025 and remains employed by the company.

An HSE investigation found that, while Duncan Farms Limited had risk assessments in place covering entanglement hazards and had instructed employees to wear close-fitting clothing, no fixed or interlocking guarding had been installed at the drive end of the manure conveyors to prevent access to the dangerous nip points when the conveyor was operating. There were no measures in place that would have prevented a person accessing the in-running nips, or which would have automatically stopped the belt before they could be reached.

Employers have a legal duty under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) to take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery. Fixed or interlocking guarding is the most effective means of achieving this and should be the primary control measure – not reliance on clothing guidance or training alone. Further guidance on safeguarding machinery can be found on our website at [introduction to machinery safety](#).

Duncan Farms Limited, of 1 Muirden Farm, Turriff, AB53 4NH, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 11(1) and (2) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and Section 33(1)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £53,000 at Aberdeen Sheriff Court

on 7 May 2026.

Jurate Gruzaite, HM inspector of Health and Safety, said:

“This incident could have had devastating consequences.

“Workers must never be placed in a position where they can access dangerous moving parts of machinery while it is in operation. Guarding is not optional it is a fundamental requirement of the law. Had appropriate fixed guards been in place at the drive end of these conveyors, this injury would not have happened.

“I would urge all employers who use conveyor systems to review their guarding arrangements without delay.”

Further Information

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Relevant guidance can be found here [Introduction to machinery safety – HSE](#)
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences in Scotland can be found [here](#).