

NEWS RELEASE

30 June 2009

Frodsham solicitor leads national campaign to protect victims of animal attacks

Frodsham solicitor Stephen Lawson is leading a national campaign to protect the rights of people injured by farm animals.

In the wake of the recent death of Northwich vet Liz Crowsley and a broken rib suffered by former Home Secretary David Blunkett, both caused by aggressive herds of cows, Mr Lawson, is fighting a proposed change in the law which would make it almost impossible to gain compensation.

As a leading personal injury lawyer and secretary of the national Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), he is opposing the Government's plans to amend the 1971 Animals Act which currently allows victims who suffer injuries from dangerous or escaped animals to sue for compensation.

The Government wants to reduce animal owners' liability to people who may suffer injury or even death as a result of cows, horses, dogs or other animals.

Mr Lawson, a partner in the Cheshire law firm Forshaws Davies Ridgway, represented the legal profession in a debate on the subject on BBC's Farming Today programme last Saturday. He believes this change in the law is completely unacceptable. "If this amendment becomes law, it will mean that innocent victims will potentially lose out on vital compensation," he said. "And if the victim is the main breadwinner, any accident can have devastating consequences for the whole family."

Miss Crowsley, who lived in Warrington, and Mr Blunkett, were both walking their dogs across fields with grazing cows when they were attacked. Eye witnesses believe the cows went for the dogs to protect their calves.

More....

Animal 2

“These are both high profile cases which have caught the headlines recently, but every year people are injured in fields due to attacks by aggressive herds of cows or animals breaking down fences and causing road accidents by running onto the highway,” said Mr Lawson.

“Car drivers, by law, have to hold third party insurance to protect the victims of any accidents they cause and it is not unreasonable to expect animal-owners to do the same. As an owner of farm animals myself, I believe owners should take responsibility for protecting public safety and ensuring their animals are kept securely out of harm’s way.”

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advises all farmers to keep dairy bulls and cows with calves in fields away from public footpaths or to fence them in.

Mr Lawson added: “If you are taking your dog for a walk, the best way to ensure your safety is to avoid fields of cows with calves. The pleasant pastoral scene can easily turn into a nightmare, so when you are walking in the countryside, keep dogs on leads and be on your guard.”

End

***Issued by Lynn Pegler,
Pegler Communications.
Tel: 01928 789042. Mob: 07783 686246.
lynn@peglercommunications.co.uk***

About Forshaws Davies Ridgway LLP

- Forshaws Davies Ridgway LLP is a full service legal practice with 6 offices in Cheshire and Warrington
- 18 Partners
- Over 135 staff
- Top 15 practice in NW
- Top 200 practice in England & Wales
- Mortgage Strategy Awards 2009 ‘Best Conveyancer’ Runner Up
- Commercial Law
- Conveyancing
- Criminal
- Family
- Litigation
- Wills & Probate

Contact: Stephen Lawson on 01928 739300