

# Fact Sheet



1996 ■ Number 1

## Agricultural Injury

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### Population at Risk

The 1992 Census of Agriculture reported a total of 1,925,300 farms in the US, reflecting a 7.8% drop from the 1987 census.<sup>1</sup>

In 1992, an annual average of 3.2 million people 16 years of age and older were employed in agricultural production in the United States.\*

About 7.7 million people 14 years of age and older were employed on US farms at some time during 1987. Almost 2.5 million persons were hired farmworkers, 2.8 million persons operated farms, and about 3.6 million persons were unpaid farmworkers. Over 1 million workers engaged in more than one of these three agricultural occupations during the year.<sup>3</sup>

### Fatal Injuries

Agriculture has consistently ranked as one of the most hazardous industries in the US. In 1994, agriculture and mining had higher fatality rates than other industries. The fatality rate for agriculture was 26 per 100,000 workers, compared with a rate of 4 per 100,000 for all industries combined.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 1993 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry division, with a total of 855 work related deaths, shared the highest rate of fatal injury (26 deaths per 100,000 workers) with the mining industry. Within the industry division, agricultural service workers experienced a fatality rate of 94 per 100,000 workers. Workers in farming-related occupations represent 3% of the workforce, yet account for 10 % of all fatal work injuries. <sup>5</sup> Note: CFOI includes data on work-related injury and illness fatalities occurring in operations with employees and in operations involving self-employed farmers and family members. Transportation-related fatalities are included.

Analysis of work-related fatalities in agriculture from 1980-89 for workers 16 years and older shows that the five leading causes of death in the agricultural production sector are (in descending order) machinery, motor vehicles, electrocution, environmental hazards and falling objects. In the agricultural services sector the five leading cause are falling objects, electrocution, motor vehicles, machinery and falls.<sup>6</sup> Note: Agricultural production, as used here, includes general farming and ranching work. Agricultural services include custom crop and animal care, horticultural and landscaping work.

In 1994, tractor overturns accounted for more of the on-the-farm tractor-related fatalities in the US than any other single factor.<sup>7</sup>

### Non-Fatal Injuries

Note: There is no single, continuous source of national non-fatal agricultural injury data.

In 1993, there were an estimated 200,000 work-related injuries on US farms. Of these injuries approximately 65% involved operators, partners and family members; the remaining 35% involved hired farmworkers. Injuries occurred at a rate of 6 injuries for every 200,000 hours worked.<sup>8</sup>

A 1993 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health agricultural injury survey found that livestock caused 19% of injuries; machinery other than tractors caused 15%; hand tools 11%; working surfaces (slips, falls) 11% and tractors 6%.<sup>8</sup>

In a population-based study in central Wisconsin, one per 31 farm residents was treated annually for farm work-related injury. Eight percent of these cases were hospitalized. Adult, male farm residents in the study had 556.9 injuries per 10,000 person years and 21.3 injuries per million hours of farm work.<sup>9</sup>

### Special Issues/Populations

In 1987, approximately 20.3% of hired farm laborers and 25% of farm operators were women.<sup>3</sup>

Roughly 150,000 to 200,000 children ages 0 to 21 are injured on US farms and ranches each year. Most of the children injured on farms and ranches reside elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

Data from the Traumatic Injury Surveillance of Farmers Survey conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health revealed that of the 12,873 occupational injuries among farm workers ages 10-19 years, 89.2% were male. Analysis by race revealed 92.2% were White, 6.3% were Hispanic, and 1.5% were American Indian. Further analysis showed that 3.2% of the injuries resulted in permanent disability, 39.4% were associated with a tractor or machinery, and 74.8% occurred in June, July, and August.”

Of the 2.5 million farmworkers in the US, about 1.6 million are seasonal agricultural service workers and approximately 42% (670,000) of these workers are migrant farmworkers.\*<sup>2</sup> Note: There are no national estimates of injuries to migrant farmworkers.

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