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From crops to livestock, water is needed on every farm. Water also presents some dangers like drowning, injury, and potentially contaminated drinking water.

DROWNING

Drowning is a leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths to children under age 15. Toddlers are particularly at risk because proportionally their heads are larger than their body which makes them likely to fall head first. Drownings in rural areas often occur in non-pool settings, such as natural bodies of water and irrigation canals. The risk of drowning increases in the muddy water of lakes, ponds, and rivers.

Take these precautions:

- ▶ Supervise children at all times around any form of water
- ▶ Fence in all ponds and lagoons; including self-closing, self-latching gates
- ▶ Provide flotation devices where swimming is allowed
- ▶ Install a rescue post with an empty plastic milk jug, a long pole, and emergency phone numbers at each body of water

OTHER INJURY

Wells and cisterns are common on many farms and ranches. All wells and cisterns should be safely covered to avoid a fall. If abandoned, a well should be filled in.

Irrigation can create hazards as well. Motor drive shafts can entangle loose clothing if caught in an unshielded mechanism. Not to mention, water and electricity can be a deadly mix, and both are used within the irrigation process. Instruct children to take caution not to touch electrical sources while in water. Make sure the proper safety shields are in place on irrigation equipment.

HEALTH RELATED DANGERS

Drinking contaminated water is a health risk. Rural water may be contaminated by agricultural fertilizer and pesticide runoff, livestock waste, or other pollutants. Caution should be taken to ensure the sanitation of this much needed resource. Sample and test your water for quality.



Keep children safe around any body of water, including farm ponds and irrigation ditches.

