

Quad safety

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I am a long time motorcycle dealer selling Honda since 1991. In that time we have seen an enormous rise in popularity of the quadbike in the Agriculture side of our business.

At first we would sell around 20 quads per year steadily rising to around 130 units a year by 2017. (these machine mean a lot to my business) Over this time not one has caused a fatality that I know of, we do have records of every unit Vin no & customer we sold it to.

We do try to stress the need rider education, and always have pushed the safety side of these machines. In the right hands & used in accordance with the manufactures guidelines quads are quite stable , safe & irreplaceable on the farm.

Farmers on the whole now days are quite educated with the use & safety of the quadbike. They do need them for their maneuverability & universal uses on the farm. Whilst the larger SXS utility vehicles are becoming more popular they cannot totally replace the quadbike they are just to bulky cannot fit through tight scrub & is not nimble enough to control flighty stock. Not to mention they are a lot harder to transport from property to property being a much larger unit.

The Personal Safety Devices being recommended in the ACCC report, for use on quads, whilst at first seem o/k they do have their failings. Both systems attach to the back rack and rely on it for there strength, most rear racks carry capacities from 50kg to 90kg maximum, I'm sure at roll over impact that weight on said rack would be way over the manufacturers recommended limit.(if this caused an injury from rack failing who is at fault)

One of these systems attaches to the rear towbar and rack this interferes with bike suspension especially after about 6 months & nylon guides are totally worn out. The other system is very bulky & weighty unit and stops you using quad as an intended workhorse.

Both of these systems become dangerous in thick scrub when you duck down to go under branches etc they catch, bike wheel stands and if you a not agile enough it will flip over. Another failing is that they can restrict your movement on bike which is a must when riding - you need to move your body weight according to the terrain & conditions you are riding in not just sitting as if driving car.

The quadbike is not & never has been a toy, some people may think they are, it is usually the recreational user letting their children ride their machines, the same is happening with SXS utility. Not one manufacturer recommends any person under the age of 16 drives these vehicles. Need to make fines for anyone found doing this substantial

If ACCC go ahead with recommendations I am sure farmers will replace the quad with probably the 2 wheel motorcycle or horse which both in their own right attribute to a lot of injuries in our casualty wards throughout Australia.

The best way to prevent or control, probably a better description, injury is to educate people on how to ride and counterbalance their weight as well as wear a HELMET.

To improve safety it has to become compulsory to wear a helmet on quads & motorcycles off road even on private land, how do we police this I do not know. Owners of quads need to take responsibility for their actions, they need to be fined substantially if any injuries recorded at hospital's and no proof of helmet being worn and even larger fines if injured rider under recommended age of 16.

Why do we have make it compulsory for manufacturers to fit PSD no other country (probably one other) when the Australian market would be under 10% of world wide sales for them to modify quads for our amount of sales would not be practical even if it were possible. Remember rack capacity is no where enough and to change frames etc to fix this would lead to other fallings I am sure.

I feel current situation where people can fit their own PSD is servicing customer needs.

If the finding's in the ACCC report would totally fix the problems we have with injury on quads I would totally agree with them but I doubt it.

These things were invented by the Japanese and they are one of the most safety conscious nationalities in the world it were possible they would do it.