

Agricultural Safety: 2009 Injuries to Youth on Farms

Injuries to Youth on Farms in the United States, 2001, 2004, 2006, and 2009

In 2009, there were an estimated 2,200,010 farms in the United States, an increase of 2 percent from 2001. Agriculture-related injuries to youth under 20 years of age on United States farms have decreased from 13.5 injuries per 1,000 farms in 2001 to 7.2 injuries per 1,000 farms in 2009. In 2009, there were 15,876 injuries to youth who lived on, worked on, or visited a farm in the United States compared to 29,277 in 2001, 27,591 in 2004, and 22,894 injuries in 2006.

These findings are based on a series of telephone surveys of farms conducted for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Farm operators were asked questions about injuries to youth less than 20 years of age that occurred on their farms in four separate surveys covering the years 2001, 2004, 2006, and 2009. An injury was defined as any condition occurring on the farm operation resulting in at least 4 hours of restricted activity or requiring professional medical attention.

For all four survey years, male youth incurred most of these injuries: 57 percent in 2001, 52 percent in 2004, 67 percent in 2006, and 58 percent in 2009. Youth 10 to 15 years old incurred the highest number of injuries in all four years: 13,368 injuries in 2001, 10,480 injuries in 2004, 10,158 injuries in 2006, and 6,912 injuries in 2009. Youth less than 10 years of age were injured in 9,698 events in 2001, 9,060 events in 2004, 6,435 events in 2006, and 4,111 events in 2009. Youth aged 16 to 19 years incurred 5,976 injuries in 2001, 7,722 injuries in 2004, 6,048 injuries in 2006, and 4,148 in 2009. Youth living on the farm operation (household youth) incurred 22,144 injuries in 2001, 18,801 injuries in 2004, 11,654 injuries in 2006, and 7,715 injuries in 2009.

Injuries to males accounted for 54 percent of all household youth injuries in 2001, 53 percent in 2004, 66 percent in 2006, and 58 percent in 2009. Most injured household youth were 10 to 15 years of age. Youth in this age range incurred 10,836 injuries (49 percent) in 2001, 7,273 injuries (39 percent) in 2004, 5,790 injuries (50 percent) in 2006, and 3,594 (47 percent) in 2009. In 2001, 6,644 injuries (30 percent) to youth living on the farm were work-related, while 6,384 injuries (34 percent) were work-related in 2004, 3,601 injuries (31 percent) were work-related in 2006, and 2,585 injuries (34 percent) were work-related in 2009.

In each survey year, work-related injuries to hired and working household youth contributed to approximately a quarter of childhood injuries occurring on these farm operations. In 2001, 8,588 injuries (29 percent) were work-related while 6,965 injuries (25 percent) were work-related in 2004, 4,964 injuries (22 percent) were work-related in 2006, and 3,191 injuries (20 percent) were work-related in 2009. In 2006 and 2009, over 70 percent of these work-related injuries occurred to male youth, compared to 62 percent in 2001 and 59 percent in 2004. In 2001, 2004, and 2006, most work-related injuries were to youth 16 to 19 years of age; 49 percent in 2001, 50 percent in 2004, and 54 percent in 2006. In 2009, approximately 42 percent of work-related injuries were to youth 10 to 15 years of age and 42 percent were to youth 16 to 19 years of age.

NIOSH sponsored this survey to better understand the magnitude and scope of agricultural-related injuries to youth on United States farms. The survey was conducted as part of the NIOSH Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention Initiative. For further information, contact Kitty Hendricks, NIOSH, at (304) 285-6252 or Scott Cox, at USDA/NASS (202) 720-4028.

