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COUNTRY Reports Fewer Illinois Farm Deaths

Twenty farm-related deaths occurred in Illinois last year — the lowest number in more than 30 years, according to a COUNTRY Financial survey. The amount of deaths is nearly half of what it was the previous year, when 39 farm-related deaths were reported.

“National Farm Safety and Health Week (Sept. 16-22) is an opportunity to learn from the past and ensure our farm families stay safe in the future.” said Eric Vanasdale, senior loss control representative at COUNTRY. “We are happy to see the number of farm deaths has fallen and COUNTRY will continue to raise farm safety awareness.”

The leading cause of death continued to be tractor runovers and rollovers, while roadway collisions ranked second for the fourth year in a row.

- The tractor runover and rollover death rate **decreased** by three, but still consisted of nearly half of all farm deaths.
- Roadway collisions deaths **increased** by four, and accounted for 35 percent of farm-deaths.
- Electrocuting caused the third highest number of deaths, accounting for 15 percent of the total.

Grain bin accidents accounted for one death this year, which is the lowest number on record. This number comes as a success after last year’s National Farm Safety and Health Week campaign, which focused on preventing grain bin suffocation.

“The increased awareness and publicity offered by the Illinois Grain Handling Safety Coalition certainly helped prevent accidents. A dry crop also worked in our favor last year. There wasn’t much reason for farmers to enter grain bins and break up crusted grain,” said Vanasdale.

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

This year’s National Farm Safety and Health Week theme is “Agricultural Safety and Health: A Family Affair.” The national effort focuses on ensuring that family members, primarily children, are kept safe around farm machinery and other equipment.

“It's important to remember that the majority of farms in Illinois are family-owned and operated. Children, spouses and extended family members often work and live on the farm.” said Vanasdale. “It can be a dangerous place to live. Machinery and other farm items are tempting for children to play on.”

Farmers should educate their children and teach them to use proper safety precautions around machinery and livestock to avoid accidents, said Vanasdale.

Vanasdale added that farmers should take extra precaution during this summer's drought, a time when anxiety levels are high.

“People are stressed. That will lead to less sleep and less attention to safety, which could lead to accidents,” he said.

Number of Deaths	Accident Type
8	Tractor Rollover/Run-over
7	Roadway collision
3	Electrocution
1	Other
1	Grain Bin Suffocation
Total: 20	