



1996 Wisconsin Farm-Related Fatalities

Mark A. Purschwitz and Cheryl A. Skjolaas
 UW Center for Agricultural Safety and Health
 Department of Biological Systems Engineering
 University of Wisconsin-Extension/Madison

Thirty-five fatalities related to farm work or work site activities occurred in Wisconsin in 1996, compared to 36 fatalities in 1995 and 31 in 1994. Wisconsin has averaged 38.4 such fatalities per year over the past five years.

The 1996 fatality rate (number of fatalities per 100,000 workers) was 31.2, based on an estimated average of 112,000 workers in production agriculture in Wisconsin in 1996, as reported by the National Agricultural Statistics Services (including farm operators, unpaid family labor, and hired workers, but excluding service workers hired through labor contractors). This compares to rates of 28.3 and 26.1 for 1995 and 1994, respectively.

Fatalities	1996	1995	1994
Number	35	36	31
Rate*	31.2	28.3	26.1

* (per 100,000 workers)

According to the National Safety Council, agriculture is consistently one of the three most hazardous industries in the U.S. (along with mining and construction), with an estimated 800 work deaths in 1995 and a fatality rate of 24 deaths per 100,000 workers. This compares with 5300 fatalities for all U.S. industries combined, with a death rate of four per 100,000.

Farm-Related Fatality Definition

Farm-related fatalities are defined as unintentional deaths resulting from injury or environmental factors involving farm work or hazards of the farm work site. Fatalities resulting from heart attacks, recreational activities, home-related activities, or most motor vehicle injuries, are not included in this definition.

Types of Farm-Related Fatalities

Farm tractors were involved in 12 (34.3%) of the 35 fatalities. Other farm machines were involved in 11 (31.4%) of the 35 fatalities. These are discussed in more detail later in this report. Falls accounted for four (11.4%) of the fatalities. Animals accounted for three (8.6%) of the fatalities and involved a bull attack, a child being butted in the chest by a heifer, and a cattle trampling. Confined space fatalities involved two engulfments/suffocation in feed bins. There were two fatalities related to tree felling or woodcutting. The other incident was a person riding an ATV for work purposes who hit his head on a tree limb.

Fatalities	1996	1995	1994
Tractors	12	16	11
Farm Machines	11	12	7
Falls	4	1	0
Animals	3	2	3
Confined Spaces	2	0	0
Trees/Woodcutting	2	0	4
Trucks	0	1	3
Other	1	4	3
Total	35	36	31

Farm Tractor-Related Fatalities

Farm tractors were involved in 12 farm fatalities in 1996, compared with 16 in 1995 and 11 in 1994. Tractor rollovers (overturns) accounted for six (50.0 %) of the tractor fatalities. Runovers/falls (being run over by the tractor, sometimes after falling from it) accounted for six fatalities (50.0%).

Tractor	1996	1995	1994
Rollovers	6	5	6
Runovers/Falls	6	6	3
Other	0	5	2
Total	12	16	11

Machine-Related Fatalities

Farm machines (other than tractors) were involved in 11 farm fatalities in 1996, compared with twelve in 1995 and seven in 1994. Entanglements accounted for seven fatalities (63.6 %); machines included a manure spreader, rectangular hay baler, total mixed ration (TMR) mixer, corn elevator, silo unloader (2), and unidentified farm machine. At least two entanglements involved PTO drivelines. Three fatalities (27.3%) involved being pinned by a machine. One incident involved being pinned by the wing of a harrow that fell while the victim was attempting to lower it. Another involved being pinned by the bucket of a skid-steer loader after stepping on the controls while the bucket was elevated. The third involved being pinned by a flat-bed wagon that fell from the front-end loader being used to elevate it for repairs. The runover involved a young child coming up behind a skid-steer loader while it was operating.

Machines	1996	1995	1994
Entanglements	7	5	2
Pinned	3	6	3
Runovers	1	0	1
Other	0	1	1
Total	11	12	7

Month of Occurrence

The peak month for fatalities was July with seven fatalities. The distribution by month of occurrence is given below.

January	2	July	7
February	2	August	4
March	2	September	3
April	2	October	4
May	4	November	3
June	0	December	2

County of Occurrence

In 1996, farm-related fatalities were reported in 26 counties. One county had three fatalities, seven counties had two fatalities, and 18 counties had one fatality.

Ashland	1	Manitowoc	1
Buffalo	1	Marathon	1
Chippewa	1	Monroe	1
Dane	2	Oconto	2
Dodge	1	Outagamie	2
Douglas	1	Pierce	1
Dunn	1	Price	2
Eau Claire	2	Richland	1
Fond du Lac	1	St. Croix	2
Grant	1	Shawano	1
Green	2	Vernon	3
Green Lake	1	Walworth	1
Jackson	1	Waupaca	1

Age and Gender of Victims

Thirty-three (94.3%) of the victims were males, and two (5.7%) were females. The ages of the two females were 3 and 47.

Persons age 65 and older accounted for eight (22.9%) of the victims. Adults age 45-64 accounted for fourteen (40.0%) of the victims. Six victims were age 9 or younger. The following table gives the age distribution using standard National Safety Council age categories, with expanded categories below age 25.

Age	Number	Percent
0 - 4	2	5.7 %
5 - 9	4	11.4 %
10 - 14	0	0.0 %
15 -19	3	8.6 %
20 - 24	0	0.0 %
25 - 44	4	11.4 %
45 - 64	14	40.0 %
65+	8	22.9 %
Total	35	100.0 %

Data Sources

Clippings from Wisconsin daily and weekly newspapers; Wisconsin Center for Health Statistics death certificate registry; National Agricultural Statistics Service Farm Labor Reports

July 1997