



# PASS it on

Newsletter of Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support Inc

## CONTENTS

WorkCover safety awards	1
Simple tips	1
Fire – A Dangerous Beast	2
Hazardous spills	2
A Word from the Chairman	3
Farmers Lungs	3
Bushfire Safety	4

**REMEMBER  
BEING SAFE IS  
NO ACCIDENT**

#### Disclaimer:

The content & views expressed in the articles in this newsletter are those of the author & are not necessarily the opinion or views of PASS Inc or its members of staff.

Every care has been taken no responsibility is accepted for non-insertion of material or typographical or printing errors.

Acceptance of an advertisement does not imply endorsement of any service or product by PASS Inc. nor does PASS Inc support any claims made by the advertisers.

All materials in this publication are covered by copyright & must not be reproduced without written permission. Copyright © 2009

#### About PASS Inc.

##### Management Committee:

**Chair:** Anne Taylor  
**Vice-Chair:** Kathy Henry  
**Secretary:** Fiona Chilvers  
**Treasurer:** Simon Hegarty  
**Members:** Jane Bond  
 Richard Doyle

**Editor:** Jane Bond  
**Published by:** Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support Inc.  
 ABN. 98701563826

**Website address:** [www.pass.org.au](http://www.pass.org.au)

**Help PASS to save lives –  
become a member**

**Contact:**  
 Anne Taylor (Chairman) 6398 6212  
 Anne Hammersley (Admin Assistant) 6391 8496  
 for a membership form and more details

Check out the website [www.pass.org.au](http://www.pass.org.au)

## 2009 WorkCover Safety Awards

The PASS Inc Management Committee congratulate all finalists in the 2009 WorkCover Safety Awards, for their contribution to continuous improvement in safety. We are delighted and proud of the awards won by two of our members. Anne Taylor, our Chairwoman, won the Best Individual Contribution to Workplace Health and Safety and went on to be announced as the overall winner.

We, as her Committee feel very strongly that this award has truly given Anne the recognition she deserves. It also recognises PASS as being highly relevant and important to the safety of our rural communities and young people.

*Anne is pictured at right with her award.*

Help us to spread the word and save lives – become a member. Lend your support and join up today.

Also congratulations to Rob & Kathy Henry (PASS Vice-Chairman) of Woodrising Farm for winning the *Best Workplace Health and Safety Practice in a Small Business*. This is the first time a farming business has won this award – a great achievement.

*Kathy and Rob Henry and their son Mike of Woodrising Farm are pictured at right with their award.*



## Not Sure? ASK

This was the theme that *Workplace Standards Tasmania* and *WorkCover* were promoting at this year's Agfest. It is still relevant – always is.

WorkCover offers free, in-confidence advice on OHS. Independent qualified OHS professionals provide

- Face-to-face practical assistance
- Workplace visits
- Information sessions
- Education sessions
- Safety publications

A new guide introducing the concept of injury management, what it is and what makes it work, is now available.

The booklet is called *Injury Management: Making it work* – it encourages employers and workers to look beyond simply meeting their legislative obligations in injury management, and to consider the benefits of actively embracing the management of injuries in the workplace.

It provides a series of practical tips for ensuring the best possible injury management outcomes are achieved, such as:

- Creating a workplace culture of trust and respect
- Valuing the health and safety of workers
- Taking responsibility for managing workplace injuries
- Being committed to recovery and return to work
- Starting the injury management process as soon as possible
- Supporting and caring for injured workers.

For your free copy of *Injury management: Making it work* call the Helpline on 1300 366 322 or go to [www.WorkCover.tas.gov.au](http://www.WorkCover.tas.gov.au) and search for GB197.

## Simple Tips For Doing Things Easier As Age Catches Up!

- Carry a small stepladder in the back of the ute for getting up and down easily
- A lip on the workbench will prevent nuts, bolts etc rolling off onto the floor
- Carry an old-fashioned shepherds crook to make catching of sheep easier
- Put wheels on a stool for ease of movement round the workshop – sit rather than squat
- Garden kneeling aids with handles are great in the workshop
- Make a mobile stand for your toolbox – easier on your back and quicker to access
- Re-invent the old-fashioned trolley for moving heavy or awkward loads
- Keep spare pairs of reading glasses in the ute, workshop etc.

These ideas and more were published in the booklet *The Great Idea Bank* and discussed at the Older Farmers Workshops run by PASS Inc. They can be accessed by emailing [aghealth@health.usyd.edu.au](mailto:aghealth@health.usyd.edu.au)

**If you are an employer with less than 200 employees and would like specialist advice on health and safety in the workplace, phone 1300 366 322 to arrange for the advisors or education officer to visit you and give advice in a non-threatening and confidential way. And it's free.**

**WorkCover officers can help employers and workers with the management of workplace injuries and its various facets, such as medical treatment, rehabilitation and return to work.**



# Fire – A Dangerous Beast

## The Fire

A fire needs 3 things to make it burn – without any one of these it will go out:

1. Fuel – anything that will burn
2. Oxidant – usually air or oxygen, occasionally chemical form
3. A certain temperature- heat

### How Does it Start?

It only takes a spark:

They occur when welding, grinding, using a machine (tractors, harvesters), powerlines clashing or powerlines fallen to the ground/ resting against the pole. Smouldering cigarette butts can also be an ignition source.

If the spark lands in combustible material a fire may commence immediately, or smoulder for hours before flames erupt.

How far can the sparks fly? Are you absolutely certain the spark will not reach dry grass, straw, workshop rubbish, fuel fumes?

### What to Do

Prevention is better than cure:

- Have fire fighting equipment close and ready, e.g. have a full water tanker in the paddock when harvesting
- Create fire breaks: 5 metre or more wide ploughed bare earth strips e.g. around property perimeter
- In case of electricity failure, have a generator stored on a trailer for ready access to take to pumps
- **Do not take risks – personal safety is paramount.**

## Basic Fire Rules

1. Have a fire plan to put in place when required
2. Get the attention of someone else and request assistance
3. Small fires can be smothered with something non-flammable i.e. fire blanket, wet cloth, tin tray, sand etc. Make sure power is turned off
4. A bigger fire will need a fire extinguisher – make sure you use the right one for the job
5. Keep low to the ground if there is heavy smoke and cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth
6. Close doors, windows and vents to reduce the supply of oxygen
7. Call the fire brigade (and ambulance if necessary), or in an emergency call 000 direct.

## Fire First Aid

### If a person is on fire

- Stop, drop, cover and roll
- Smother the flames with a blanket
- Move away from heat source

### For all burns apply cold running water

- For at least 20 minutes
- If running water not available, wet 2 cloths and alternate them onto the burn every 2 minutes (do not use ice, butter, creams etc.)
- Keep the rest of the body warm

### Remove clothing and jewellery

- Clothing can hold heat on the burn. Caution: clothing can “stick” to the skin so thoroughly wet clothing and leave insitu
- If swelling occurs jewellery can stop blood flow to the burn

### Seek medical attention

- For any burn bigger than a 20c piece, or that blisters
- If there are signs of smoke inhalation
- If there is signs of shock – shivering, cold clammy skin, fainting
- Keep patient reassured and calm until help arrives

### In an emergency call triple zero (000)

## Fire Safety

All fire equipment should be inspected by a suitably qualified person every 6 months and serviced every 12 months.

There are various types of extinguishers, however on most farms, a Powder AB(E) extinguisher would be applicable to the majority of situations. In other situations, a stored pressure water extinguisher may be appropriate.

Fire equipment locations must be clearly identified and must be kept clear of obstructions at all times.

More information can be found at [www.fire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au) or from your local fire authority.



# Hazardous Material Spills and Leaks

**Always refer to the material safety data sheets (MSDS) for requirements to wear protective clothing or equipment while using chemicals or attending to and during the clean up process.**

If a leak occurs from a container, **put on your PPE**, control the leak, move the container or empty contents into another container that is safe; isolate the area to avoid people walking near the affected area.

If a spill occurs, **put on your PPE** and clean up spills immediately. Avoid contact with skin and avoid breathing vapours or dust. A designated spill control station should have adequate material to clean up a small spill. Kitty litter is cheap and effective. Dispose of products in a safe and approved manner.

If a large spill occurs:

- Call the fire brigade
- Provide as much information about the hazardous material as possible (refer to MSDS)
- Move all persons to evacuation assembly area
- Do not attempt to re-enter the affected area until it has been made safe
- **Stay calm** – call emergency contacts for assistance
- **If you think someone has been poisoned by any chemicals, medication or plants, call the Poisons Information centre on 13 11 26**

\* Can download some MSDSs from [http://cropping\\_elders.com.au/echemseek](http://cropping_elders.com.au/echemseek)

For more information contact Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.

This information is from their booklet *OH&S – A Quick Reference for Broadacre Agriculture*

## ESSENTIAL PPE's

- Rubber gloves
- Masks
- Goggles
- Waterproof apron
- Hooded overalls
- Rubber boots

**REMEMBER A SAFE BUSINESS IS A GOOD BUSINESS**

# A Word From The Chairman by Anne Taylor

## Managing safety can be simple. Managing safety is not expensive. Not managing safety can be costly.

Having a plan is the first step. Imparting that plan to the community in which we live is one component to ensure success. Taking the community along with us on our journey to achieve a sustainable safety culture is vital.

In the past few months PASS Inc has been involved in quite a few events in our journey to achieve a "Safety First" culture in all persons living and working in Tasmanian rural environments.

### HortExpo

Our manned display, held at Campania on 5th August 2009 engaged much interaction from the delegates attending the field day as part of the 2009 National Cherry and National Apple and Pear Growers Conference. We distributed all our copies of the comprehensive "Managing Horticulture Production Safety" manual, a joint initiative of Farmsafe Australia and RIRDC, as well as other literature and Aurora LULO stickers and signs.

Our site was shared by 2 WorkCover Advisors who talked to many, and several business owners who engaged the advisors to conduct their free, no obligation worksite visits.

### Safe Futures

This rural careers expo with a safety theme, a partnership between Tasmanian Central North Local Community Partnership and PASS Inc was a great success. Held on 6th August 2009 at "Riverlands", Longford, with industry representatives from a large and diverse range of rural industries speaking and demonstrating to students, teachers and parents from as far a field as Yolla, Bridgewater, Oatlands and

Scottsdale. Next year it is planned to expand with more industry demonstrations and representation from more schools.

### Sustainable Farming Families Program

Our AGM guest speaker, Lester Jones, Manager of the Deloraine Hospital, has inspired us all to take part in this program when/if it is rolled out in Tasmania. Lester reported on the very successful "pilot study" conducted in Circular Head region over the past 3 years.

For more information visit [www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au](http://www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au) and [www.regional.org.au/au/apen/2006/refereed/2/2839\\_brumbys.htm](http://www.regional.org.au/au/apen/2006/refereed/2/2839_brumbys.htm)

### Rural Safety Awareness Council

This is a joint initiative of PASS and TFGA, to which all rural industries stakeholders have been invited to participate. Our focus includes communities, families, businesses and workers who live and work in rural environments.

Our first activity was a riveting presentation by Mr Bruce Byron, AM the former CEO of CASA (Civil Aviation Safety Authority). There are many similarities between agriculture and aviation industries with people, often working alone, interacting with machines and unpredictable environments.

It is planned for RSAC to coordinate a multifaceted approach to Safety Awareness education.

### 7th National Farm Health and Safety Conference

Held in Perth, Western Australia on 13 – 15th October 2009, with a presentation by the

WA FarmSafe Farmer of the Year (2008) Rod Birch, a field tour to various operations, a presentation about the Quadbar, a ROPS for quad bikes [www.quadbar.com](http://www.quadbar.com)

Papers reporting on various research projects included the research project in which several PASS members participated. "Effectiveness of Risk Control Measures to Reduce Occupational Exposure to Pesticides" is downloadable from the members section of our website.

Congratulations to Michael Neville, winner of the 2009 Australian Farmsafe Farmer who is manager of Wongan Farm (Stoneleigh, Victoria), Chairman of the Warakirri Agricultural Group Consultative Health and Safety Committee and board member of Southern Farming Systems.

### Farmsafe Australia Inc Meeting

After the conference PASS Inc, as the designated Farmsafe Tasmania role, participated in this meeting attended by most of the 22 board members from around Australia and New Zealand.

### Thank you

To the PASS Inc committee, our current and previous sponsors, and all our supporters as it is their combined efforts, encouragement and support which have resulted in the PASS Inc Chairwoman being awarded the Overall winner of the "2009 WorkCover Safety Award". Together everyone achieves more.

**Thank you and Congratulations** to "Woodrising Farm" for winning the "Small Business" award, proving that Agricultural businesses are up there with the best. Well Done.

## Farmers Lungs

A cough is abnormal. It results from irritation of the lung tissue, by foreign matter.

This foreign matter may be **microscopic, invisible particles of dust**, which may also contain fungi spores. Soil borne fungi, essential for decay of plant and animal matter, can be found on every farm, in stored grain, in straw, in animal manure. Some fungi are parasitic, some produce toxins and some can cause infections or allergic reactions in humans and animals. Lungs provide the perfect environment for fungi to grow, being dark, moist and warm.

### Who's at Risk?

Workers inhaling organic dusts, including Farmers, horticultural workers, Landscape Gardners, anyone handling animals or with pre existing asthma, allergy or immuno-suppressed disorders. Have a look at the farmer's hair comb to see his exposure rate!

### How to minimise the risk:

Wear a facemask when in dusty environments, handling straw, especially pea straw, store grain at 13% moisture or less, keep humidity below 70%, and improve ventilation. More information: just google "Farmers Lungs".

**"I still need more healthy rest to work at my best. My health is the main capital I have and I want to administer it intelligently."**

**So said Ernest Hemingway**

# Bushfires – Preparing Your Home

## A Defendable Space is the key

Your home is more likely to survive a bushfire if you have prepared it properly. The most important job is to create a defendable space, which is an area around your home where you have modified the vegetation and removed most of the other flammable materials to reduce the fire's radiant heat intensity. Flames and radiant heat from an approaching bushfire will be reduced, so sparks and embers will have less fuel to ignite when they land, and any spot fires will be easier to put out.

A defendable space makes it much easier to defend your home. And if you choose not to stay, a defendable space will help firefighters protect your home, or may even protect your home if fire fighters can't reach it.

Once a defendable space has been created, it needs to be maintained during each fire season to be effective.

A defendable space includes two 'zones':

- an inner zone where flammable materials are minimised, and
- an outer zone where a low level of flammable material is permitted.

In the **inner zone**, flammable materials on, under and around your home should all be moved away from the house.

In the inner zone:

- include non-flammable areas such as paths, driveways, and mowed lawns,

- use non-flammable mulch, do not use woodchips or bark,
- locate any dams, orchards, vegetable gardens and any effluent disposal areas on the fire prone side of the home,
- use radiation shields and windbreaks such as stone or metal fences, and hedges using low flammability plants,
- remove fire hazards such as wood piles, rubbish heaps and stored fuels,
- replace all highly flammable plants with low flammability plants,
- prune lower branches on trees and remove flammable shrubs from under and between trees, and
- rake up bark and leaves and keep roofs and gutters clear of flammable debris.

It is not necessary to remove all vegetation from the inner zone. Individual trees rarely cause houses to burn in bushfires, and trees can screen a building from windblown embers while protecting it from radiant heat. Smooth barked trees are less likely to catch fire than those with rough bark. No tree should be able to fall on the home.

In the **outer zone**, small-sized natural fuels (such as leaf litter, bark, sticks, tussocks and some shrubs) should be removed and larger fuels (trees and shrubs) should be cut back to reduce the intensity of an approaching

bushfire.

Fuel amount and continuity, both on the ground and between the ground and any larger trees, should be reduced by selective removal of vegetation, both horizontally and vertically, followed by on-going maintenance.

In the outer zone:

- retain established trees to trap embers and reduce wind speeds,
- selectively remove small trees and shrubs to create clumps (rather than a continuous wall of trees), separated by open areas,
- remove the vegetation between the ground and the bottom of the tree canopy, to a height of at least 2 metres, and
- minimise fine fuels at ground level, such as grasses and leaf litter.

There is no need to remove most trees as they are beneficial in trapping embers and reducing wind speeds and will not be involved in a bushfire once the fuels on the ground and the understorey have been modified. Effective landscaping design should provide for safety while retaining a pleasant environment. The final impression from a distance is that all the vegetation has been retained, while up close, the impression is of more open vegetation.

This information and lots more can be found at [www.fire.tas.gov.au](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au), also at [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

## Tasmania Fire Service recommends that you should leave and not defend your home when:

1. Fire Danger rating exceeds 50 (severe) in your area and your home *does not* have a defendable space
2. The fire danger rating exceeds 75 (extreme) and you have created a defendable space, ember-proofed your home,
3. When the fire danger rating exceeds 100 (catastrophic) in your area, regardless of any preparations you have made. If a fire breaks out on these days, you should leave for a safer place well before the fire threatens your home.

Fire Danger Rating	Defendable space	Action
50 (severe)	NO	Leave
50+ (severe)	YES + ember-proofed your home	May Stay. Suggest consult TFS
75+ (extreme)	YES + ember-proofed your house	Leave
75 + (extreme)	YES + house is designed and built specifically to withstand a bushfire	May Stay. Suggest consult TFS
100 + (catastrophic)	Nothing is defendable	Leave

## Apology and thank you to David Sadler

David Sadler wrote the article *Don't Take Chances* in Edition 6 *PASS it on* newsletter. His impressive credentials include General Manager at Bell Bay Smelter, Safety Adviser to Chief Executive of Rio Tinto (based in London), Managing Director and CEO of Palabora Mining Company in South Africa, Vice President Health and Safety for Arcelor Mittal based in London and Luxembourg, Director for Health, Safety and Environment for Barrick Gold (Perth, WA).

## With thanks to *PASS Inc* sponsors:

### GOLD



### SILVER



### BRONZE



An Anonymous Donor is proud to support the *PASS Inc* newsletter.