

Figures reveal that numbers of people killed have fallen, yet agriculture continues to have the highest rates of worker fatal injury

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has today published a report that reveals agriculture has the worst rate of worker fatal injury in Great Britain. Last year, 21 people were killed in agriculture, one was a child.

The report, *Fatal injuries in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Great Britain 2019/20*, has been published to coincide with the start of Farm Safety Week (20 – 24 July). Led by the Farm Safety Foundation charity, the week shines a light on safety and wellbeing in the sector. The HSE statistics highlight that agriculture continues to have the worst rate of worker fatal injury; eighteen times higher than the average rate across all industries.

Transport-related incidents, such as overturning vehicles or being struck by moving vehicles, were responsible for more deaths than any other cause last year. Around half of the workers killed were aged 55 years or older, with older workers being disproportionately most at risk of fatal injuries on farms. The youngest person killed last year was a 4-year old child.

HSE's Head of Agriculture, Adrian Hodkinson, said: "Agriculture is a vitally important part of our economy and has played an essential role during the coronavirus outbreak. However agriculture still has the poorest safety record of any occupation in GB. Despite the very welcome reduction in numbers of deaths – 18 less than the previous year – much more remains to be done in this sector.

"Each individual death is a huge and devastating loss to their family, friends and the wider community. It is not acceptable that agriculture and forestry continue to have such high rates of people being killed, and we will continue to push for a wholesale change of attitude and behaviours toward safety within the sectors.

"Farm Safety Week is a timely reminder for the agriculture community to manage and control risk and not become complacent on farms. Death, injuries and cases of ill-health, including poor mental health, are not an inevitable part of farming. The safety and wellbeing of people working and living on farms must be treated seriously and things must be done the right way every day, not just this week.

"The recent coronavirus outbreak at a farm shows how important it is for everyone in agriculture to take effective steps to control the risk of transmission and protect people from the virus. Inspectors are carrying out spot checks in workplaces to make sure they are COVID-secure and complying with the law and government guidance on social distancing, hygiene practices

and supervision.”

HSE urges farmers to keep children safe whilst they stay at home on the farm during COVID-19 restrictions. Children must not be allowed in the farm workplace unless very carefully supervised. It is illegal to carry children under 13 in the cab of an agricultural vehicle and it is unsafe. For guidance on this, see [what a good farm looks like](#). The full report and more information on working safely in agriculture are available on the [HSE website](#).

Notes to Editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.
2. The report highlights trends and provides summaries of each fatality involving employees, the self-employed and members of the public. The full report along with summaries of the circumstances of the individual fatal injuries can be read at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/resources/fatal.htm>
3. Detailed data and tables can be seen at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatal.htm>
4. Farm Safety Week is an initiative led by the Farm Safety Foundation and supported by the Farm Safety Partnerships, The Health and Safety Executive, Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland and the Health & Safety Authority, Ireland.
5. HSE continues to work with stakeholders across the farming and forestry sector to keep up the pressure to manage risk in the workplace to reduce the likelihood of serious injury, ill health and death. In relation to our response to Covid-19, this includes working with others e.g. Public Health Authorities and Government Departments.
6. HSE Inspectors and Local Authority Inspectors are visiting workplaces across a range of sectors following up any reports or concerns about safety in the workplace including over Covid-19 and ensuring compliance. HSE is carrying out proactive checks to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to protect workers from COVID-19.

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