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Risks for Children in Agriculture

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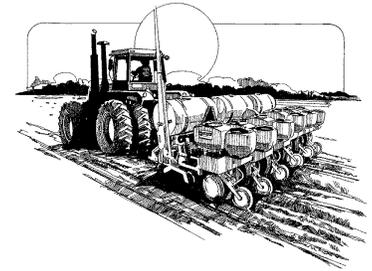
Agricultural Health and Safety

Fact Sheet AHS-07



Risks for Children in Agriculture

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Nationally, an estimated 300 boys and girls under 20 years of age die each year in farming accidents nationally. In fact, children under 16 years old account for 20% of farm fatalities in the U.S. Unfortunately farm children are twice as likely to be killed in an accident than urban children. In addition young people living on, working on, or visiting a farm, suffer 100,000 injuries each year. These injuries result nearly 1,000 permanent disabilities.

Farms and ranches are the home, playground, or workplace for thousands of children in Utah. Young people in Utah suffer fatalities and accidents at a higher rate than the national average, 27.6% (age 0-16) in Utah as opposed to 20% (age 0-16) for the U.S. Parents, grandparents, and employers need to be aware of the risks in agricultural settings. Knowing the hazards can help you eliminate dangers and set limits that reduce the exposure of your children or young employees to hazards.

Some areas of the farm or ranch should be off limits to young children. Farm shops, chemical storage areas, feed storage, and livestock pens are good examples of unsafe environments for small children.

Some farm activities are also unsuitable for children. They should not be allowed to engage in these activities, until they are mature

enough to understand the risks, and have the physical ability to do the job.

According to the national statistics the greatest risks to young people in agriculture are:

- Tractors
- Farm Machinery
- Livestock

Utah agriculture differs from the national agricultural accident statistics in a number of ways.

- In Utah horses are the greatest risk for all age groups including children. According to the 1993 agricultural accident analysis, 68.9% of all farm related accidents involved livestock. Furthermore 85% of the accidents involving livestock were caused by or involved horses.
- Fencing related accidents accounted for 39% of rural injuries.
- Hay stacking related accidents accounted for 36% of rural injuries.
- Farm machinery including tractors accounted for 18.5% of accidents. 37% of those injuries and fatalities involved All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). Tractors were

involved with 26% of the farm machine accidents in Utah.

- Young people in agriculture are also exposed to numerous other hazards, threats to their safety, and long term health. Dust, pesticides, noise, and other environmental exposures are long term risks. Every effort should be made to limit exposure.

Recommendations

Young Children:

- Closely supervise children (know where they are)
- Use physical barriers and restrict access to hazardous areas. A fenced play area may avert a serious accident.
- Keep small children away from livestock. (Never allow a child in a fenced pen with an animal.)
- Keep small children away from machinery. (Never allow riders on farm equipment including ATVs, especially small children.)

Older children and young adults:

- Make sure that tasks assigned to young workers are age appropriate.
- Train young workers for each task that they are asked to do. Training should be formal such as The Farm Safety Certification Program (USU and the Utah Farm Bureau). Discuss the potential hazards of each task and how to do the job safely.

- Insist that young workers wear suitable clothing for the work they are going to do, including personal protective equipment, safety glasses, steel toe shoes, dust mask, etc.
- Insist that young workers follow safety practices at all times.

Pertinent Literature

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