Farm Workshop Safety Meeting Kit

The workshop is essential to the operation of farm. There are a wide variety of work tasks that happen in the shop and there is the potential for many hazards.

HAZARDS IN THE WORKSHOP

Up to 20% of farm injuries processed in hospital emergency departments are caused by farm maintenance work. More than 30% of these are eye injuries and more than 30% are hand injuries.

FARM WORKSHOP FACILITIES

A workshop provides a focal point at the farmstead for the repair and maintenance of machines, implements and structures. It also provides a place where tools can be stored in an orderly manner, a store for supplies and spare parts, and a shelter where work can be carried out during inclement weather. A facility of this type should be available on every farm. The size and design of a workshop, however, should be commensurate with the size of the farm and the work to be done in the shop.

The workshop should be located close to the work centre of the farm and convenient to the farm home on ground that is well drained and sufficiently level to allow easy maneuvering of equipment. Where electric power is available, proximity to the power source should be considered.

Equipment needed in the workshop will depend on the type and extent of work to be done. Generally this means those tools required to perform day-to-day maintenance on machines and to carry out general repair work and small construction jobs required on farm buildings and equipment. However, any shop, regardless of size, will need some simple woodworking tools, some means of sharpening field tools, and wrenches (spanners) of various types

and sizes. If the shop equipment includes a welder, it should be located, in the interest of safety, away from the woodworking area and preferably near the main door where it can conveniently be used inside or outside the building.

FEATURES OF A SAFE AND EFFICIENT SHOP

1. Sufficient room for the largest machine that may need repair, including workspace around it.
2. An entrance that is both wide enough and high enough for the largest equipment that the shop has been designed to accommodate. If the building is enclosed with either solid walls or wire netting, a second door is essential for safety in case of fire.
3. Some means of lifting and supporting heavy loads. When the roof span is 3m or less, a timber beam is often adequate. For larger spans or very heavy loads a truss will be required. Alternatively, a portable hoist can be used.
4. Electric lighting and electrical service for power tools.
5. A water supply for both convenience and safety.
6. One or more fire extinguishers of a type suitable for fuel fires.
7. Storage cabinets for tools, supplies and spare parts.
8. A heavy workbench attached to the wall or otherwise firmly supported. There must be sufficient clear space around it to maneuver workpieces and, if attached to a solid wall, ample window openings above it to provide light.

WORKSHOP SAFETY CHECK

- Keep the workshop tidy and avoid tripping hazards such as trailing cables, tools etc.
- Ensure welding gas bottles are secured upright, and when in use can be moved easily on a trolley.
- Verify that battery charging is done in a well-ventilated area away from sources of ignition such as welding flames.
- Avoid chlorinated solvents such as ‘trike’ or ‘perc’ for degreasing.

- Make sure arc welding is done in a protected area so that others nearby are not affected by the ultra-violet light.
- Use the correct abrasive wheel for the job and adjust bench grinder tool-rests close to the wheel.
- Ensure noise levels from plant such as compressors are controlled.
- Inspect hand tools regularly to ensure they are in good condition and suitable for the job.
- Provide appropriate PPE: For example, eye protection for chiseling, grinding, and welding work, or respiratory protection for work that creates dust.
- Provide safe means of access for raised storage areas or mezzanine floors.
- Use lifting equipment and mechanical handling aids to reduce risk of musculoskeletal injury (MSDs). Such equipment should be capable of handling the required loads and be regularly inspected and tested.

FINAL WORD

The Workshop is essential to the operation of your farm. There are a wide variety of work tasks that happen in the shop and there is the potential for many hazards. A tidy, organized workshop is important to safe and effective work.