



SAFETY ALERT

Tractor Fires

WHAT HAPPENED?

This safety alert is being issued to remind farmers and their teams to be extra vigilant this time of year, checking for birds' nests before starting vehicles. This is following a serious tractor fire, likely caused by a bird's nest. Luckily no one was injured.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

While birds nesting is a common occurrence in tractors, the warm sheltered body of the quad bike or side-by-side is a common spot for starlings too. Birds' nests, as well as wiring and engine issues are common causes of fires.

Whenever you're using a tractor remember to:

- Check for birds' nests especially in spring.
- Regularly check the machine and engine area; remove debris such as hay build up around the tractor's air or fuel filters.
- Make sure wiring of aftermarket accessories is fit for purpose, to decrease risk of fire.
- Watch what you're carrying when it comes to flammable chemicals or substances, such as fuel.



Key Lessons:

- Discuss this safety alert with your farm team, and how to prevent a similar incident on your farm.
- A starling bird can build a nest in 20 minutes. In spring, be extra vigilant with pre-start vehicle checks to ensure engine fires do not put both operators or machinery at risk.
- Where possible, leave tractor and machinery engine covers open to discourage nesting, and build it into your engine oil and coolant levels inspection, by checking for nesting material around exhaust and turbo manifolds, radiators and all areas where ignition may be possible.
- Ensure the tractor cab is equipped with a suitable fire extinguisher, and it is within test and fully charged.
- If there is a fire call for help and take reasonable steps to extinguish the fire. Explosion risk is minimal on diesel powered machines but under no circumstances put your safety at risk trying to extinguish a fire. Tractors can be replaced, people can't.
- Wipe up any surplus engine or hydraulic oil around the tractor as this can increase the chances of ignition. If these steps are followed there is a low risk of fire.

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SAFE FARMING STARTS HERE:

farmwithoutharm.org.nz/safety-alerts

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