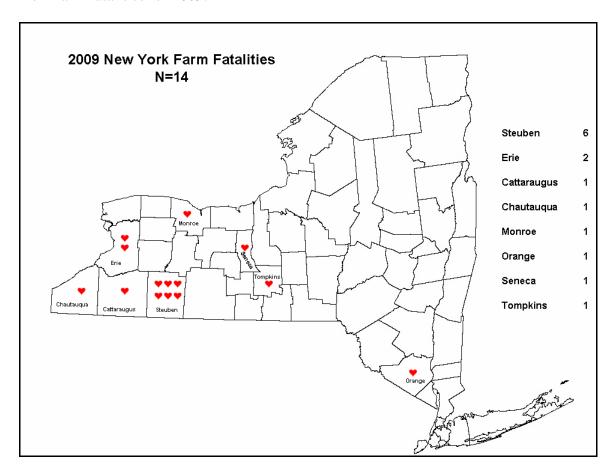
New York Suffers Fourteen Farm-Related Fatalities in 2009

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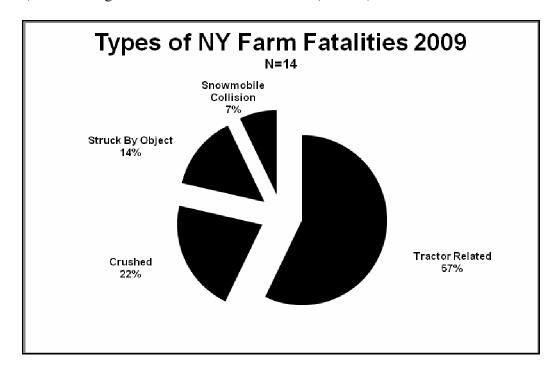
During 2009, there were 14 farm-related fatalities that occurred in New York. This is a slight decrease from previous years, with 20 fatalities identified in 2008, 22 fatalities identified in 2007 and 25 fatalities identified in 2006. Unfortunately, for 2010, farm-related fatalities are on the increase. As of October 2010, there are reports of 19 farm-related fatalities in New York so far this year. NYCAMH gathers these statistics through a news clipping service and from fatality reports distributed from the New York State Department of Health. The New York Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation program (FACE) reports that from 1992 to 2004 there were 287 New York agricultural workers that died while working which is approximately 24 workers killed each year.

The graphic below illustrates the counties in New York where the fatalities occurred. Steuben County had the highest number of fatalities with six or 43% of the 14 total New York farm fatalities for 2009.



Tractor-related incidents were the most common cause of farm-related fatalities in 2009 with eight (57%) deaths. The other types of fatalities included being crushed under a vehicle when a jack failed (2 deaths), being crushed by the lift arms of a skidsteer (1

death), being struck in the chest by a tree (1 death), being struck by an exploding tire (1 death) and striking a corn crib with a snowmobile (1 death).



The victims ranged in age from 15 years old to 87 years old. The 15 year old victim died when his snowmobile struck a corn crib. The 87 year old victim died in a tractor rollover which occurred in a woodlot. The average age of all the victims was 59 years old.

Of the eight tractor-related fatalities, five were rollovers and three were runover incidents. To protect against tractor rollover deaths, tractors need to be equipped with ROPS (Roll Over Protective Structures) and seatbelts. NYCAMH's New York State ROPS Retrofit Rebate Program has placed ROPS on over 800 tractors in the last four years. This program has also saved lives. NYCAMH has identified 53 participants of the program that said having their tractor retrofitted with a ROPS and seatbelt saved them from a serious injury or fatality. If you have a tractor without ROPS, call the toll-free number 1-877-ROPSR4U, to see if your tractor can be equipped with a ROPS and seatbelt. The program will rebate 70% of the cost of the ROPS up to a maximum of \$765. New York tractor owners are eligible for this program and can retrofit one tractor per year.

In 2009, three runover deaths occurred when the victims' tractors started in gear and bolted ahead, running them over. Every year there are tractor operators that are killed when they attempt to start a tractor while standing on the ground, instead of from the operator's seat. Older tractors that are left in gear can start in gear and lurch ahead causing the operator to be crushed by the rear tractor wheel. Never attempt to start a tractor while standing on the ground or by performing by-pass starting. It may seem quicker to just reach up and turn the ignition switch rather than climb up on the tractor.

However, taking that shortcut might cost you your life if the tractor should suddenly jump ahead because it was started while in gear. The only safe way to start a tractor is by climbing into the operator's seat, and making sure the tractor is in park or neutral and the clutch is depressed.

There were two crushing deaths that were caused when jacks gave way. Never trust a jack to hold a raised load. Always use the correct size jack for the amount of weight that is being raised. Make sure jacks are not damaged and are properly maintained. Fill with oil as needed. If you are jacking something up off the ground outdoors, place a wide, solid block or plank under the base of the jack to stabilize it and keep it from sinking and tipping. When lifting a tractor or vehicle, make sure it is left in gear or the park position, set the brakes, and block the remaining wheels that are still on the ground. Lift the load only as high as needed. After the load is raised in position, it should then be supported with jack stands or appropriate sized, solid, cribbing. Never use cinder blocks as cribbing supports; they could shatter when supporting the load.

Farm fatalities and injuries can be prevented. NYCAMH is always here to help farms with their safety promotion efforts. We offer our on-farm safety program, on-farm safety surveys or farm safety training sessions. Our on-farm safety program provides continuous farm safety activities coordinated by farm personnel. Our on-farm safety surveys identify potential farm hazards around the farmstead, tractor and machinery, and regarding use of personal protective equipment, like hearing and eye protection. Our training programs are farm specific and can be provided in Spanish by Anna Meyerhoff, Bilingual Farm Safety Educator. These services are available at no cost through a grant from the New York State Department of Labor Hazard Abatement Board. Contact me at 800-343-7527 ext 239 or jcarrabba@nycamh.com or Anna Meyerhoff ext 291 or ameyerhoff@nycamh.com to schedule these programs or for more information about our services. NYCAMH, a program of Bassett Healthcare Network, is enhancing agricultural and rural health by preventing and treating occupational injury and illness.