

Choosing the Right Vehicle for the Job Task



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Considering the Plant & Equipment

- When planning a particular Job Task we need to consider the most appropriate and plant and equipment to undertake the Job Task safely and in an efficient manner.
- This planning goes right back to when we purchase or acquire plant and equipment for our Farm Job Tasks.
- Quad-bikes, Side by Side Vehicles, Ag-bikes, Light Utility Vehicles or Horses are all options that we should consider when planning our transport requirements for the farm.
- All of these options are suitable for undertaking various transport and mustering job tasks on a farm.



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Considering the Job Task

- ❖ The Job Task is often poorly considered when selecting the most appropriate and safest Plant & Equipment to undertake the Task.
- ❖ The Job Task should be assessed and the following issues should be considered:
 - ❖ **The Terrain** – Is it rough, long grass or other vegetation , melon holes, wash-away gullies, undulating, hills, steep descents, numerous obstacles, (cut-off stumps, rocks etc.) ground holes.
 - ❖ *Remember many incidents occur, not because of the chosen method of transport, but because the method was unsuitable for the terrain, the skill of the operator and the nature of the Job Task.*



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Mustering Livestock

- One of the most common Job Tasks on Australian Farms is the mustering or movement of livestock;
- Mustering animals may involve Plant and Equipment, including vehicles, aircraft, horses, pedestrians and other forms of transport that are used either singly or in combination with a number of different methods and equipment.
- Specific vehicles may include Quad-bikes, Ag-Bikes (2 wheelers), Side by Side Utility Vehicles and Light trucks (I.e. Landcruiser). Alternatively Stationhands on horses or even pedestrians can be used.



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The Plant and Equipment

- ✓ Accident investigations often determine the major causal agent of an incident is a poor choice of the right equipment for the Job Task. These factors coupled with the lack of skills and knowledge to perform the Job Task safely can often lead to fatal or serious injury;
- ✓ Make the right choice! – Choosing a Quad-bike to undertake a mustering task over terrain that may be covered with long grass and littered with numerous obstacles such as stumps, logs and rocks can often be a major contributor to an incident particularly when combined with an operator who has limited or no rider skills;
- ✓ Ensure the operator has the necessary skills and knowledge to operate the vehicle and to undertake the Job Task safely. Selecting an alternative vehicle or even a horse may be a better option to perform the task.



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Operator Knowledge and Skills

- ❖ The lack of skills and knowledge to perform a Job Task safely including poor riding training, lack of the cognitive skills required to operate the vehicle while simultaneously concentrating on chasing or trying to move an animal in a particular direction can all contribute to a serious incident;
- ❖ The lack of operator education, training and poor operator behaviour while safely operating different vehicles (particularly Quad-bikes) has proven to be a major contributory factor to many incidents;
- ❖ There is very limited training and education provided by the PCBU to operate these vehicles and yet there is a significant obligation in the WHS legislation for workers to have adequate training to operate plant and equipment.



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Summary

- For the last 20-30 years in Australia we have been fixated on trying to manage and reduce the incidents that occur with these vehicles (particularly Quad-bikes) by various enquires, coroners reports, committees and engineering controls. (None of which have significantly lowered the injury rates)
- Many control measures have been proposed over the years and some are quite absurd, having been proposed by people who have little or no understanding of the dynamics of operating a Quad-bike.
- There are some engineering controls (fitment of CPDs) that certainly may contribute to lowering the injury rates. However these devices in themselves will not prevent the incidents occurring with these vehicles while ever there is little or no emphasis on the education and training for the operators of these quite complex vehicles.
- Until the users of these vehicles have a sound knowledge and skill set to safely operate and make informed choices about their suitability for a particular Job Task the high frequency of incidents and the injury rates will continue to occur.



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