

# Farming-related Deaths, Oklahoma, 1998-2008

May 2010

## Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program

Farming is one of the most hazardous industries in the United States. In 2008, 456 farmers and farm workers died due to farm-related injuries. From 1998 to 2008, 195 people were killed in farming-related incidents in Oklahoma. Farming related deaths accounted for 16% of all work-related deaths in Oklahoma during this time. More than half of all farm-related deaths involved a tractor, and 20% involved a tractor rollover. Nearly all (95%) deaths occurred among males. The age of workers killed ranged from 16 to 91. Injuries were most common in the months of May and July. More than half of all fatal injuries occurred between 10:00 AM and 8:00 PM, and most often from 3:00-4:00 PM.

- An 80-year-old male was attempting to let a cow and calf through a gate on his ranch when the cow charged him, knocked him to the ground, and stepped on him numerous times. The cow weighed approximately 900 pounds.
- A 51-year-old male was operating a tractor when it died. He tried to jump start it by using pliers at the starter. He was standing between the tires when the engine engaged and the tractor leapt forward. The tractor had been left in gear and he was run over.

**The Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program collects statewide information on 19 occupational health conditions in order to develop and inform occupational injury and illness prevention programs. Oklahoma's occupational surveillance system is a research program of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.**

**For detailed reports, please go to the Occupational Injuries section at:  
<http://ips.health.ok.gov>**

- A 21-year-old male was moving dirt with a tractor equipped with a front-end loader to repair a farm pond. The tractor overturned on a slope and ejected the driver as it rolled. The tractor had a roll bar and seat belt, but it is unknown if the seat belt was in use.
- A 79-year-old male was driving a tractor with a brush hog in his pasture when the brush hog raised and the power take-off engaged, causing the blades to turn. He drove into a ditch and the tractor tilted to the left. He was ejected and was dragged for a short time before being rolled up under the brush hog.
- A 52-year-old male was driving a tractor on a two-lane road and was struck from behind by a one-ton truck. The tractor ran off the road and overturned, pinning the driver. The tractor was not equipped with tail lights or a slow-moving vehicle placard.

## SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Install rollover protective structures (ROPS) and seat belts on all tractors for which there is a manufactured retrofit.
- Use a seat belt at all times while riding on a ROPS-equipped tractor.
- Maintain safe speeds.
- Avoid operating tractors near ditches, embankments/steep slopes, and holes.
- Use slow moving vehicle placards when operating machinery on a roadway.
- Use proper implements for hauling hay.
- Ensure the weight and distribution of the tractor's load is appropriate.
- Keep a fire extinguisher on tractors.
- Maintain tractors and other farm equipment in good working order; inspect equipment and vehicles regularly.
- Check for people and obstacles before moving equipment.
- Never start or operate a tractor unless seated in the driver's seat.
- Disengage the power take-off and shut off the tractor before dismounting.
- Always read package labels and Material Safety Data Sheets for all types of crop protection, fertilizer, and other chemicals or animal medications.
- Always wear personal protective equipment when advised including gloves, coveralls, boots, helmet, safety goggles, face shield, etc.



**Contact Information:**  
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405-271-3430 or  
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