



Maine Farm Safety Program

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Child Safety Around Animals

Children love animals, but animals do not always love children. Children need to be taught how to handle and work around animals to lessen potential hazards. Household pets can be as dangerous as farm animals. Respect for all animals should be one of the first things taught to children.

Pets

Family pets should be cared for with love and respect. Make sure they receive all shots, especially rabies, and worm them regularly. Keep litter boxes and yards clean. Pet food is a tempting snack for little ones, so keep them away from food dishes.

Farm Animals

Protect children by keeping them out of animal facilities. Farm animals should be treated with caution and respect. They can cause accidents just because of their size. They can knock

down, step on, kick or trample children without provocation. Even good tempered animals can become dangerous.

Children should have no contact with some farm animals. Herd sires, cows and sows with new offspring are some examples. Some male animals are very aggressive and could be dangerous. Animal mothers are very protective of their offspring and will attack if threatened. Sick animals are also dangerous.

Child Safety Around Animals

- **Teach children how to approach, handle and care for animals.**
- **Children should be kept away from aggressive animals.**

When working with animals, children should wear the proper clothing. Feet should be protected with boots. This will also guard against slipping. Wearing pants and long sleeves will protect arms and legs from scratches. Horse riders should always wear helmets.

Most animals will not intentionally hurt children. Children and animals can make each other nervous, which can lead to an accident. Teach children how to approach, handle and care for animals.



Wild Animals

Wild animals pose several risks to people. Children are at risk because they are not as careful as adults. Explain to children that wild animals should not be touched or teased. Rabid animals are friendly, but can be deadly.

This Maine Farm Safety fact sheet is part of an educational fact sheet series produced by University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information on farm safety, contact your county Extension office.

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