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Illinois Farm Deaths Increase, Roadway Collisions No. 2 Cause

Illinois farm-related deaths increased for the second consecutive year in 2008-09, according to a survey by COUNTRY Financial. Deaths totaled 33, up from 29 in the previous year. The number of deaths in 2008-09 was the highest since 2000-01, when 38 deaths were reported.

Illinois lost 25 farmers and eight non-farm residents. For the ninth year in a row, tractor rollover was the number one cause of death. However, casualties caused by roadway collisions increased in number and surpassed grain bin incidents as the second leading cause of death.

- Thirty percent of farm-related deaths were caused by tractor rollover.
- Roadway collisions increased by five to account for 24 percent of deaths.
- Deaths involving grain bins dropped to 12 percent compared to 17 percent previously.

COUNTRY, the No. 1 insurer of Illinois farms, tracks farm-related deaths through newspaper accounts.

“The fact that farm deaths are on the rise is certainly cause for concern, especially the significant increase in casualties stemming from roadway collisions,” said Jeff Gendron, senior vice president of property/casualty operations for COUNTRY. “We need to increase awareness of these issues, and that’s why COUNTRY participates annually in National Farm Safety and Health Week.”

To boost awareness of increasing casualties, “Rural Roadway Safety—Alert, Aware and Alive” is the theme for National Farm Safety and Health Week Sept. 20-26.

According to the University of Iowa, 60 injuries occurred from roadway collisions involving farm equipment in Illinois in 2007. Injuries jumped to 74 in 2008.

The New England Journal of Medicine recently reported that rural crashes are more frequent and severe than urban crashes. Rural crashes are also more likely to result in death with nearly 54 percent of crashes resulting in one or more fatalities.

According to Gendron, lack of awareness contributes to a majority of roadway accidents. Both farmers and motorists need to exercise more caution on the road and remain alert at

all times. Motorists should closely watch the farm vehicle's signals and never follow too closely. When farmers move their equipment, they might want to have a vehicle follow them to increase their visibility of the equipment ahead.

**Illinois Farm Death Statistics
Farm Deaths 2007-08**

Number of Deaths	Accident Type
10	Tractor Roll-Over
8	Roadway Collision
4	Grain Bin Incident

Year (July 1 to June 30)	Number of Deaths
1995-1996	27
1996-1997	31
1997-1998	29
1998-1999	38
1999-2000	31
2000-2001	38
2001-2002	22
2002-2003	24
2003-2004	21
2004-2005	31
2005-2006	32
2006-2007	22
2007-2008	29
2008-2009	33