**PRESS RELEASE 33/22**

Tuesday 28 June 2022

**Ensure safety is a priority this summer, says LMC**

THE Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) has issued a timely farm safety reminder as schools finish up for the summer holidays and children prepare to spend more time around the home.

“For many farm families the home is a central aspect of the farm business, commonly used as an office or meeting space and typically located within walking distance of the farmyard,” said LMC chief executive Ian Stevenson. He continued, “During the summer months children will spend more time at home, and weather permitting outdoors and on the farm.

“The summer season is normally a busy one on farm with slurry spreading, sowing and harvesting just some of the many tasks to be conducted. Heavy machinery and advances in technology have undoubtedly benefitted the agricultural industry but such advances have heightened risks of accidents on farm.

“Enhancing farm safety-related practices has been a core LMC objective for many years. Recent reviews of the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBLFQAS) have served to put a number of key safety-related practises at the very heart of the management standards expected of local cattle and sheep farmers.”

Ian explained that in addition to this LMC is an affiliate member of the Farm Safety Partnership (FSP). Through its multi-media farm safety campaign, 'Stop and Think SAFE', the partnership advises farmers to stop and think about the four main farm hazards: slurry, animals, falls and equipment (SAFE).

“There is a clear need to protect the health and safety of children and farm workers and I would encourage all farmers to stop and think SAFE before conducting any job. If children are in the farmyard risk assess their presence too. Children are naturally inquisitive about their surroundings and while we are keen to encourage children to learn about agriculture, we are also mindful that farmyards are workplaces and present many dangers. Talk to children and educate them about farm animals and machinery in the yard. Reinforce to children of all ages that the farmyard is not a playground and that carelessness causes accidents and injury.”

Ian went on to note that this time of year sees increased movement of farm machinery. Appealing to farmers to follow safety guidance and regulations, he said, “There is an acceptance on many farms that children will be safe enough driving machinery if they are off-road and on their own farms. This is a myth. Allowing children to drive and operate machines that they are neither licensed nor insured to be in control of is simply asking for trouble.”

Concluding Ian noted, “Machinery, equipment, animals and substances are just a few of the more obvious farmyard hazards. Make your summer one to remember for all the right reasons by being proactive and taking steps now to ensure the farmyard is as safe as possible for all.”

**ENDS**

**Photo caption**

**001 – LMC Chief Executive, Ian Stevenson**

**Notes to Editor**

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For more information contact LMC on: 028 9263 3000

**Media Contacts**

Lauren Patterson, LMC Marketing and Communications Manager. E: [lpatterson@lmcni.com](mailto:lpatterson@lmcni.com)

Linda Surphlis, LMC Communications Manager. E: [lsurphlis@lmcni.com](mailto:lsurphlis@lmcni.com)