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Injuries to Youth on Hispanic Farm Operations, 2003



Photograph courtesy of National Farm Medicine Center

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Hispanic Farm Operations

Just the facts . . .

- In 2003, 47,200 farms were operated by Hispanics in the United States
- About 1/3 (17,300) of these farms reported having youth less than 20 years old living on them
- 34,500 youth lived on these Hispanic-operated farms
- 540 injuries (1.5 injuries/day) occurred to youth who lived on, worked on, or visited these Hispanic-operated farms
- Nearly 2/3 (340) of the injuries were to youth who lived on the farm
- Between 1995 and 2002, 77 Hispanic youth died on farms (42 deaths/100,000 youth)

Hispanic Youth Fatalities on Farms, 1995-2002

- Of the 77 Hispanic youth who died on farms in the United States, most were between the ages of 16 and 19
- The majority of deaths to Hispanic youth on farms were due to machinery (21%), such as tractors; motor vehicles (18%), which include ATVs; and drowning (15%)

Understanding how to create a safe farm environment is important for farm operators and their families. Youth who live and work on farms are exposed to potentially dangerous farm-related hazards more frequently than other youth.

Non-fatal Injuries to Youth Living on Hispanic Farms, 2003

The most common sources for the 340 non-fatal injuries to youth living on a Hispanic farm were:

- Floors, walkways, ground (29%)
- Persons, animals, plants, minerals (21%)
- Vehicles (ATVs, tractors, automobiles, 17%)

The most common types of injury were:

- Broken bone (36%)
- Cut (15%)
- Bruise (13%)

The body parts most commonly injured were:

- Hand, wrist, finger (20%)
- Arm (17%)

Non-fatal injury rates (per 1,000) for youth living* on Hispanic farms by age group, 2003



* Includes all individuals 0-19 years of age who live on a Hispanic farm operation.

How to Keep the Youth on Your Farm Safe

- Children do what they see...be a good role model for farm safety. Devote a day to FARM SAFETY with your children.
- Inspect your farm for hazards to children. Remove as many hazards as possible. Mark dangerous areas clearly with hazard signs.
- Provide an enclosed and supervised safe play area for children. Do not allow children to play around machinery, workshops, storage buildings, or where work is occurring on the farm.
- Assign farm chores to youth that are appropriate for their age such as those recommended in the North American Guidelines for Childhood Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT).

Keeping Youth Safe Around Animals

- Teach youth how to handle and work with animals safely.
- Farm animals that are breeding, have newborns, or are sick can be aggressive - make sure children have no contact with these animals.
- Children should wear proper protective clothing when handling animals. For example, youth should always wear a helmet when riding horses.
- All household pets should have proper health checks and shots.

Keeping Youth Safe Around Machinery

- Do not allow extra riders on tractors, all terrain vehicles (ATVs) and other farm equipment; follow the “ONE SEAT— ONE RIDER” rule.
- NEVER leave keys in the ignition of machinery or vehicles.
- Limit operation of ATVs, tractors, and machinery to older youth. ATV manufacturers recommend that riders be at least 16 years of age for ATVs 400 cc or larger, and that they take an ATV safety training course. Youth should not operate any ATV without wearing a helmet.
- Child labor laws require that hired youth be at least 16 years old to operate tractors and machinery on farms, except for 14- and 15- year olds who have received operator certification. All youth should be properly trained before operating tractors or machinery.
- Child labor laws do not apply to youth on their family’s farm. However, they are a good guide for when youth are old enough to do hazardous work safely.
- Youth, like adults, should not operate farm tractors without a Roll-Over Protective Structure (ROPS) and a seatbelt.
- Youth should not operate tractors or other vehicles on public roads without a driver’s license.

Farm operators who hire youth to work on their farm should be aware of all applicable child labor laws.

Keeping Youth Safe Around Water

- Always supervise children when playing in or near water.
- All entrances to ponds, lagoons, pools, and manure pits should be restricted. All farm ponds should have water safety and rescue equipment.
- Alcohol contributes to many teen drownings on farms. Talk to your teens about the dangers of drinking and swimming.
- Never leave containers with standing water in areas where toddlers are present.

Farm Youth Dies After Being Engulfed in Corn Inside of Steel Grain Bin

1995 – A 13-year-old male farm youth died of injuries sustained after he was engulfed in corn inside a grain bin. The youth and his father had been using a portable auger to remove corn from the bin. The youth climbed the bin ladder to remove the cover on the roof opening, and remained seated on the roof ladder to observe the corn being removed from the bin. The youth apparently fell into the bin while his father was moving the truck forward to be filled.



For More Information

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Web: research.marshfieldclinic.org/children

North American Guidelines for Children’s Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT)
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Web: www.nagcat.org

Farm Safety 4 Just Kids
P.O. Box 458
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Web: www.fs4jk.org

U.S. Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210
Telephone: 1-866-4-USA-DOL
Web: www.dol.gov/dol/topic/youthlabor/Agriculturalemployment.htm

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U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Telephone: 1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669)
Web: www.insurekidsnow.gov