

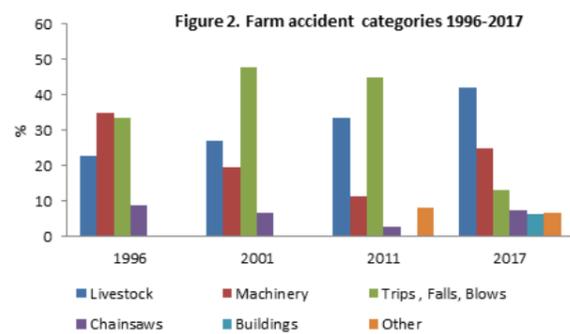
Farm accidents – alarming rise

Farm accidents have risen by 13% in the last five years and by 31% in the last 10 years. This is the stark finding of a national survey of Farm Accidents conducted by Teagasc National Farm Survey.

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The survey found that in the five-year period 2012-2017, 11% of farms had an accident and in total 2,814 accidents occurred. The 2017 survey represented 85,000 farms with a standard output greater than €8,000. Farm accidents cause tragedy, pain and suffering, disability and economic loss so it is vital to give safety first priority to reduce the number of on-farm injuries.

Accident categories



Over the period 1996 to 2017, 42% of accidents involved livestock with farm vehicles or machinery involved in a further 25% of accidents (Figure 2).

Trips or falls resulted in a further 13% of farm accidents over the period, with chainsaws accounting for 7% and a further 6% involving farm buildings. The increasing proportion of accidents involving livestock over time is evident, with a 20 percentage point increase from just over 20% of accidents in 1996 to over 40% of accidents 2017.

Similarly, the proportion of accidents involving machinery more than doubled from 2011 to 2017. On the other hand, a marked decline in the proportion of accidents due to trips and falls is evident over the same period.

Persons injured

The 2017 survey indicates that the vast majority of on-

farm accidents (92%) involved a family member with 80% occurring to the farmer. Twelve per cent involved a spouse or another family member. The remainder involved workers (5%) and others (3%).

Location of Injury

The survey showed that almost two-thirds of farm accidents occurred in the farmyard (64%) and a further 15% in farm buildings. Almost one-fifth of accidents (19%) were in fields with only 2% on farm roadways or lanes.

Medical treatment required

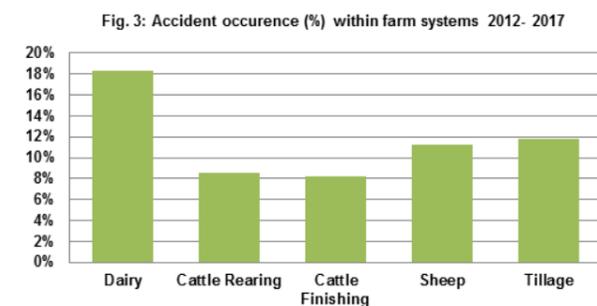
Almost all of the reported farm accidents (97%) required medical treatment, with 73% of accident victims attending hospital, a further 19% seeing a doctor and 4% receiving first aid. Tragically, 1% of such accidents resulted in a fatality.

Recovery time

In terms of the impact of farm accidents on work time, almost one-third (30%) of accidents resulted in a work absence of more than a month, with 21% being more than two months. Thirteen per cent of accidents resulted in an 11 and 30 days' work absence, 22% led to four to 10 days of an absence, while 18% resulted in one-to-three days of an absence. Just 17% of accidents resulted in no work time loss. Ongoing disability arising from accidents were not measured in the survey.

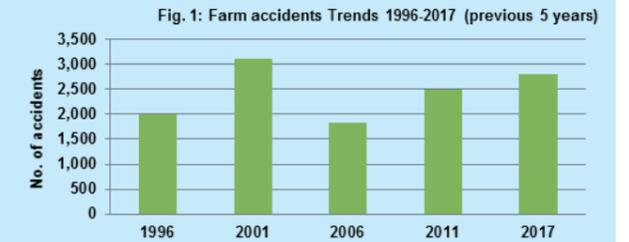
Accident occurrence by farm system

Data for prevalence of accidents by farming system (Figure 3) indicates that dairy farms had the highest accident of 18%. Accidents occurred on 12% of tillage farms and 11% of sheep farms with the cattle systems of rearing (9%) and finishing (8%) reporting marginally lower accident levels.

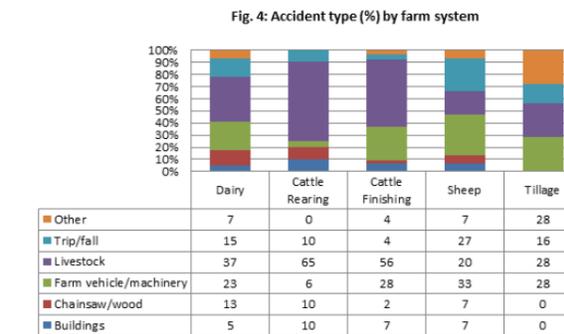


KEY MESSAGE: MANAGE SAFETY ON YOUR FARM

- The survey highlights a rising trend of accidents on Irish farms. It also indicates increased levels of both livestock and vehicle related accidents. Agricultural output has expanded rapidly in recent years following quota abolition which gives rise to risk factors including long hours, rushing, tiredness and stress.
- The key message is that accident prevention must be integrated into overall farm management. Accident prevention approaches focus on 'Engineering' out hazards and 'Behavioural' work practice approaches:
- 'Engineering' refers to managing the physical aspects of farm workplace to secure safety. This involves many items such as machinery maintenance, farmyard and building design and tidiness. It also involves having infrastructure to match the workload and avoid overload, tiredness and rushing. The DAFM TAMS11 scheme provides grant aid for

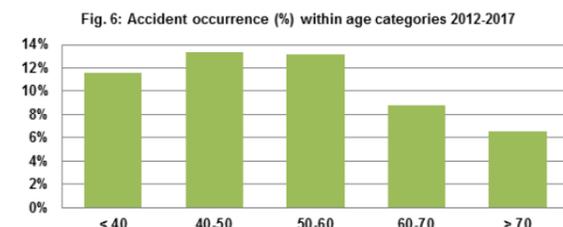


- farm investment including a lengthy list of safety items.
- Behavioural approaches include adopting safe work methods and practices. Farmers 'in principle' have a positive attitude to safety but studies show that when 'the pressure comes on' work completion tends to take over from safety. Excellent overall farm management limits breakdowns and good time management to prevent accidents. Farmers' management of risk is the key requirement to secure safety.
- A practical 'Code of Practice and Risk Assessment' document is available to assist farmers to both understand and implement the standards in a practical way. As a first measure, we suggest to farmers to review their Farm Safety Risk Assessment Document and take action where needed!



Accident Type by System

A striking feature of accident type by farm system is that livestock accidents accounted for 65% of cattle rearing, 56% of cattle finishing and 37% of dairy farm accidents. High levels of machinery accidents occurred on sheep (33%), tillage (28%) cattle finishing (28%) and dairy (23%) farms. On sheep farms, machinery accounted for 33% of accidents followed by trips and falls (27%). A high level of accidents classified as 'other' on tillage farms may be

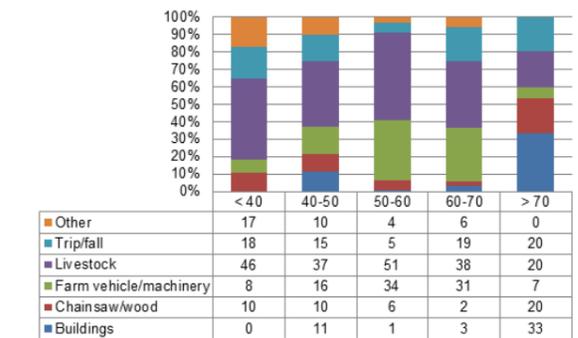


due to workshop / repair type work.

Farm accident by age category

The highest frequency of accidents occurred within

Fig. 7: Accident type (%) by Age category



younger age categories, with 13% of farmers in the 40-50 and 50-60 age brackets involved in an accident and 12% aged below 40 years of age involved in an accident. Nine per cent of farmers aged 60-70 and 7% over 70 years of age reported an accident over the time frame of the survey.

Accident category by age

Livestock accidents were most common across all age categories except where the victim was aged over 70 which were more likely to involve farm buildings. Livestock related accidents accounted for over half (51%) of all accidents involving those aged 50-60 and almost half of those (46%) in the less than 40 age category.

Farm vehicle and machinery accounted for 34% and 31% of accidents to 50-60-year-olds and 60-70-year-olds. Chainsaw related accidents accounted for 20% of those occurring to those aged over 70.

The 2017 NFS survey data indicates that younger farmers are more likely to have farm accidents, whereas HSA and international data indicates that fatal accidents are more likely among older farmers. This is in accord with international literature which indicates that older farmers have the highest proportion of fatal farm accidents while younger farmers had the highest level of non-fatal farm accidents.