

Fatal Farm Accidents in Wisconsin
Donald V. Jensen

Sixty Wisconsin citizens lost their lives in farm accidents in 1974. This farm accident death loss is one more than the 59 deaths in 1973 which was the lowest recorded in the state in the past 30 years. The deaths in 1973 and 1974 were down sharply from the 70 reported in 1972.

The graph below shows a gradual decrease in the number of fatal farm accidents since 1945. Fatalities involving fires, falls, and animals were very common during the five-year period 1945-49, accounting for 39 percent of the total while in 1974 they accounted for 8 percent of the fatal accidents, and 53 percent were tractor accidents. Sixty-nine percent of the tractor deaths were caused by upsets.

Fatal Farm Accidents in Wisconsin

Year	Number of Fatalities	Year	Number of Fatalities
1945	168	1960	103
1946	156	1961	93
1947	145	1962	86
1948	134	1963	100
1949	128	1964	85
1950	124	1965	81
1951	115	1966	93
1952	114	1967	75
1953	102	1968	65
1954	99	1969	77
1955	89	1970	75
1956	95	1971	68
1957	94	1972	79
1958	81	1973	59
1959	89	1974	60

Some accident costs such as time lost from work, decreased earning power, decreased efficiency, damage to equipment, and crop loss can be measured. In addition there is suffering, grief, and loss of life.

Safety therefore needs to be a continuous concern. We need to increase our efforts to reduce or eliminate hazards and to learn how to avoid hazards which cannot be eliminated. Voluntary safety programs are necessary, as more than 90 percent of the accidents to rural Wisconsin residents involved the farm family which is exempt from rules and regulations.

Accident Summary 1974

Yearly summaries of fatal farm accidents are based on reports from all Wisconsin daily and weekly newspapers, with further verification and details obtained from county agents, agricultural teachers, implement dealers and similar sources.

In addition to fatal accidents, hundreds of permanent-injury and thousands of lost-time accidents occur each year.

For persons promoting community or county-wide safety programs, individual county statistics are available from the Department of Agricultural Engineering, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Tractor and machinery accidents caused most of the farm accident fatalities in 1974. Tractors were involved in 32 of the 60 deaths in 1974. Tractors were involved in 32 of the 60 deaths in 1974, and other machinery in 7 of the fatalities. Table 2 shows the total and monthly fatalities by types of accident.

Table 1 gives a breakdown of the tractor and machinery accidents shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Number of Fatalities Involving Machinery

Tractor and Machinery

Tractor	32	Chopper Wagon	1
Silo Unloader	2	Wagon	1
Combine	1	PTO Self-Unloading Wagon	1
Manure Spreader	1	Total	39

Table 2. Type of Accident and Total Fatalities by Month for 1974

Total	Type of Accident	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
32	Tractor	3	2	1	3	1	4	6	-	5	3	3	1
7	Machinery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	2	-	-
5	Strangulation	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
3	Woodcutting	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
3	Animals	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-
2	Falls	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
2	Falling Object	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
1	Explosion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
1	Lighting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
1	Drowning	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
1	Poisonous Gas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
1	Traffic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
1	Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60	All Types	5	3	1	4	3	5	8	3	12	10	4	2

Fatal Tractor Accidents 1974

Tractor accidents were responsible for 32 (53 percent) of the 60 fatal farm accidents in 1974. Tables 3 and 4 give the type of accident, age and sex of the victims.

Table 3. Fatal Tractors Accidents by Age Group and Sex

		65-Over	45-64	25-44	20-24	15-19	10-14	5-9	Under 5
30	Male	7	8	7	2	3	2	-	1
2	Female	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-

Table 4. Fatal Tractor Accidents by Type and Age

22	Tractor Tipped Over	Girl Boys Men	16 12, 15, 15 20, 20, 26, 33, 35, 36, 44, 53, 54, 56, 56, 59, 66, 66, 66, 71, 75, 77
3	Extra Passengers on Tractor	Girl Boys	10 3, 14
3	Crushed between Tractor and Other	Boy Men	15 38, 74
2	Run Over by Tractor	Men	58, 61
1	Fell from Tractor	Man	58
1	Thrown from Tractor	Man	39
32	Fatal Tractor Accidents		

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This publication is revised.