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Promoting productive workplaces
through safety and health research



CHILDHOOD AGRICULTURAL INJURY PREVENTION INITIATIVE

Health and Safety for Kids on the Farm



Farming is one of the most dangerous industries in the United States. Yet injury, illness, and death on the farm are not restricted to adults. Each year, approximately 100,000 children under 20 years of age are injured on farms and over 100 are killed.

Approximately 1.5 million children under the age of 20 live, work, or have a regular presence on farms in the United States. Included in this total are children of farm families, farm workers, and migrant and seasonal workers. These children are exposed daily to many farm hazards including tractors, farm machinery, pesticides, and livestock.

Until now, there has been no national coordinated effort to protect young people in the production agriculture industry. Even the data used in this fact sheet are estimates, based on inadequate surveillance systems which provide little information about the causes and consequences of injury, and may underestimate the problem.

Realizing this, Congress provided funding for a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) initiative to prevent agricultural injury and death among children. The initiative builds on previous NIOSH research and on recommendations from a national action plan for child agriculture safety and health which was produced by a broad-based coalition of researchers, farmers, agricultural groups, safety and health professionals, and government officials.

The NIOSH initiative will address critical data needs; establish an infrastructure which facilitates the use of data to develop and improve upon prevention efforts; and encourage the use of effective prevention strategies by the private and public sectors.

NIOSH will grant competitive awards to address the following research gaps:

- Identification of characteristics unique to the farm and farm children which may contribute to agricultural injuries.
- Identification of the positive and negative consequences of children's involvement in agriculture.
- Identification of effective agricultural injury prevention programs and strategies.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of commonly used educational or training programs.

As the lead Federal agency responsible for the safety and health of children on farms, NIOSH will head a Federal agency task force responsible for ensuring a coordinated and informed public response to preventing childhood agricultural injuries. Additionally, NIOSH will take the lead in documenting the scientific basis for recommendations in this area.

NIOSH will also convene a panel of experts in agricultural injury surveillance to evaluate existing surveillance programs and identify the most promising strategies for ongoing surveillance and reporting of childhood agricultural injuries. To learn more



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Additionally, NIOSH has made extramural awards to quality agriculture research proposals which were submitted to NIOSH prior to this Initiative. These awards include an evaluation of a promising privately funded, community-based intervention and studies evaluating occupational injuries among migrant workers and their children.

Through a cooperative agreement with the National Farm Medicine Center, Marshfield, Wisconsin, NIOSH has funded the new National Children's Center for Agricultural Injury Prevention. The

Center will conduct research, training, and education to prevent childhood agricultural injuries. Under the terms of the cooperative agreement, the Center will:

- House a unique, accessible data base of timely, comprehensive information about childhood agricultural injuries
- Actively disseminate information to the farming community, industry, government agencies, public health and medical professionals, and other key stakeholders for the prevention of childhood injury .
- Organize working groups from a diverse array of stakeholders to develop recommendations for protecting children on farms from injury and illness.
- Facilitate the involvement of educators, agricultural businesses, national organizations, and other major partners.
- Provide training to health and safety professionals through a potential mix of national conferences and regional seminars focused on unique local needs.
- Collaborate with well-established national health communication efforts such as the National Safety Council's Farm Safety and Health Week.
- NIOSH will also explore the possibility of transitioning these research and prevention efforts from the public sector to the private sector following the current five year NIOSH initiative.

There is much to be done under this national initiative. It is important that this initiative continue in the same spirit in which it was created—with all interested parties in the private and public sector working together for the protection of children on the farm.

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