

Purdue University

Agricultural Safety and Health Program

2009 Indiana Farm Fatality Summary

Compiled by the Purdue University Agricultural Safety and Health Program

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The 2009 Indiana farm fatality report was compiled by Purdue's Agricultural Safety and Health Program through a variety of sources, including a contracted news clipping service, Web searches, voluntary reporting from Extension educators and individuals, and personal interviews. In addition, fatality data gathered by the Indiana Department of Labor were made available which yielded one additional fatality that the regular surveillance methods did not. No cases were identified from sources outside of the state, including Federal government sources.

In review, only eight farm-work-related fatalities were recorded during 2006— exactly one half of the lowest number ever previously reported (16); however, that uncharacteristically low number of fatalities was not sustained with 24 fatalities in 2007, 28 fatalities in 2008, and now 20 in 2009. These currently wide variations in the fatality frequency from year to year have also historically occurred in the past. This report includes a summary of those 20 farm-work-related fatalities¹ that were documented in 2009. For over 30 years there has been a steady downward trend in the number of farm-work-related fatalities, and the 2009 total is only slightly larger than would be expected from that downward trend. The ages of the recorded victims ranged from two to 79. The average age for farm-work-related fatality victims in 2009 was 52.8 (Table 1) while the average age over the past ten years was 53.0.² All documented cases involved males, and there were three fatalities of males under the age of 18; their ages were two, five, and nine. Those three incidents involving children accounted for 15% of the total number of fatalities reported in 2009. Only one or two fatalities of children or adolescents under age 18 have been reported annually over the last ten years except seven occurred in 2000, four in 2007, and now three in 2009. Victims over the age of 60 (N=12) accounted for 60% of all documented cases, and that is consistent with a continuing trend of older individuals being involved in a disproportionate number of fatal incidents.

¹ A farm-work-related fatality is defined as any fatal injury to a farm or ranch worker (or bystander) occurring in the course of performing an agricultural work-related task, or as a result of exposure to hazards in the agricultural workplace. Motor vehicle incidents not clearly involving agricultural equipment or vehicles are excluded. In addition the report does not include fatalities that may have occurred due to chronic exposures to hazardous environments or substances, or heart attacks that occurred during work activities.

² According to current census data, the average age of farm operators in the state is 57.

Gender	Age Distribution					Total	%
	1-17	18-35	36-59	60+	Unknown		
Males	3	2	3	12	0	20	100
Females	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	2	3	12	0	20	100
%	15	10	15	60	0	100	-
Average Age	5.3	25.5	53.7	68.9	-	52.8	-

Table 1. Age distribution of Indiana farm-work-related fatalities in 2009.

Tractor-related incidents continue to be the leading category of fatalities and accounted for 11 (55%) of the recorded fatalities (Table 2), and that percentage approaches the historical average. Machinery-related incidents were the other leading type of farm-work-related fatalities in the state--accounting for three (15%) of all identified fatalities. Tractor overturns accounted for three (15%) of the fatalities and remain the leading cause of farm-work-related fatalities nationally accounting for approximately 25% of all fatalities. However, an unusually high number--six or 30%--of runovers involving tractors and trailing implements occurred. In five cases the tractor operator fell off his tractor and was run over by a trailing implement. In the other case a farmer was run over by a tractor that he was attempting to start while standing on the ground. In contrast to the three farm-work-related fatalities involving ATV/utility vehicles in 2007, there were none in 2008 and 2009 even though there has been a rapid increase in fatalities and injuries in the ATV recreational sector. The three cases in 2007 represent the highest number of farm-work-related, ATV/utility vehicle fatalities ever recorded during a single year.

Table 2 summarizes the specific types of incidents associated with Indiana's farm-work related fatalities in 2009. Note that roadway collisions involving machinery are listed in the "Roadway" category instead of the "Machinery" category. Figure 1 displays the distribution of farm-work-related fatalities by general type of incident.

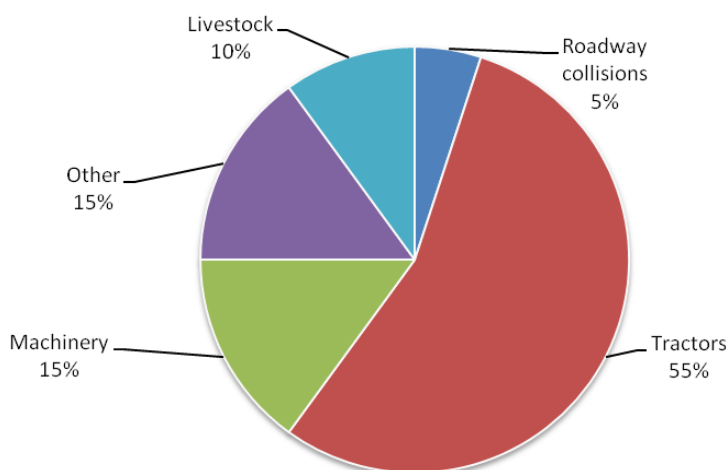


Figure 1. Distribution of 2009 Indiana farm-work-related fatalities by general type of incidents.

Type of Incident	Description	Facilities
Livestock-related incidents	Trampled by horse	1
	Kicked by horse	-
	Horse-drawn wagon incidents	1
Machinery-related incidents	Entanglements	1
	Curshings/pinnings	-
	Runovers	1
	Fall from machinery	1
Tractor-related incidents	Overturns	3
	Runovers	6
	Crushings/pinnings	1
	Unspecified	1
Roadway collisions	With pull-behind machinery	1
Other incidents	Struck by falling tree	1
	Runover by a pickup truck in barn	1
	Hit on head when wrench slipped	1
Total		20

Table 2. 2009 Indiana farm-work-related fatalities by specific type of incident.

Table 3 provides a more detailed listing of fatalities that occurred in Indiana counties in 2009. Fatal farm-work-related incidents are described here by (1) date of incident, (2) county of incident, (3) age of victim, (4) gender of victim, (5) description of circumstances surrounding the incident, and (6) the Farm and Agricultural Injury Classification (FAIC) Code. The FAIC code is used to facilitate consistent and accurate classification of farm and agriculture-related injuries. Additional information on the FAIC code is available from the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE³) or by contacting Purdue's Extension Safety Specialist.

The FAIC code system:

- parallels, to the extent appropriate, current nationally established methods for classifying and assigning work-related injury cases to an industry;
- provides a systematic scheme for separating farm production work cases from non-farm-production work cases; and
- permits the identification of cases that uniquely reflect the situational exposures predominate to the agricultural industry.

Figure 2 represents a geographic distribution of Indiana's documented farm-work-related fatalities in 2009. Only Elkhart County had two fatalities in 2009; however, eight counties had fatalities in both 2008 and 2009: Decatur, Greene, Harrison, Howard, Miami, Owen, Porter and Putnam; but only Greene and Harrison had fatalities in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Figure 3 represents a geographic distribution of 758 of Indiana's 831 documented farm-work-related fatalities in the years 1980 through 2009 where the county of incident was known. Interestingly, Howard and Fayette Counties were the only two counties without a documented farm-work-related fatality for 28 years; however, Howard incurred one in both 2008 and 2009. Counties where relatively few fatalities had occurred in

³ASABE Standard S575.1, 2002. ASABE, 2950 Niles Road, St. Joseph, MI 49085. Tel: 616-429-0300

the past 29 years also added to their low totals this year. Howard went from a total of one to two; Fulton from two to three; and Tipton from five to six. The counties with 12 or more identified fatalities over the past 30 years are as follows:

Elkhart	24	Jennings	14	Morgan	13
LaGrange	22	Madison	13	Davies	12
Greene	19	Ripley	13	Huntington	12
Dubois	16	Allen	13	Jefferson	12
St. Joseph	15	Franklin	13	Randolph	12
Adams	14	Harrison	13		

Date	County	Age	Sex	Description of Incident	FAIC ^a
1/24/09	Owen	64	M	Tractor overturned while hauling bale	1
1/26/09	Marshall	31	M	Entangled in PTO of farm equipment	1
5/11/09	Clay	20	M	Tractor overturned--pinned under water	1
5/12/09	Greene	63	M	Operator fell off tractor-- mowing field	1
5/30/09	Harrison	73	M	Operator fell off tractor-- mowing roadside	1
6/23/09	Fulton	62	M	Fell off tractor--disking	1
6/27/09	Davies	67	M	Farmer trampled by a horse	1
7/02/09	Miami	66	M	Tree trunk rolled down tractor loader arms	1
7/20/09	Howard	81	M	Tractor overturned--mowing field	1
8/06/09	Allen	9	M	Passenger fell off horse-drawn cart-- ran over by wagon	NA
8/11/09	Jay	56	M	Operator fell off tractor--chisel plowing	1
8/21/09	Spencer	61	M	Crushed while working on tractor	1
9/07/09	Decatur	66	M	Crushed by tree he was cutting down	1
9/14/09	Putnam	69	M	Operator fell off tractor--mowing	1
9/17/09	Porter	84	M	Run over by tractor--jump starting	1
9/24/09	Elkhart	2	M	Run over by skid loader which was backing	NA
9/30/09	Tipton	71	M	Hit on head by wrench--working on combine	1
10/20/09	Elkhart	54	M	Pickup truck driver died after hitting farm truck that was pulling wagon load of hay	9
10/22/09	Franklin	5	M	Run over by pickup truck in barn	NA
11/27/09	Morgan	51	M	Fell from grain bin	1

Table 3. Listing of 2009 Indiana farm-work-related fatalities, N=20.

^aFAIC-1 Farm Production Work, Victim engaged in work activity related to agricultural production.

FAIC-9 Farm Hazard Exposure: Roadway collision. Victim not actively engaged in a work activity but injured as a result of collision with agricultural hazard on roadway.

NA Not applicable

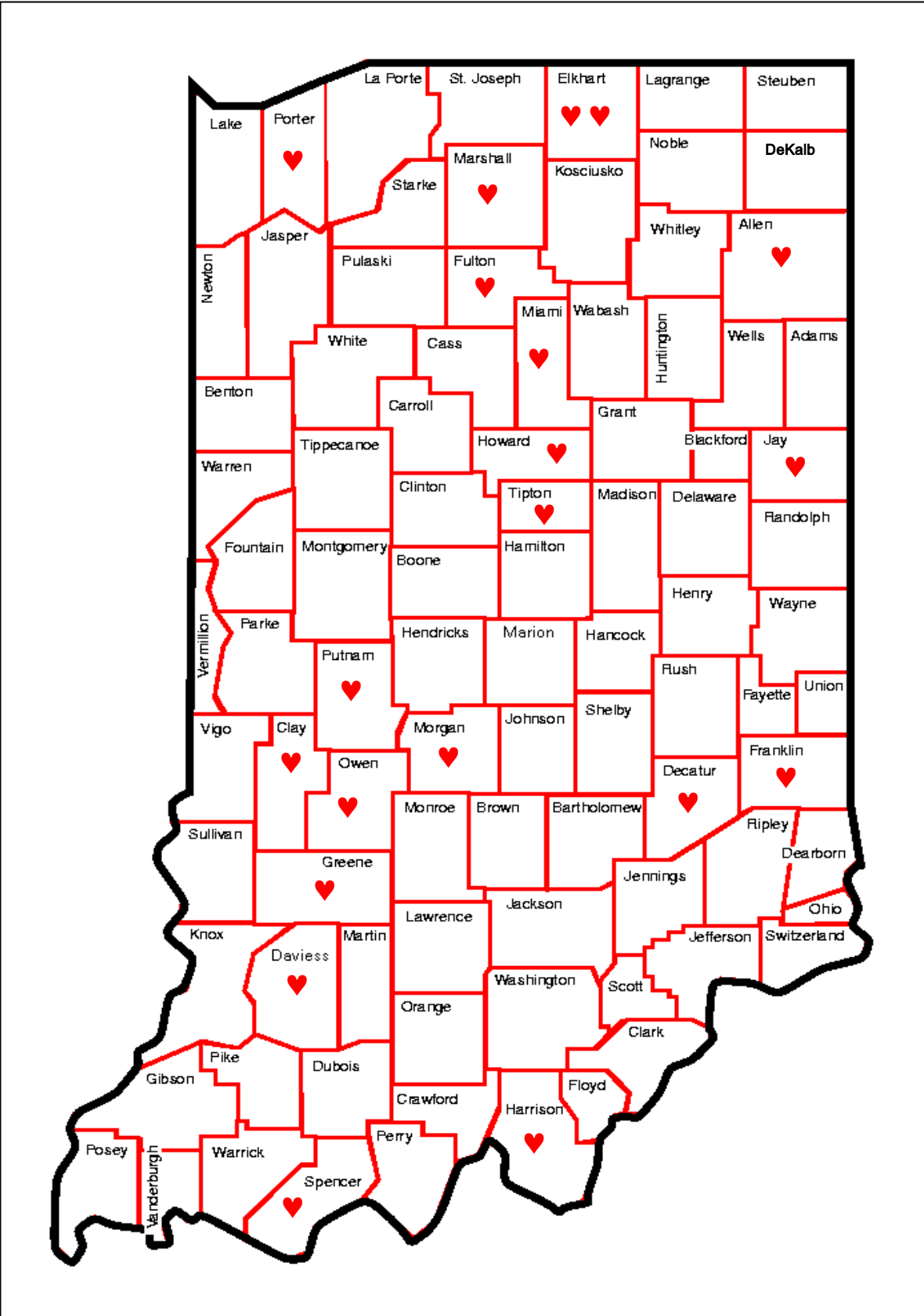


Figure 2. Geographic distribution of 2009 Indiana farm-work-related fatalities, N=20.

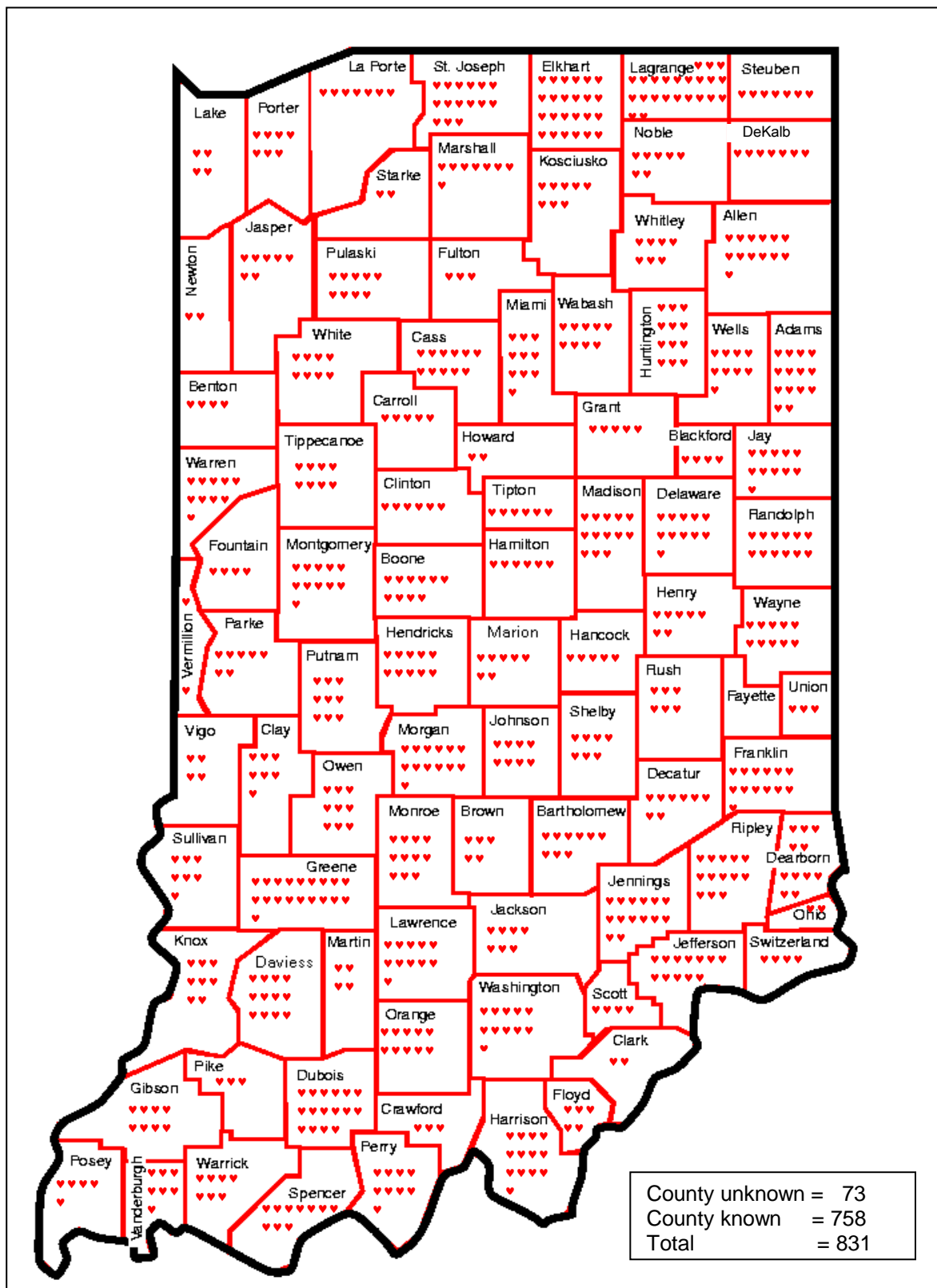


Figure 3. Geographic distribution by county of Indiana’s farm-work-related fatalities from 1980 through 2009.

Figure 4 displays the general downward trend of identified farm-work-related fatalities over the past 40 years. The 1998, 2004, and 2005 years each recorded the second lowest number of fatalities (N=16) while 2006 recorded only eight fatalities, the lowest since Purdue’s Agricultural Safety and Health Program has been keeping records. The number of identified fatalities increased in 1999 and 2000 then continued the general decreasing trend from 2001 through 2006; however the 24 fatalities in 2007 and 28 in 2008 again fell above the general downward trend line. The 20 fatalities in 2009 fell above the trend line but only slightly.

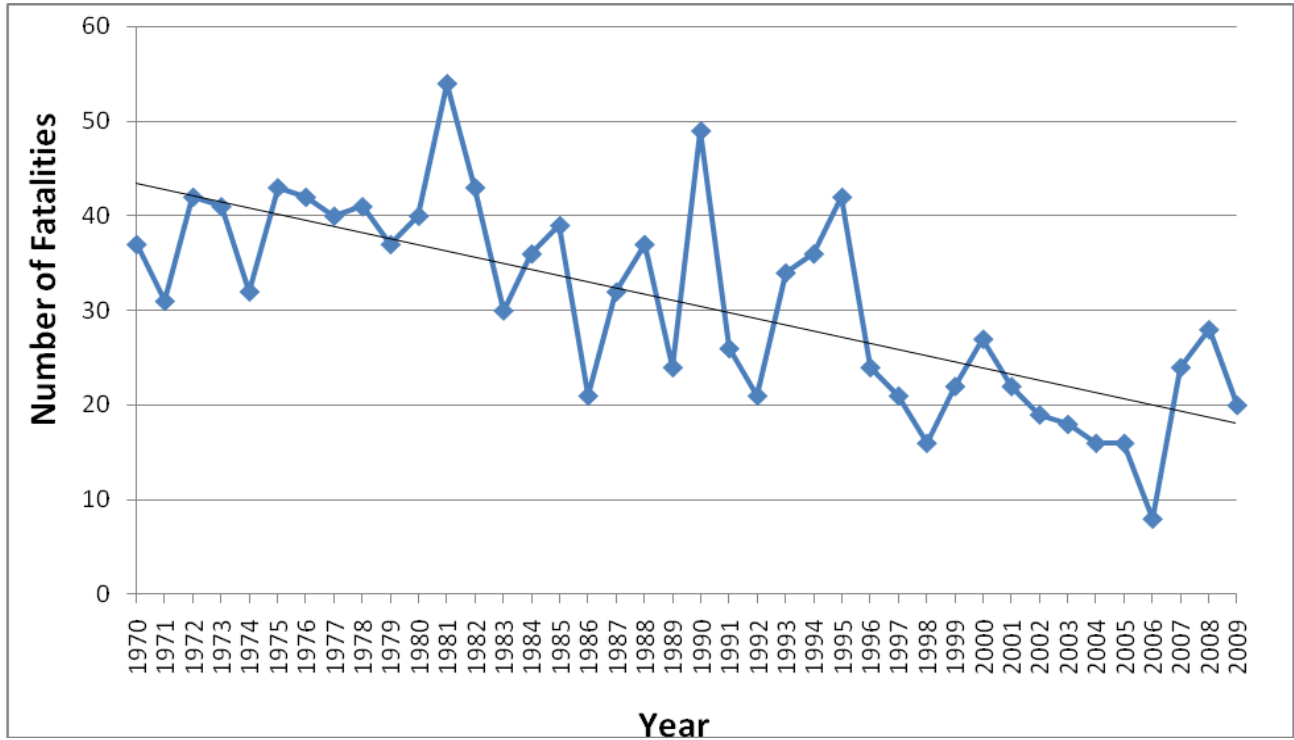


Figure 4. Annual summary of farm-work-related fatalities.

Using the number of 60,938 productive farms in Indiana with sales of over \$1,000, it was estimated for 2009 that one out of every 3047 farms experienced a farm-work-related fatality⁴. Using a population of 133,000 operators and hired workers on farms in Indiana, the death rate was approximately 15.0 per 100,000 farm workers⁵. That rate compares to an estimated national death rate of 3.5 per 100,000 for workers in all industries and 31.6 per 100,000 for those engaged in agricultural production nationwide⁶. It is believed, however, that the Indiana and national agricultural rates would be lower if unpaid family labor were included in the population of those exposed to farm hazards on a regular basis. Furthermore, the National Safety Council data does not include children under 16 in their calculation of rates while Purdue’s Agricultural Safety and Health Program does if the children were involved with or exposed to farm-work activities.

⁴ **Estimated number of farms** from the final report of the 2007 US Census of Agriculture.

⁵ **Estimated farm population** of operators and hired workers on farms from the final report of the 2007 US Census of Agriculture.

⁶ **Estimated death rates** from the National Safety Council Injury Facts, 2007 edition.

Summary of Indiana's Farm-Related, Non-Fatal Incidents and Their Economic Impact

While the Purdue Agricultural Safety and Health Program's surveillance of farm-work-related fatalities is rather comprehensive, farm-related non-fatal injuries are not well documented by any source in the state; therefore, there is little data on the frequency and severity of injuries that occur annually during farm work. However, many of Indiana's non-fatal farm-related injuries that were identified in 2009 were severe. At least nine of these incidents required ten victims to be air lifted to trauma centers: (1) two falls from a grain bin and a silo, (2) three tractor overturns, (3) a grain wagon that overturned pinning a farmer, (4) an entanglement when a farmer stepped over a PTO shaft, (5) a 12 year-old who caught his foot in an auger, and (6) a motorcycle with two riders that collided with a tractor. In addition to the victims that required air evacuation, the condition of the many of the others was described as serious or critical. Historically, many of these injuries would have been fatal but were not, due to rapid access to emergency medical services. One incident with a happy ending occurred when a farmer was partially buried in a corn silo and was successfully rescued without injury by emergency personnel.

In addition to the one roadway fatality reported in Table 2, a total of 13 nonfatal roadway collisions were reported of which at least two required air lifts to regional trauma centers: (1) a semi-truck collided with a farm tractor resulting in the five-year old passenger on the tractor becoming pinned under the tractor and (2) a motorcycle collision with a tractor. Other roadway incidents included (1) a school bus that sideswiped a farm vehicle, (2) an SUV and tractor collision, (3) a vehicle collision with a portable auger, (4) a vehicle collision with a utility pole while avoiding a tractor, (5) a vehicle collision with a manure spreader, (6) a vehicle collision with a cow, (7) a tractor overturn off a bridge, (8) a tractor overturn causing critical injuries to the 15 year-old operator, (9) a tractor and chisel plow that damaged a roadway and two utility poles; and (10) two separate incidents involving overturns of farm semitrucks.

A limited surveillance for fires discovered (1) one total-loss combine fire, (2) one total-loss tractor fire, and (3) 35 barn fires of which 14 were confirmed as farm buildings and 21 were at unspecified locations. The majority of these barn fires resulted in the total loss of the barns and their contents which included hay, straw, animals and machinery. Many of the barn fires were fought by multiple fire departments with one large fire requiring six departments to extinguish the flames and save other buildings. Reported causes of the fires were lightning, trash fires that spread to barns, heat lamps, faulty thermostat, spontaneous combustion of hay, and vehicles.

It is estimated, based upon prior research, that approximately one out of every nine farms annually experiences a farm-work-related injury requiring medical attention. Based upon the estimated 60,938 farms in the state, it can be projected that in 2009 there were approximately 6,770 treated injuries. Prior research by the National Safety Council indicated that 2% of reported farm injuries result in permanent disabilities which suggests that approximately 135 such cases occurred in the state in 2009. Many of these incidents, however, are not reported in the media, and there is no requirement to report such incidents to any official agency.

To gain a perspective of the potential economic impact of farm injuries to the state, a conservative estimated medical treatment cost of \$1200 per injury⁷ would result in an economic loss of \$8.12 million excluding the costs of transportation to receive medical services, replacement labor, property damage, emergency services, and long-term rehabilitation services. This estimated total, however, would be substantially increased if both the direct and indirect costs associated with the 20 fatalities and the 135 permanent disabilities were included. For example, the estimated cost of medical and rehabilitation care for a person experiencing a permanent spinal cord injury now exceeds \$1 million.

⁷ Estimated cost per injury based upon research conducted at the University of Illinois

The general trend for the total number of fatalities and injuries has been on the decline until the rise in 2007 and 2008, but the 20 fatalities in 2009 have dropped once again near the trend line. Even though there is a decline in the number of farm-related injuries, it is believed that the economic impact on the state has been on the rise due to the significant increase in medical and rehabilitation costs. This is especially problematic considering that a disproportionate number of farm families do not carry or cannot afford sufficient health care insurance. A single serious injury can result in almost insurmountable financial disaster for an otherwise successful farm family which is further emphasized by the fact that Indiana leads the nation in the rate of bankruptcies filed for medical reasons. However, there is hope that the passage of the new U.S. Health Care Bill may alleviate some of the health care and insurance difficulties currently faced by farm families.

Another issue that can create significant hardships for both Indiana farm families and hired farm labor is that most are not covered by nor can they afford state workers compensation insurance programs that nearly all employees of other Indiana industries have available to them. Therefore, an on-the-job injury can result in both excessive personal debt due to medical costs and long-term loss of income. The lack of both affordable health care insurance and insurance for lost wages due to injury are complex issues that need attention to ensure that the economic impact of work-related injuries on the state's farm families and agricultural workforce is minimized.

Other Incidents

Other incidents were reported which were not directly farm-work related but involved circumstances similar to those encountered with farm work.

ROADWAY-RELATED

Six roadway incidents were reported: (1) a commercial fertilizer spreader that overturned on a highway after a tire blew out, (2) a county highway mowing tractor that was struck by a train, (3) a semitruck load of fungicide that spilled causing a highway to be closed for eight hours during a hazmat-crew cleanup, (4) a tractor overturn off a bridge while the intoxicated driver was dragging his wrecked car upside-down on a roadway, (5) a semitruck load of corn that was struck by a train when the semitruck stalled on the tracks, and (6) the overturn of a semitruck load of watermelons.

GRAIN HANDLING

One nonfatal and four fatal incidents were reported at commercial grain facilities: (1) a grain entrapment where rescuers worked five hours to save a worker's life, (2) a fatal entrapment in a large bin of soybeans, (3) a fatal fall from an 80-foot tall silo, and (4) and (5) two separate fatal incidents where workers were entangled in grain augers.

ATVs

Three fatalities were reported during the recreational use of ATVs: (1) an ATV overturned on a man riding in his backyard, (2) a six-year old girl was a passenger on an ATV that rolled over behind her home, and she died even though she was wearing a helmet, and (3) another ATV with three riders overturned after hitting a dog on a county road--the nine-year old boy died while the 12-year old and the driver were treated at a hospital.

Anhydrous Ammonia Incidents

The overturn of a semitruck load of anhydrous ammonia occurred on a roadway and two anhydrous ammonia releases were reported at fertilizer supplier facilities during botched theft attempts to gather the ammonia ingredient for methamphetamine production. One release caused an ammonia

cloud near Evansville that sickened and sent 20 people from the surrounding neighborhood to hospital emergency rooms. Numerous emergency agencies responded to that incident to provide emergency medical care, conduct triage, evacuate the area, warn residents to stay inside, and contain the release. The other release caused an ammonia cloud near Chrisney that closed U.S. 231 for an hour and kept local residents confined to their homes. The strong ammonia odor was noticeable in downtown Chrisney. When one considers the problems that emergency personnel encounter when responding to the illegal possession of anhydrous, the magnitude of the danger from anhydrous ammonia is greatly magnified. A search for the phrase "anhydrous ammonia" on the Web site of only one newspaper, the Evansville Courier Press, found 51 articles in 2009 (two or three articles often covered the same incident). Forty-eight articles involved illegal use. The articles covered the explosion of an unapproved anhydrous container that killed one and injured two others, and a police chase of alleged anhydrous thieves that resulted in the death of the two being chased. The 48 articles mentioned the terms theft, leaking, strong odor, chemical smell, unapproved container, explosion, illegal possession, tampering with storage tanks, ammonia release, illegal transportation, and unlawful storage. Though an important and generally safe source of soil nutrient for farmers, the illegal use of anhydrous ammonia presents a serious potential hazard to Indiana's rural communities.

The Changing Agricultural Workforce

Over the past 30 years, the agricultural workforce in Indiana has changed dramatically. In 1976, when the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) was passed by Congress, the US Census of Agriculture showed there were fewer than 100 farm operations in Indiana that were required to comply with the workplace safety and health provisions of the act due to their workforce exceeding 10 non-family member employees. In 2007, the estimated number that could be interpreted as needing to be in compliance has grown to around 850. It is assumed that this number continues to increase with additional farm consolidation. Many of the farms have grown slowly and quietly, and their owners may not even realize that they should be in compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.

Another major change has been the rapid growth in the number of Hispanics that are now employed in agricultural production operations on a full-time basis. This trend is especially notable on dairy, poultry, and hog operations. Many of these workers have limited English speaking skills and lower literacy levels that make traditional agricultural safety and health resources ineffective. To address the workplace safety and health needs of this new workforce, attention must be given to developing new and innovative instructional material that addresses the hazards of newer and more complex farm operations. That material needs to be culturally sensitive and delivered in a format that can be interpreted by the target audience.

Based upon the most recent agricultural census data, the growth of small farms is another important change occurring in rural communities. This audience of part-time and hobby farmers have very different educational needs as compared to larger commercial operations. A review of fatality data over the last few years suggests that these smaller operations are beginning to account for a disproportionate share of all documented fatalities.

Farm-related Injuries in the Amish/Old Order Communities

Amish are a part of the Old Order Anabaptist subculture, and Indiana is home to the third largest Amish community in North America. This group is closely associated with agriculture, has a larger than average number of children per household, and is doubling in population approximately every 20-22 years. In 1996 one third of all documented farm-work-related fatalities occurred in Amish communities. Elkhart, LaGrange, Adams, and Allen counties, home to some of the largest Amish

communities, are also counties with the largest number of farm-work-related fatalities over the past 30 years.

There are several contributing factors to the larger number of cases being reported from these communities. These include the widespread use of horses and horse drawn vehicles and equipment, more labor intensive farm practices, greater use of children in completing farm work, and the recent acceptance of skid loaders and certain hybrid equipment that is engine powered yet still horse drawn.

Purdue Agriculture Safety and Health Program identified 203 farm-related injuries and 14 deaths that occurred in 2002 to Anabaptist children and youth under the age of 18 in the U.S. and Canada.⁸ Direct animal contact, hay-hole falls, and horse-drawn equipment runovers were the most common causes of incidents, and the injuries occurred most frequently at ages 3-4 and 13-15.

Over the past 10 years, Purdue Extension has undertaken an aggressive effort to raise the awareness level within the Amish community of the hazards being identified by the injury data collection efforts and has facilitated over 20 family safety days that have attracted several thousand Amish family members. Intervention strategies have been developed and presented which include new safety material that is more culturally acceptable.

Grain Entrapment--Nationwide and Indiana

In addition to the previously mentioned one on-farm and two commercial grain entrapments that were reported in Indiana, 35 more cases were reported in other states in 2009 for a total of 38 (16 fatal and 22 nonfatal). The U.S. data show a disturbing trend of an increasing number of grain entrapments. Between 1994 and 2002, the five-year average had decreased to 18.8 per year; but since 2002 the five-year average has increased steadily to 31.2 per year in 2009. While historically 74% of entrapments have resulted in death, a recent trend is shows more successful rescues--only 42% of the 2009 cases were fatal. Better confined space entry procedures and first responder training may be contributing to the better survival rates. (U.S. data available at www.grainquality.org, select "Safety issues" then "2009 Summary of Grain Entrapments in the U.S.") In response to the increasing occurrence of grain entrapments, the Purdue Agricultural Safety and Health Program has been conducting grain handling safety programs across the state, developed new educational resources, and has planned seven grain-entrapment rescue trainings at Purdue farms around the state in June, 2010.

Bull Attacks--Nationwide and Indiana

With the advent of artificial insemination, the frequency of farmers and ranchers in close contact with bulls was reduced, and little attention has been given to bull attacks in agricultural safety and health literature over the past two decades. However, when Purdue University's agricultural safety and health program's surveillance project detected 31 bull attacks on people **nationwide** in 2006 and 29 in 2007 (not counting recreational attacks from bull riding), the program began a study researching bull attacks. It appears there is a trend to bring back the yearling bull for "clean up" breeding purposes, and intact bulls are also being raised for meat production. In Indiana there was one fatal attack and one nonfatal attack in 2006 and no attacks recorded in 2007, 2008 and 2009, but all of these numbers are most likely very conservative because minor injuries are often not reported.

The study showed that over half of the attacks resulted in a fatality, with the nonfatal attacks often causing severe disabling physical injuries. The study concluded that better bull handling facilities should be used to minimize direct contact with bulls and that aggressive bulls should be culled from the herd and slaughtered because several cases demonstrated if a bull attacks once it is likely to attack

⁸ "Farm-Related Injuries among Old Order Anabaptist Children ...," Gilliam et al., *Journal of Agromedicine*, Vol. 12(3) 2007.

again. Due to the unpredictable nature of bulls which can be docile one day and aggressive the next, bull handlers should be aware of the risks associated with mature bulls and never turn their back on a bull just because the bull has always been docile in the past. The complete results and recommendations from the study can be found in Volume 13 of the Journal of Agromedicine.

Impact on Agriculture from Natural Disasters

An ongoing review of reports from across the state indicates that farmers are also regularly impacted by a variety of environmental forces including flooding, tornadoes, winter storms, lightning and high winds. In most cases, the bulk of these losses are absorbed by the farm operation due to a lack of adequate insurance coverage, high levels of deductibles, and policy coverage limitations. Though not always preventable, some of these losses can be mitigated through adequate planning and more effective response strategies. A good example is the damage caused by frozen pipes, a significant source of insurance claims. Utilizing appropriate design criteria, recognizing the need to protect vulnerable pipes and providing short-term but safe supplemental heating could save farm families hundreds of thousands of dollars annually that are spent to repair broken pipes and water damage.

Motor Vehicle Safety

The most frequent cause of work-related deaths for Indiana farm families and farm labor is, and always has been, motor vehicle crashes. The data in this report only reflect a small portion of the motor vehicle crashes because pickup truck and automobile collisions are not included unless they involve a larger farm truck or farm equipment. The total number of deaths may be lower, but the rate is just as high as and probably higher than other segments of the population even though the exemption, which farm truck operators had from having to comply with the state motor vehicle seatbelt law, was rescinded effective July 1, 2007. It may be that the single most important step that could be taken to reduce work-related fatalities among farmers is to encourage them to buckle up every time they get behind the wheel and head out on the highway.

Diminishing Resources

As budgets have tightened and legislators at the state and federal levels have explored ways to reduce expenditures, farm safety efforts have not gone untouched. In Indiana, reduced travel budgets and increased fuel costs for Extension staff have made coordination and participation in local safety initiatives more difficult. Educational material that was once free and readily available is now expensive and restricted to on-line access. Most commercially available farm safety videos and DVDs have become so expensive that they are now out of reach to most public schools and groups such as 4-H and FFA. The Indiana Rural Safety and Health Council, the only non-profit group in the state with its sole mission being to promote agricultural safety and health, has a budget of only a few thousand dollars per year to spend on exhibits, displays, and information dissemination. To make matters worse, USDA eliminated all earmarked farm safety funds for the states from the budget for the past seven years leaving several states with no, or greatly diminished farm safety programs. Due to the foresight of Purdue's earlier Extension directors, Purdue's commitment to farm safety and health had already been incorporated into line item budgets and was not impacted as much as most states.

Farm safety and health is not, nor will it ever be, a topic that will make the front page of the paper, turn the heads of legislators or generate an outpouring of public support. However, if you belonged to one of the 831 Indiana farm families that experienced the loss of a family member over the past 30 years, including the 20 in 2009, you know personally the impact these events can have. In some cases, the effects last a lifetime.

If you are interested in supporting the work of Purdue's Agricultural Safety and Health Program or the Indiana Rural Safety and Health Council, please feel free to call 765-494-1191.

For additional information, contact 765-494-1191 or visit www.farmsafety.org.