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Canadian farm fatalities decreasing

Winnipeg, March 10, 2009: Fatal agricultural injury data from 1990 to 2005 show the safety record on Canadian farms is improving. Based on the most recent report from the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (CAISP), the number of people killed on farms in Canada has declined during the past 16 years.

According to CAISP data, there were fewer fatal injuries among children in Canada aged one to 14 and among adults 15 to 59.

Marcel Hacault is the executive director of the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association that oversees CAISP. He says “the statistics are evidence of a safety culture changing for the better within Canadian agriculture – except in adults over 60”.

The CAISP data showed no change in the rolling average of fatal injuries for farmers over 60. “That”, he says, “is an indication that older adults are actually at increased risk on farms.”

Hacault also points out that the data show agricultural injuries are not due to random or isolated “accidents”. Instead, there are many recurrent patterns of injury – with agricultural machinery involved most often.

In the sixteen years from 1990-2005, 1,769 people were killed in agricultural injury events in Canada. Hacault points out that agricultural machines were involved in 71% of the fatalities with rollovers accounting for almost a quarter of the deaths and machine runovers just slightly behind.

Nine out of 10 of those fatally injured as a result of agricultural work were boys and men. Hacault says over 95% of those were 65 years of age or older. Fatality rates were lowest for adults of normal working age, though they had the greatest exposure to the hazards of agricultural work.

Hacault says if more producers made sure all their tractors had Roll Over Protection and seatbelts, it would go along way toward making farm work safer. He also advises parents to keep all children under 12 from operating tractors of any size.

For the complete *report Agricultural Fatalities in Canada 1990 – 2005* from the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program, go to www.casa-acsa.ca.

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CASA-the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association - is Canada's national agricultural safety networking, co-ordinating and training agency dedicated to helping producers recognize and manage risk in the agricultural workplace. It is a non-profit organization funded through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Renewal Chapter.