

Non-intentional farm-related incidents in Australia

AgHealth Australia has been leading research into deaths and injuries on farm since 2004, providing the most comprehensive evidence on which to build prevention approaches to enhance the safety and wellbeing of people in Australian agriculture. Australian print and online media monitoring provides an avenue to highlight the prevalence of farm injury in a timely manner. This report focuses on injury events that occurred between 1 January and 31 December 2023.

Deaths

During the period 1 January to 31 December 2023, a total of 32 on-farm deaths were reported. In the corresponding period for 2022, there were 55 cases. A comparison of these data for the 2022 and 2023 periods through to December 31 by state is provided in Figure 1.

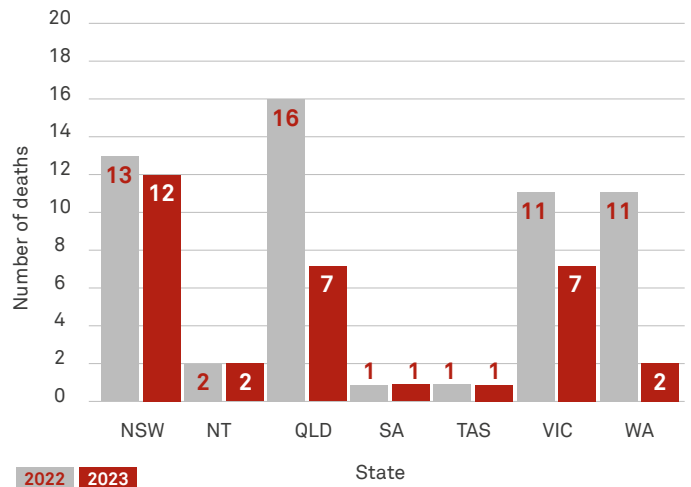
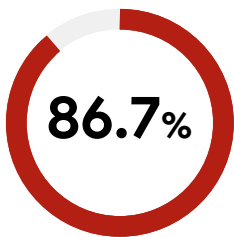
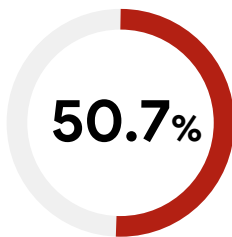


Figure 1: On-farm deaths reported in Australian media by state, 1 January – 31 December 2022 and 1 January – 31 December 2023.

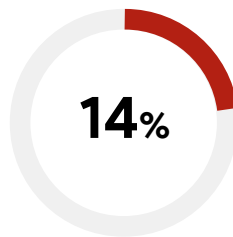
Since 2001, 1,742 people have lost their life on a farm due to non-intentional injury in Australia.



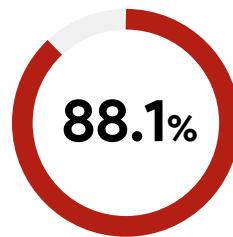
Of these, 1,511 cases (86.7%) have been finalised and 'closed' by a coroner.



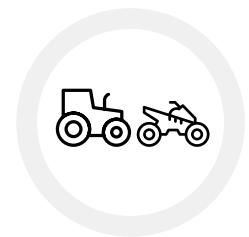
Persons in the 50+ years category (n=884) accounted for 50.7% of all reported incidents.



Children under 15 years were present in 244 cases (14%).



Males were involved in 1,535 cases (88.1%).



Tractors (n=276) and quads (n=219) are the leading agents causing fatal injury since 2001.



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For the 2023 period, quads (n=5) and tractors (n=5) were reported most frequently (Table 1). Of the total number of cases (n=32), males were involved in 29 of these cases (90.6%), with data for age and gender presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Agents of injury causing on-farm deaths by age group, 1 January – 31 December 2022 and 1 January – 31 December 2023.

Category	Agent	2022			2023		
		<15 yrs	≥15 yrs	Total	<15 yrs	≥15 yrs	Total
Animal	Cattle		1	1			
	Horse						
	Animal NEC*		1	1			
Farm structure	Cattle yards					1	1
	Dam	1		1			
	Powerline		1	1			
	Shed		1	1			
Farm vehicle	Aircraft		2	2		4	4
	Car		1	1			
	Quad		8	8	2	3	5
	Side by side	1	1	2	1	3	4
	Trailer	1	1	2			
	Truck		2	2		1	1
	Utility		2	2		1	1
Fixed plant	Fixed elevator/conveyor					1	1
	Wool press		1	1			
Materials	Bulka bag (one tonne bag)		2	2			
	Chain		1	1			
	Hay bale					1	1
	Steel		1	1			
	Tow strap		1	1			
Mobile farm machinery	Earthmoving equipment		2	2		1	1
	Field bin		1	1			
	Harvesting machine		1	1		1	1
	Skid steer loader					1	1
	Telehandler		1	1			
	Tillage equipment		1	1			
	Tractor		11	11		5	5
	Mobile farm machinery NEC*		1	1			
Other	Other NEC*		2	2		1	1
Working environment	Fire/smoke/flame	1	2	3		4	4
	Heat					1	1
	Tree/tree felling		2	2			
Total		4	51	55	3	29	32

*NEC: Not elsewhere classified

Table 2: Number of fatalities by age group and gender, 1 January – 31 December 2023.

Age group	n	%
0-14 years	3	9.4
15-29 years	6	18.8
30-44 years	3	9.4
45-59 years	6	18.8
60-74 years	8	25.0
75+ years	6	18.8
Gender	n	%
Male	29	90.6
Female	3	9.4

The fatal cases for this reporting period could potentially increase. Monthly queries are run in the National Coronial Information System to identify any additional incidents that have not been captured by the media; historically, this occurs in about 5-10% of cases. As new cases are identified, they will be included and reported in subsequent six-monthly reports. Over time, the information is then validated against data from the National Coronial Information System as cases are closed by a coroner.

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Injuries

An additional 122 non-fatal on-farm injury events were reported in the Australian media for the current reporting period. Fifteen (12.3%) of the injury events involved children aged under 15 years. Quads (n=35) were the leading cause of injury. These incidents were followed by horses (n=21), cattle (n=13), motorbikes (n=10) and tractors (n=9). These five agents (n=88) accounted for more than 72% of all incidents reported. As indicated in Figure 2, more than 86% of the incidents occurred in Queensland and New South Wales.

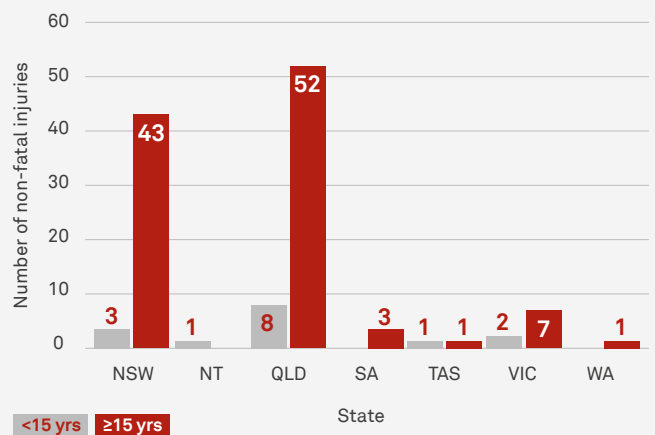


Figure 2: On-farm non-fatal injury events reported in Australia media by state, 1 January – 31 December 2023.

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