

## **Illinois Farm Deaths Increase, Highest Rate in 10 Years**

Illinois farm-related deaths nearly doubled the 2009-10 rate. From July 1, 2010 through June 2011, thirty-nine farm-related deaths occurred, the highest Illinois has seen since 2001. Twenty-one farm-related deaths occurred in 2009-10.

“National Farm Safety and Health Week (Sept. 18-24) helps us focus on opportunities to learn from the past and plan for future farm safety,” said Eric Vanasdale, senior loss control representative at COUNTRY Financial. “Accidents will still happen. If we can alter our work patterns so we don’t intentionally put ourselves in harm’s way, injuries and farm deaths will decrease. Farm families are the backbone of our communities and we will keep raising awareness of farm safety because COUNTRY cares about our farmers, their families and our communities.”

The leading cause of death continued to be tractor runovers and rollovers, while roadway collisions ranked second for the third year in a row. From July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011, four non-farm residents died, down two from the previous year.

- Tractor runover and rollover death rates increased by four, causing more than one-fourth of this year’s farm-related deaths.
- Roadway collisions caused 13 percent of farm-related deaths compared to 29 percent during the 2009-10 year. These collisions also accounted for all four non-farm resident deaths.
- Deaths involving grain bin suffocation, electrocution and ATV rollovers accounted for three deaths each.

COUNTRY, the No. 1 insurer of Illinois farms, tracks farm-related deaths through newspaper accounts. Every year, COUNTRY reports the findings in conjunction with National Farm Safety and Health Week.

This year’s theme is “Safety Counts—Your Community Depends On It.” Illinois’ greatest focus is on community safety efforts concerning grain bin accidents and suffocations. Purdue University reported that 51 men and boys were engulfed in grain bins throughout the United States in 2010. Twenty-six died. Illinois led the nation with 10 accidents and five deaths.

Dave Newcomb, Illinois Fire Service Institute Agriculture Coordinator, believes wet grain harvested in 2009 contributed to more farmers entering grain bins. The wet grain proved difficult to dry, which resulted in crusted and compacted grain that was unable to flow freely from the bin into the trucks. Farmers then had to enter to bin to aid the flow of the grain.

Farmers should never enter a grain bin during loading or unloading, nor should they enter a bin alone, says Vanasdale. If a farmer needs to enter a bin, he or she should turn off all

motors and lock the switch with a key that only he or she has. One must also follow all other safety precautions like wearing a harness and life line, checking the quality of air before entering and having a co-worker on the outside of the bin monitoring the activity in the bin.

“All farms should have an emergency response plan that all employees understand,” says Vanasdale. “Invite the local emergency personnel to your farm to learn the layout of the buildings and any hazards on your property like lagoons, ponds or chemical storage. Plan ahead, eliminate hazards and stay safe.”

**Illinois Farm Death Statistics  
Farm Deaths 2010-11**

<b>Number of Deaths</b>	<b>Accident Type</b>
11	Tractor Runover/Rollover
5	Roadway Collision
3	Grain Bin Suffocation
3	Electrocution
3	ATV Rollover

<b>Year (July 1 to June 30)</b>	<b>Number of Deaths</b>
2000-2001	39
2001-2002	22
2002-2003	24
2003-2004	21
2004-2005	31
2005-2006	32
2006-2007	22
2007-2008	29
2008-2009	33
2009-2010	21
2010-2011	38