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LMC reminds farmers to ‘think SAFE’ this summer

With the school summer holidays looming the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) is urging farmers to ‘think SAFE’ before completing any task on farm that may present a risk of injury or death.

The end of term is a time most children look forward to especially if that means getting to help out on the family farm. However, LMC Chief Executive, Ian Stevenson says that whilst he wants to encourage children to enjoy their time on the farm and learn about agriculture, it’s vitally important that safety is treated with the utmost regard to prevent accidents.

“Farms can be very dangerous places with animals and machinery moving around, chemicals and treatments being used, farm inputs being stored and handled, tanks and silos being filled and emptied etcetera,” Ian said. “It’s always great to see children taking a keen interest in the farm and whilst we don’t want to discourage that, safety must be at the forefront before any task is completed.

“With the inclement weather we’ve been experiencing over recent weeks, farmers may be tempted to rush to complete tasks in a shorter period of time. It is of vital importance that the proper procedures are followed and risks are carefully assessed when it comes to managing safety on the farm. Thankfully most farmers are acutely aware of the dangers that can occur but it’s worth reiterating the ‘think SAFE’ message if it helps prevent serious injury or fatality.

“As an affiliate member of the Farm Safety Partnership, we have worked closely with the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) in recent years to help communicate farm safety messages. This included the production of a booklet entitled ‘The Importance of Properly Maintained Slurry Storage Facilities’ which was circulated to members of the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS). We also had a stand at Balmoral Show this year where we distributed hi-vis vests for children to wear while they’re out on farm.

“There’s a perception that working in the countryside is an ideal profession with minimal stress factors and low risk, however there are very real dangers facing farmers and their

families every single day. All steps should be taken to ensure that farms are as safe as they can possibly be.”

For further information about farm safety, visit the HSENI’s website: www.hseni.gov.uk.

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