

2023 Wisconsin Farm Related Fatalities

A COLLABORATION OF UW DIVISION OF EXTENSION AND THE NATIONAL FARM MEDICINE CENTER

INTRODUCTION

Each year, a summary of Wisconsin farm fatalities is compiled to help identify the hazards and risks for people who work in agriculture. This report includes fatalities from agriculture-related hazards for the year 2023. Fatalities from naturally occurring health events or underlying conditions, such as heart attack or stroke, or recreational or home-related activities, are not included.

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fatalities	28	35	29	30

NOTE: Since 2017, farm fatality reports differ from BLS data summaries due to the inclusion of children, bystanders, non-farm motorists, and other public roadway incidents involving agricultural operations.

TYPES OF FATALITIES

Thirty fatalities were recorded in 2023. Using the **Farm and Agricultural Injury Classification (FAIC)**¹ code allows researchers and others to identify and categorize occupational cases and unique exposures, such as non-working children and bystanders injured in work environments.

Injury Classification	Number
Farm Production Work	14
Farm Hazard: Non-workers	3
Roadway Collision	4
Agricultural Support (e.g. farm mechanic)	1
Unable to determine	8

EVENTS THAT LED TO FARM FATALITIES

Machinery hazards are a significant source of injuries. Farm equipment conditions and the presence of safety devices such as shields or rollover protection vary widely. Even with “safe” equipment, unexpected events and improper operation can lead to injury.

Blunt trauma, such as from equipment that falls while it is being repaired, trees, and equipment runovers, led to 13 fatalities. Nine cases were caused by falls from barns, sheds, silos, and other structures. Operating a tractor on a public roadway led to 2 fatalities. One fatal injury was caused by crushing.

Injury Event	Number
Blunt Trauma	13
Falls	9
On-road Transportation	2
Machine Entanglement	1
Crushing Injuries	1
Fire	1
Grain Entrapment	1
Other	2

BLUNT TRAUMA INCIDENTS

Of blunt trauma cases, 3 (23%) involved being run over by tractors, 2 (15%) involved trees, and 2 (15%) involved being run over by UTVs. The remaining blunt trauma cases (1 each, 8%) involved: hay bale, skid steer, silo motor, pickup truck, small feed mill part, and grain bin.



Trees 2



Vehicles 2



Building 3



ATV/UTVs 3



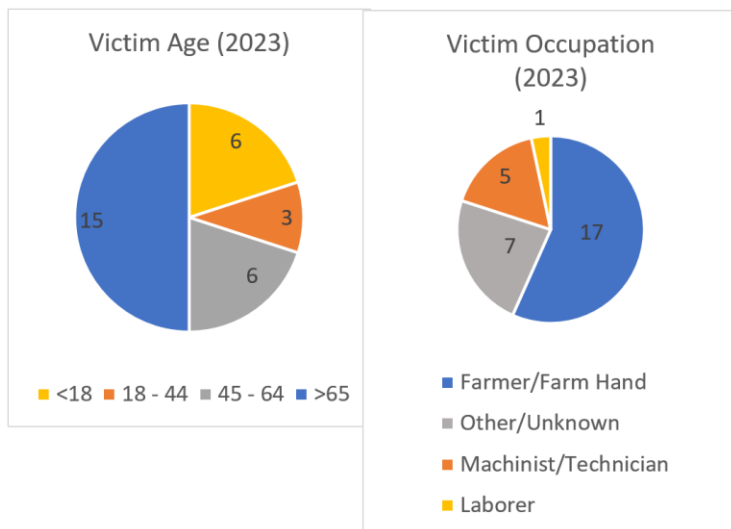
Tractors 6

SOURCE OF INJURY

Roadway collisions pose a threat to farmers as well as to non-farm motor vehicle operators and passengers. Tractors, including collisions and rollovers, fatally injured 6 victims. ATVs/UTVs used while performing a farm task and buildings (grain bins) were also major sources of fatalities, with 3 victims each. Passenger vehicles and falling trees and logs, such as clearing trees from a farm fencerow with a tractor, fatally injured 2 victims each.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Twenty-five of the victims (90%) were male and three were female. Persons aged 65 and over constituted the largest number of victims with 15 individuals (50%), while 3 were between 18 and 44 (10%). Of the victims with known occupations, 17 were primarily farmers. Outside of farming occupations, victims included five machinists/technicians, one general laborer, plus a mix of other ag service professions.



Note: The authors of this factsheet documented several suicide and homicide events involving those reported as farmers. If you have concerns for yourself or others including thoughts of suicide, call 1-800-273-8255, and also consider locating a "QPR" suicide prevention training course in your community.

AREAS OF INTEREST – FARM EQUIPMENT ROADWAY COLLISIONS

The team that analyzed Wisconsin farm workplace deaths has seen a modest decline in roadway-collision fatalities involving farm equipment operators, motor vehicle drivers, and occupants in recent years. Statewide, organizations like the National Farm Medicine Center have led efforts to distribute SMV emblems. Awareness-building efforts have reminded equipment owners of the need to upgrade to meet federal requirements to be compliant with the ASABE's standard for lighting and marking (S-279), required by federal regulation for newer ag equipment. The Wisconsin-based Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) offers a guide outlining the required lighting and marking for agricultural equipment,

including tractors, implements, larger self-propelled machines, and other equipment. See: <https://go.wisc.edu/4ltel2>

IMPACT OF FARM FATALITIES

Nationally, workers in agriculture and closely related industries are up to 7 times more likely to die on the job than workers in other industries.² Farming remains among the most dangerous jobs in the U.S., with an annual fatality rate of 20.9/100,000 full-time working individuals compared to an all-industry rate of 3.3/100,000.² A 2024 study examined the economic impact of U.S. farm injuries and deaths for farm operators, agricultural workers, and society. This study estimated total costs at \$11.3 billion in 2024 dollars, representing an annual cost burden of 10%-15% of net farm income.³

ABOUT OUR DATA

Data sources included the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Bureau of Health Information death certificate registry; clippings from Wisconsin daily and weekly newspapers collected and collated via AgInjuryNews.org.

REFERENCES

1. D J Murphy, M Purschwitz, B S Mahoney, and A F Hoskin Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Pennsylvania State University, University Park 16802. "A proposed classification code for farm and agricultural injuries.", *American Journal of Public Health* 83, no. 5 (May 1, 1993): pp. 736-738.
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2024. Number and rate of fatal work injuries, by selected private industries. <https://www.bls.gov/charts/census-of-fatal-occupational-injuries/number-and-rate-of-fatal-work-injuries-by-industry.htm>
3. Adhikari, S., Wilson, F., & Rautiainen, R. (2024). Cost of agricultural injuries in the United States: Estimates based on surveillance, insurance, and government statistics. *American journal of industrial medicine*, 67(9), 801–812. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajim.23628>

SUGGESTED CITATION

Weichert B., Aby G.R., Shutske J. 2023 Wisconsin Farm Related Fatalities. Marshfield, WI. Marshfield Clinic Research Institute; 2025.



GET MORE INFORMATION

CALL: 1-800-662-6900

EMAIL: nfmcsh@mcrf.mfldclin.edu

VISIT: marshfieldclinic.org/nfmc



Supported by grant UL1TR002373 from the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) program of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, NIH. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH.