

# Media Release

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## **Older farmers at higher risk for machine and non machine death.**

A new study analyzing eleven calendar years of agricultural fatality data from 1990 to 2000 has found that 440 persons aged 60 or over died in agricultural injury events. Ninety-one percent of those killed were male. This number represents over a third of all the agricultural fatalities in Canada from 1990 to 2000, even though older adults comprise only 13% of the national farm population.

The Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (CAISP) report, funded by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, found that the percentage of older persons killed due to contact with animals was 2.5 times higher (30.8%) than for those aged 15-59 (12.1%). The difference in the incidence of machine-related falls between the younger and older age groups was even larger. The percentage of older persons who died because of falls from moving machines (10.5%) was 2.8 times greater than the percentage of those aged 15-59 killed by that injury mechanism (3.7%).

“The study of agricultural injuries by CAISP over 15 years makes it clear that older farmers experience a substantially increased risk for fatal injury than younger farmers.”, said Dr. Rob Brison, Co-Director of CAISP. “The CAISP study examines serious injuries that resulted in death. It is the risk for these serious injuries that older farmers are most exposed to.”

“Older farmers may have limitations in reaction times, weakened muscular strength or other health conditions such as arthritis that impact mobility,” said Dr. Don Voaklander, co-author of the report. “Based on the data, prevention programs directed at older farmers should focus on the recognition that age-related change impacts an older farmer’s ability to conduct typical work-related agricultural tasks. Of particular note are machinery and animal related activities where balance and quick reaction time enhance a person’s ability to avoid hazards.”

The new CAISP report “Agricultural Fatalities in Canada 1990-2000: Focus on Older Farmers and Workers” (ISBN 978-0-9734118-7-4), is available online at the CAISP website at [www.caisp.ca](http://www.caisp.ca), or follow the links at [www.casa-acsa.ca](http://www.casa-acsa.ca).

*Canadian Agricultural Safety Association is a non-profit organization funded through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Renewal chapter. Our mission is to have Canadian agriculture free of workplace injuries and illnesses.*

**For further information:**

Dr. Don Voaklander  
Alberta Centre for Injury Control and  
Research  
School of Public Health  
University of Alberta  
don.voaklander@ualberta.ca  
(780) 492-0454

Dr. Rob Brison  
Co-Director, CAISP  
Department of Emergency Medicine  
Queen's University  
(613) 548-2389

**Background:**

The Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (CAISP) is a national program of the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA). CAISP was established in 1995 in response to the need for better information about fatal and hospitalized agricultural injuries. CAISP has partners in each of the ten Canadian provinces. It is coordinated from a national office at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

*Agricultural Fatalities in Canada 1990-2000: Focus on Older Farmers and Workers* examines agricultural fatality data for the eleven calendar years from 1990-2000. Trends in the causes and occurrence of fatal agricultural injuries in older adults are compared with trends observed in adults aged 15 to 59. This report includes agricultural fatality data for all adults aged 60 and over who were part of the farm population or who were otherwise exposed to agricultural injuries in Canada from 1990 to 2000.

In Canada, from 1990 to 2000, there were 440 agricultural fatalities in persons aged 60 years and older. This age group accounted for 34.4% of all agricultural deaths although they comprised only 13.2% of the total population living on farms and ranches. As a result, older adults had a much higher agricultural fatality rate than did younger adults aged 15-59 (35.7 per 100,000/year compared with 12.2 per 100,000/year).