Work, Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS)

FOREWORD

At [Farm Name], we are committed to providing a safe workplace for our workers, contractors, and the wider community. This safety management system outlines how we manage safety.

Everyone is responsible for health and safety. If you work on our farm, you must understand your responsibilities and take them seriously. This document will help you do that.

[Name]

Farm Manager

INTRODUCTION

This farm safety system is designed to support compliance with New South Wales safety legislation. It is based on the key requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act* 2011 (NSW), the *Work Health and Safety Regulations* 2017 (NSW), the *Workers Compensation Regulations* 2016 (NSW), and other relevant legislation.

The document is organised by core legal duties and summarises the responsibilities a farm (as a business entity) has for work health and safety. Reference is made to other sources of information where applicable.

Each key responsibility is identified and explained, and a means of fulfilling that responsibility is outlined. To keep this system simple and as straightforward as possible, there are few references to legislation throughout. It can be assumed that where the words **must, shall,** and **will** etc. indicate that the specified action is required to ensure compliance and/or safe operations.

SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

The guide for implementation is attached. It contains important information on how to make these documents applicable to a suit a specific farm business. This document is of limited value if it is not customised to make it relevant and business specific. To be of any value, it must be implemented. The processes must be followed, and the forms and tools must be used. Please follow the tutorial videos located at https://www.jopl.com.au/farmsafety.html

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1. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

1.1 THE BOTTOM LINE: KEEP WORKERS SAFE

The objective of this system is to keep our farm safe and to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses. This is not easy. Farms are dangerous places. Farming work involves inherent safety risks. Together, management and workers can reduce and manage the risks.

1.2 SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone is responsible for safety in the workplace. The law requires that everyone takes responsibility for safety, our customers require it, and our families expect it. Look after yourself and others.

Safety Responsibilities are to be read and signed by every farm worker (**Form F1**).

1.3 REASONABLY PRACTICABLE / RESOURCING

We must do everything that we are reasonably able to do ('reasonably practicable') to ensure a safe workplace. This means we must do everything within our knowledge, and skill, and applying the resources that we have to make the workplace as safe as possible.

We cannot remove all risks and still do our work. But, we can take all reasonable steps to reduce the risks.

[Farm Name] is committed to allocating sufficient resources to support safety.

1.4 CONSULTATION

Managers must consult with the workforce on safety. There are a few options, and it is up to workers to decide what they want. Options include:

- A formal safety committee.
- Having a worker trained as a Health and Safety Representative (HSR).
- 'Other agreed arrangements'.

The point of consultation is to keep workers informed of changes and safety matters, and for workers to have the opportunity to raise safety issues.

At [Farm Name], our workers have chosen to consult through regular safety-related discussions with workers.

Our Consultation arrangements are listed in our **WHS Policy** included in Appendix 1, with minutes of consultation recorded in our Consultation Minutes Template (**Form F10**).

1.5 STOPPING WORK AND RESOLVING ISSUES

Everyone has the right to **STOP WORK** if there is an immediate danger to a worker's health or safety. Work cannot be stopped for a trivial reason, but no worker will ever be penalised for stopping work when a serious risk is identified.

Sometimes a safety issue cannot be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. We will always maintain open communications. We may seek the support of an external consultant, or SafeWork NSW to resolve the matter. It is important that we all work together.

2. MANAGING RISKS

2.1 IDENTIFYING RISKS

[Farm Name] operates as a commercial farm. We have identified our key safety risks through consultation. We have recorded those risks in our Risk Register (**Form F2**).

We will update our Risk Register every six months, reviewing all hazards and controls in place (the steps we take to minimise the risk of incident or injury). We also review the Risk Register when things change (e.g. when we introduce new equipment), or after an incident (to make sure controls are adequate).

2.2 CONTROLLING RISK

It is essential to understand risks, how they work, and how we control them. **Form F6** is used.

Hazards: the things that can cause injury, illness, or other negative consequences.

Risk: the probability of a hazard causing injury, illness, or other consequences.

We cannot eliminate all hazards and risks, but we can minimise the likelihood of an incident occurring. We can limit our exposure to the hazards and in some cases, we can even reduce the potential consequences. We must use the hierarchy of controls to manage risks. This means we must:

- **Eliminate** the risk wherever possible (e.g., avoid the hazardous task).
- If the risk cannot be eliminated, do something physical to reduce the risk (for example, **substitute** an alternative, **engineer** a solution (e.g., installing a guard).
- If the risk remains, then **isolate** people from the risk (e.g., fence off a work area).
- If the risk remains, **administrative** controls must be implemented (e.g., implement a procedure).
- Finally, if the risk cannot be removed or mitigated by the above means, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can be used to reduce exposure or minimise the severity of injuries that might be sustained (e.g. a face shield or gloves).

It is called a hierarchy, for obvious reasons. The effectiveness of the controls reduces as you go further down the list. A worked example is provided below.

Worked Example – Quad Bike Usage

In 2017, ten people were killed riding quad bikes in Australia. People need to get around farms, but riding a quad bike is clearly a dangerous activity. 'Farm A' determines that it needs to reduce the risk associated with quad bikes to improve safety on their farm. Farm A considers their options:

- *Eliminate: Remove the task completely. Remove quad bikes from service completely and access site by 4WD or on foot.*
- *Substitute: Replace quad bikes with side by side all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) (a safer option).*
- *Engineer: Add a roll cage to their existing quad bikes.*
- *Isolate: Not a viable option for quad bikes.*
- *Administrative Control: Train quad bike riders in safe techniques. Only trained riders allowed on a quad bike.*
- *Personal Protective Equipment: Riders to wear a helmet and guards.*

Farm A decided it needed all-terrain vehicles. An immediate control was implemented, and all workers trained in safe vehicle use and issued with helmets. Over time and as budget allowed, Farm A substituted quad bikes with side by side vehicles.

2.3   PRIORITISING RISK

Controls must be carefully considered. What will work? What is practical? What is affordable? What is a serious risk? What is everyone else doing? What does legislation require?

To understand which risks are most significant or most serious, it is best to rank them using a scoring system, by answering two key questions:

- How serious is it? (Consequence)
- How likely is it to happen? (Likelihood)

We use the risk matrix below to prioritise the risks. The highest risks need the most action most urgently. Some controls are easier to implement than others and represent quick wins. Some higher risks require planning and resources to resolve them. The risk register is used to keep track.

LIKELIHOOD OF EXPOSURE	CONSEQUENCES			
	Major (C1) (e.g., Death / Disability)	Serious (C2) (e.g., Serious injury / Lost Time)	Minor (C3) (e.g., First Aid Injury)	Insignificant (C4) (e.g., incident but no injury)
Very Likely (L1) (and will almost certainly happen)	**(1)** **Extreme** **(L1 / C1)**	**(2)** **High** **(L1 / C2)**	**(2)** **High** **(L1 / C3)**	**(3)** **Medium** **(L1 / C4)**
Likely (L2) (and will probably happen at some time)	**(2)** **High** **(L2 / C1)**	**(2)** **High** **(L2 / C2)**	**(3)** **Medium** **(L2 / C3)**	**(3)** **Medium** **(L2 / C4)**
Unlikely (L3) (but could happen at some time)	**(2)** **High** **(L3 / C1)**	**(3** **Medium** **(L3 / C2)**	**(3)** **Medium** **(L3 / C3)**	**(4)** **Low** **(L3 / C4)**
Very unlikely (L4) (and might happen only rarely)	**(3)** **Medium** **(L4 / C1)**	**(3)** **Medium** **(L4 / C2)**	**(4)** **Low** **(L4 / C3)**	**(4)** **Low** **(L4 / C4)**

2.4   IMPLEMENTING AND CHECKING CONTROLS

To make sure controls are working to minimise risk, we must check them. We review the risk register six monthly, and after an incident, to make sure all identified risks are being managed. Our General Risk Assessment for (**Form F6**) is used to review available controls, to ensure appropriate controls are implemented.

2.5   KEEPING UP TO DATE

It is very important to keep up to date. Laws change, and best practice changes. We subscribe to the JOPL newsletter, and monitor the following websites:

www.safework.nsw.gov.au

www.farmsafe.org.au

8.5 FURTHER INFORMATION

8.5.1 MODEL CODES OF PRACTICE

The following codes of practice may be relevant to farming activities and should be reviewed when planning or assessing controls. It can be better to access the website every time than to save the Code, in case the Code is updated. The following Codes can be found at:

https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/resources_publications/model-codes-of-practice.

- Confined Spaces (e.g. silos)
- Construction Work (e.g. constructing new buildings, sheds)
- First Aid in the Workplace
- Hazardous Manual Tasks
- How to Manage Health and Safety Risks
- Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace
- Managing the Risks of Plant in the Workplace
- Managing the Risks of Falls at Workplace

8.5.2 GUIDANCE MATERIALS

Industrial Lift Trucks Guidance Material: https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/industrial-lift-trucks-guidance-material

Guide for Managing the Risks of Machinery in Rural Workplaces: https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/guide-managing-risks-machinery-rural-workplaces

Guide to Managing Risks in Cattle Handling: https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/guide-managing-risks-cattle-handling

8.5.3 FARM SAFETY MATERIAL

Sydney University has developed a comprehensive range of reference materials: http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/farmers/index.php

FarmSafe provides safety resources for farmers: https://www.farmsafe.org.au/

8.5.4 SAFEWORK NSW

SafeWork NSW's website provides farm-specific and general safety information for all NSW employers and workers. Their website is accessible and informative: www.safework.nsw.gov.au/

SafeWork NSW's Agricultural Work Health and Safety Sector Action Plan also hosts resources of farm safety strategy: http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/media/publications/whs-roadmap-documents/agriculture-sector-plan