

Health and safety regulator reminds farmers to keep visitors safe and healthy at open farm events

Ahead of [Open Farm Sunday](#) (Sunday 8 June) the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is highlighting guidance available to farmers to help them keep people safe.

As we enter the summer months, an increasing number of working farms are taking the opportunity to hold open farm events and allow members of the public to visit their farms.

Open farm events can benefit both visitors and farmers alike, but it is crucial that farmers understand the health and safety measures they should take to keep visitors safe and well.

HSE inspector Wayne Owen said: "Open farm events provide a great opportunity for the public to learn more about farming, but it must be done safely.

"Farmers choosing to hold open farm events should make sure that they comply with health and safety legislation. It is extremely important that farmers understand the risks on their farm and ensure that visitors are protected from them.

"Farms should ensure that safety risks when offering activities like trailer rides are controlled. Our guidance can help: [Carrying passengers on farm trailers AIS36](#). However, there are also health risks from contact with the animals that also need attention and must be controlled.

"The Access to Farms industry group has produced an [Industry Code of Practice](#) (ICOP) which is available to download free from their website. Farmers should read and follow the guidance so that visitors remain safe and well on their farms. The ICOP includes a useful checklist for farmers to use."

Key components of a well-managed open farm event include:

- Making sure the event is risk assessed and well planned.
- Ensuring that the farm and farm staff understand the risks on site, including zoonotic risk (i.e. risks from diseases or bugs carried by animals).
- Providing visitors with enough information on the risks and the controls in place (e.g. the importance of properly washing hands after touching animals, immediately before eating or drinking, and before leaving site).
- Controlling visitor access to animals.
- Supervising visitor contact with animals. Providing separate clean areas for petting of animals. Preventing visitors going into the pens with animals.

- Providing suitable facilities for washing hands (normally this will be hot and cold water, liquid soap and paper towels) and directing visitors to use them after petting animals, immediately before eating food, before and after using any play equipment, and before leaving site. Hand washing gels are not an acceptable substitute for washing facilities.
- If visitors are allowed to consume food or drink on site, providing separate clean eating areas, near hand washing facilities.
- Good prominent signage on site giving important information to visitors (but don't rely on signage alone to give those important messages).
- Ensuring that visitors are not exposed to other risks on the farm e.g. by fencing off high risk areas or activities and keeping people away from traffic routes and moving vehicles.

By following these principles farms can hold safe and enjoyable open farm events.

Further information:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.
2. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
3. HSE was consulted in the production of the ICOP. It provides sensible, proportionate and balanced advice to farms on how to comply with health and safety law and keep visitors safe and well.