

Looking After Yourself

Positive Ageing & Staying Fit for Farming

Normal ageing is a gradual process accompanied by some physical decline, such as decreased vision, hearing,

and pulmonary and immune functions. Changes also occur in mental functioning. Coping with all these gradual changes can be difficult and challenging but it can be done in a healthy way. Each individual ages in their own way.

Risk Concerns

Many farmers don't retire primarily because, unlike many other employment situations, there is no standard retirement age from farming. Farmers by their very nature simply like to keep going. Those who wish to remain active well into their later years can often do so with adequate support and if they take care of themselves remaining aware of the risks involved with routine farm activities. Stress reduction, open communication and creating a safe work environment are the keys to helping the older farmer continue working.

Some of the main causes of farm accidents for the older farmer include:

- PTO guards broken or missing
- Carrying out high risk maintenance on buildings and roofs
- Decreased mobility and reaction time in relation to driving tractors/machinery and working with bulls and other livestock
- Strength, mobility and flexibility in relation to working from height
- Working alone with livestock
- Stress which can lead to lack of concentration, depression, low moods and exacerbate physical illness
- Poorly maintained tractors and machinery
- Starting tractor from outside the cab

Risk Management

- Adjusting work practices and making sure not to be in a position that would require quick movement to get out of the way to avoid injury.
- Assessing the work to be done.
- Get competent help when handling livestock.
- Have tractors and machinery properly maintained.

Looking after your Physical Health

Regular exercise and eating a balanced diet can seriously improve your health by:

- Keeping your weight down
- Lowering your blood cholesterol
- Preventing high blood pressure

Often farmers ignore symptoms of ill-health, putting them down to getting older and avoid visiting the doctor. It is important to seek professional advice from a pharmacist or GP when you are ill.

Where can I get more information about staying fit for farming?

Your own GP

Health and Safety Executive NI

www.hseni.gov.uk

Telephone: 0800 0320 121

Farm Family Health Checks Programme

This programme is a one-stop mobile facility offering free health assessments and advice tailored specifically for you.

To find out when the screening van will be near you telephone: 028 2563 5573.

