



Agricultural Safety: 2009 Injuries to Adults on Farms

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Occupational Injuries to Adults on Farms in the United States, 2001, 2004, 2009; in 2009 an estimated 42,000 work-related injuries occurred to adults (20 years of age and older) living or hired to work on U.S. farms. This represents a 41% decrease from the estimated 71,000 adult occupational farm injuries in 2004, and a 45% decrease from the estimated 76,000 adult occupational farm injuries in 2001. These findings are based on a series of telephone surveys of 25,000 farm operators in the United States. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducted the survey for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Farm operators were asked questions about any work-related injuries to adults on their farms in three separate surveys in 2001, 2004, and 2009. An injury was defined as any traumatic event occurring on the farm operation resulting in at least 4 hours of restricted activity or requiring professional medical attention.

Survey results also indicate that males incurred the majority of injuries. In 2009, 68% of all injuries were to males. In 2004 and 2001, an estimated 80% and 78% of injuries occurred to males, respectively. Other trends across the survey years show that the majority of adult work-related injuries occurred on livestock operations, and adults who lived in the farm household experienced the largest proportion of work-related injuries. In 2009, an estimated 35,000 or 84% of all work-related farm injuries occurred to adults who were part of the farm household.

In 2009, survey respondents reported that animals were the primary source in 21% of all work-related injuries to adults on farms. They identified floors, walkways, and ground surfaces in 18% of all work-related injuries to adults on farms. In an estimated 78% of the animal-related injuries, horses or cattle were identified as the primary source. This is consistent with data from 2004 and 2001 where horses or cattle were identified as the primary source in 78% and 79% of the estimated incidents, respectively.

NASS has previously reported the long-term trend of the aging farm operator, with the average age of farm operators increasing approximately one year for each 5-year Census cycle. Results from the agricultural safety surveys also show an increase in the average age for adults injured on the farm. In 2001, the average age for adults injured while working or living on the farm was 47.8 years. By 2009, the average age increased to 52.2 years.

Additional survey results indicate an estimated 5,000 work-related injuries occurred to adults who were not hired farm workers or farm family members. This represents an overall decrease of 38% from the number of injuries estimated in 2001 (8,000), and a 17% decrease from 2004 (6,000).

NIOSH sponsored this survey to better understand the magnitude and scope of agriculture-related injuries to adults working on farms. The survey was conducted as part of the NIOSH Occupational Injury Surveillance of Production Agriculture project. For further information, contact Michael Goldcamp, at NIOSH (304) 285-5951 or Kevin Harding, at USDA/NASS (202) 720-4028.

Estimates of Work-Related Injuries to Adults 20 Years of Age and Older Living or Hired to Work on Farms – United States: 2001, 2004, and 2009

| Year | Relationship to farm | Injuries | Adult population | Injuries per 1,000 adults |
|------------|---------------------------|----------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 2001 | Total | 76,000 | 6,171,000 | 12.3 |
| | Living on the farm | 57,000 | 4,440,000 | 12.8 |
| | Hired to work on the farm | 19,000 | 1,731,000 | 11.0 |
| 2004 | Total | 71,000 | 5,295,000 | 13.4 |
| | Living on the farm | 59,000 | 3,536,000 | 16.7 |
| | Hired to work on the farm | 12,000 | 1,759,000 | 6.9 |
| 2009 | Total | 42,000 | 4,685,000 | 9.0 |
| | Living on the farm | 35,000 | 3,526,000 | 9.9 |
| | Hired to work on the farm | 7,000 | 1,159,000 | 6.0 |

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