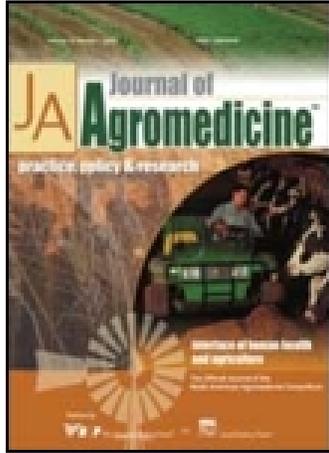


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Farm Work-Related Asthma Among US Primary Farm Operators, 2011 Farm and Ranch Safety Survey

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Farm Work-Related Asthma Among US Primary Farm Operators, 2011 Farm and Ranch Safety Survey

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Review of population-based studies estimates that 17% of adult asthma is attributable to workplace exposures. However, work-related asthma is often underdiagnosed. Farm-related exposures have been shown to cause or aggravate asthma among farmers. Limited information is available on the prevalence of asthma and asthma in relation to farm work among primary farm operators. Therefore, we estimated the prevalence of asthma and the proportion of asthma related to work on the farm among US primary farm operators using data from 2011 Farm and Ranch Safety Survey (FRSS). Operators were determined to have current asthma if they have ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that they had asthma and still have asthma. Operators with current asthma were determined to have asthma related to work on the farm if they have ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that their asthma was related to their work on the farm. The National Agricultural Statistics Service reported an estimated 2.2 million farm operations were actively farming in 2011 in the United States. Data from the 2011 FRSS found most primary farm operators were aged 40–64 years (58.2%) and males (83.6%). An estimated 5.0% of operators had current asthma. Of these, 15.1% had asthma related to work on the farm. Among operators with asthma related to work on the farm, 26.2% were located in the North, 16.7% had a second job, 41.1% managed farms with >1,000 acres, and 32.2% managed farms with a value of sales \geq \$100,000. This study addressed the National Occupational Research Agenda

surveillance goal for the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector by providing information on asthma prevalence among primary farm operators and identifying areas for future studies. These results add to the limited information about the prevalence of asthma and asthma related to work on the farm among primary farm operators. Future studies should examine potential workplace exposures associated with asthma development among primary farm operators.

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Growing Our Mission Through State and Local Networks

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Rural health professionals must engage in evidence based practices that directly improve the health of farm families. Recognizing their critical role, health professionals joined forces in 2003 to create a national non-profit network known as the *AgriSafe Network*. AgriSafe aims to shift the quality of health care towards an occupational approach so that farmers can receive the same occupational care afforded to other industries. AgriSafe formed a formal network so that services could be seamlessly adapted at the local, state and national level. During the last three years, AgriSafe launched a state-based initiative to prepare a workforce of rural providers in the field of occupational agricultural health. Clinical resources, advanced training programs, outreach services and distance education are core components of this innovative occupational health initiative. AgriSafe fosters partnerships with universities, agribusiness, media organizations, church & civic organizations, agricultural extension, mental health practitioners, and other service professionals. AgriSafe's collaborative approach to public health care delivery demonstrates how critical it is for diverse organizations to work together to bring the best preventive services