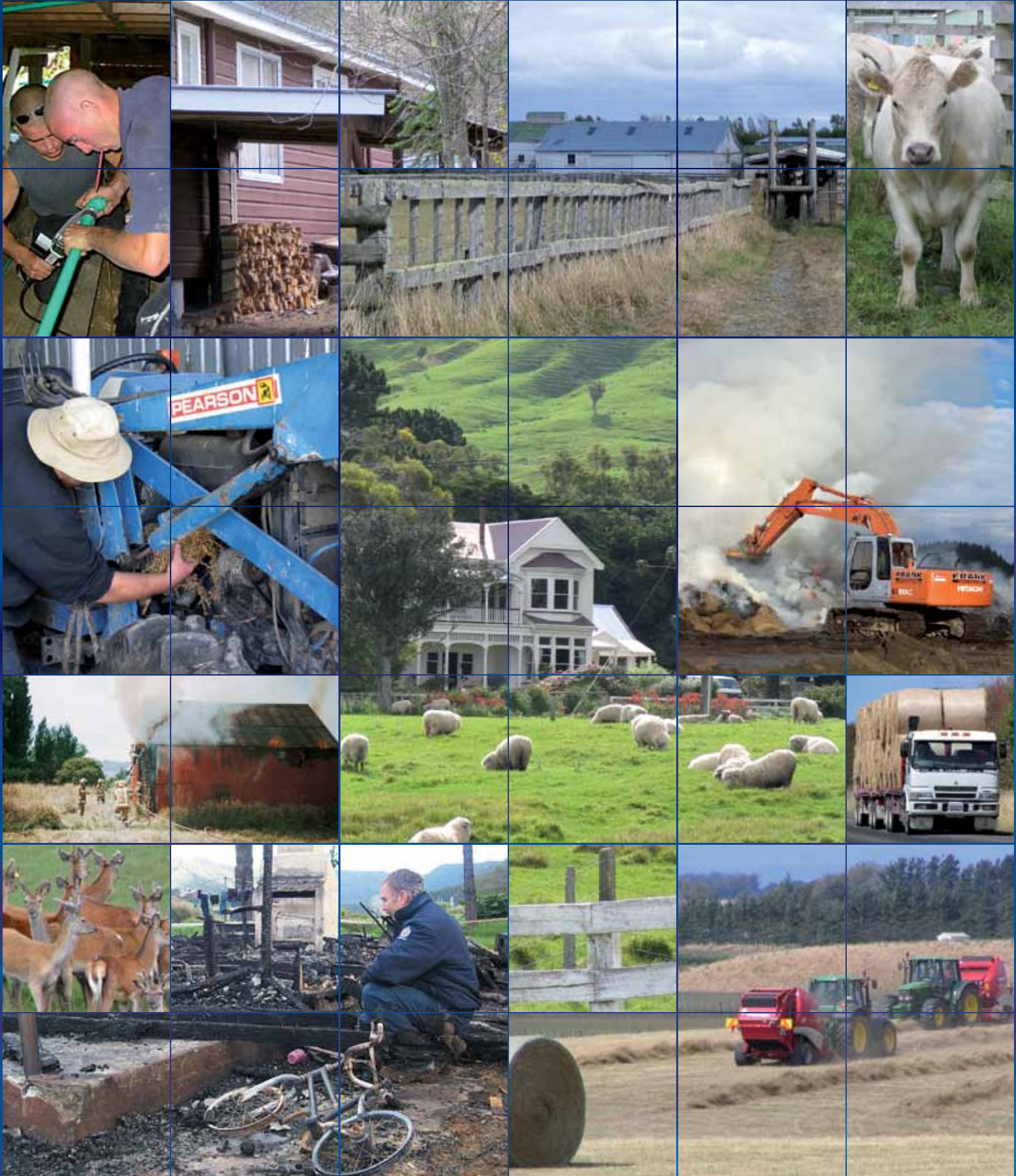




NATIONAL RURAL
FIRE
AUTHORITY
Te mana ahi manaha o te motu

Farm Fire **SAFE**

Put fire safety into your farm business plan





Planning can save your business

- Running a farm is a business.
- There aren't many businesses that are your home and way of life.
- Farmers must cope with things beyond their control, such as weather and commodity prices.
- Business success is a tribute to farmers' ability to manage risks.
- Farmers need to be alert to the fire danger and the fire risk inside and outside their homes and include fire protection in their business plans.
- Fire has the potential to cause losses both inside and outside your home. The consequences can be disastrous.
- Fire can cause financial and material losses to you, your family and your business.

Protecting your assets

Rural property owners face a higher risk from fire than their urban counterparts. The consequences are greater because fires are detected later and the emergency response takes longer.

You need to have a higher level of fire safety awareness and to take extra precautions in rural areas.





Risk of fire inside your home

Most fire deaths occur in the home. Follow these basic fire-safety measures and be fire wise around your home.

- Install smoke alarms and have identified escape plans. Carry out evacuation drills.
- Install appropriate fire extinguishers (eg dry powder) and make sure they're working.
- If you're building a new home or modifying an existing home, consider installing a home sprinkler system.
- Kitchen fires are the number one cause of fires in the home, so "keep looking while you're cooking".
- Don't overload extension cords, multi-boxes or power points.
- Don't let rubbish and junk accumulate. Clean out roof spaces, basements, cupboards and garages regularly.
- Keep combustible materials like drying clothes at least one metre from any heater or fire.
- Clean the chimney at least once a year.
- Do a fire-safety check at night before you go to bed.

Risk to your home from vegetation fire

The risk of a vegetation fire starting and doing damage on any given day depends on the weather, the dryness of the fuel and the topography in which the fire is burning.

You can't change the weather or the topography, but you can modify the fuel.

- Create a safety zone or defensible space around your home by clearing dead and cured fuels out to 10 metres.





- Establish lawns and paths and get rid of flammable vegetation or convert to less-flammable species.
- Keep your lawn mown and watered.
- Clear leaves and twigs from gutters and decks.
- Don't stack firewood closer than 10 metres from structures.
- Use approved incinerators and discard ash from home fires into metal containers.
- Keep a garden hose connected that is long enough to reach around the house.

Farm buildings and machinery

Good planning, good maintenance and good housekeeping are the keys to protecting your farm buildings and farm machinery.

- Store petrol, diesel fuels and chemicals in clearly-labeled approved containers and in single-purpose locations away from other farm buildings.
- Keep areas clean of rubbish, oily rags, firewood and other fuel sources.

- Fit suitable fire extinguishers in farm buildings and on machinery.
- Check all machinery is free of mechanical defects that could start a fire and has an approved exhaust system and spark arrester.
- Clean all machinery regularly to ensure belly pans and spaces around motors are free of oil, dust, grease, grass and straw.
- Get rid of starlings' nests from around motors and other high-risk areas.
- Keep trees and branches at least 3 metres clear of power lines.
- Keep paddocks around farm buildings and yards well grazed to reduce the fire hazard.
- Bale and stack hay when it's dry to prevent spontaneous combustion.
- Do welding and angle grinding only in clear areas. Wet down and have fire equipment handy.





Lighting fires in the open air

Fires are a legitimate land management tool. However, if you want to light a fire in the open air, check with your Rural Fire Authority to see if you need a fire permit or if there is a fire ban operating at the time.

- If you need a permit, do your burning according to your permit conditions.
- If you don't need a permit, do your burning during a period of light winds when no strong winds are forecast.



- Clear an area at least 3 metres around the area to be burnt to prevent the fire spreading.
- Supervise all open air fires until they are completely out.

Any person causing a vegetation fire can be charged for the cost of fire suppression.

Make sure you have public liability insurance with specific fire suppression cover under sections 43 and 46 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977.





Farm operations

Farmers should be very careful when using machinery during extreme fire danger periods. Fires can start from the smallest spark.

- Fires can start by sparks when slashers or mowers hit stones or wire.
- Pay special attention to checking your machinery's bearings and moving parts.
- Harvester operators need to be aware of what could be happening outside their air-conditioned cabs.
- If diesel trucks carting hay have vertical exhausts higher than the cab, cover the hay load or fix a spark-arrester shield to the exhaust.
- Be aware of exhaust heat and spark emission when driving through, or parking in, stubble or long dry grass on extreme fire danger days.
- Carry appropriate fire extinguishers, shovels, or knapsack sprayers during high-fire danger periods.
- Stop using welders, chainsaws, slashers, and some tractor operations, on extreme fire danger days.

General preparedness

Farmers need to determine the risk they run from fire. But irrespective of the risk, you should do these things to be fire wise around your farm.

- Maintain water supplies with good access and adequate sign posting.
- Provide appropriate tank/pump couplings or adequate access to static water for portable pumps.
- Ensure unhindered access to your property for fire trucks and large vehicles by clearing roads and drives to a width and height of 4 metres.
- Display your RAPID (Rural Addressing Property Identification) number at the beginning of your driveway.
- Keep a list of important contact numbers by your phone.
- Teach your children to dial 111 in an emergency.
- Have a battery-powered radio in case of power cuts.



Assessing your risks

Ask yourself	Yes	No	Action now	Action later
Is fire safety part of your farm business plan?				
Does your home have working smoke alarms?				
Do you have an established escape plan for your home?				
Do you have, or should you consider installing, a home sprinkler system?				
Do you have a RAPID number displayed at your farm entrance?				
Do you have a list of important contact numbers beside your phone?				
Do you have battery-powered radios handy?				
Do you carry appropriate insurances to fully protect you and your business against fire?				
Do you talk with your neighbours about fire safety and fire prevention?				
Do you follow fire-safe practices in your home?				
Have you prepared a defensible space/safety zone around your home and property?				
Do you follow fire-safe practices with your farm buildings and machinery?				
Is your machinery well maintained and safe to operate?				
Do you have fire-fighting equipment on tractors and other machinery?				
Do you undertake farm operations during extreme fire danger periods with fire safety in mind?				
Do you know your fire authority and understand fire seasons and burning requirements?				
Do you realise how common hay-barn fires are and how you can mitigate against them?				
Do you carefully plan all burning to minimise the risks of fire escaping?				
Are fuel supplies and chemicals safely stored?				
Are your power lines clear of trees and branches?				
Do you have adequate and accessible water supplies for fire fighting?				
Is there adequate access to your property for large fire trucks?				

- For more information on fire safety in your home, contact your nearest New Zealand Fire Service brigade or visit www.fire.org.nz or www.nrfa.org.nz
- For information and advice on installing home sprinklers visit homesprinklers.fire.org.nz
- For information on lighting fires or undertaking burning, or on fire danger and fire season status, contact your local district council or the closest Department of Conservation office.
- To get your Rural Addressing Property Identification number (RAPID), contact your local district council.
- For more technical information on protecting your home and farm buildings from the spread of vegetation or interface fires, get a copy of the National Rural Fire Authority's manual "FireSmart – Partners in Protection" by contacting NRFA phone 04-4963600.

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