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176

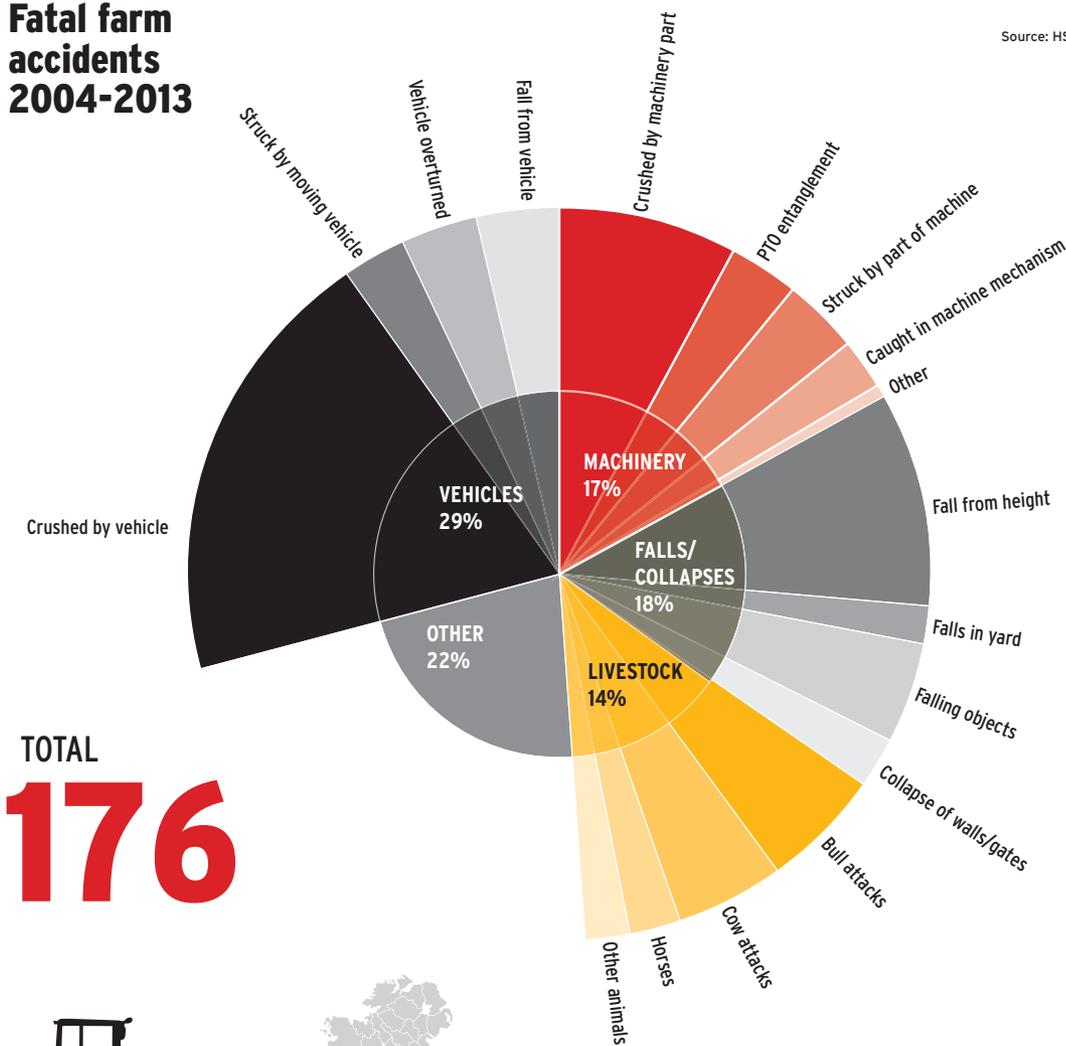
lives were lost in accidents on
Irish farms from 2004 to 2013.
Please farm safely.

FULL IRISH FARMERS JOURNAL INSIDE



Farming is the most dangerous occupation in Ireland, which is why putting safety first is crucial

Fatal farm accidents 2004-2013



Source: HSA

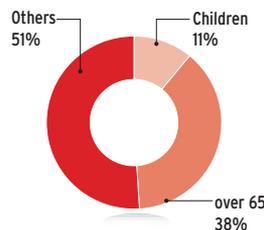
TOTAL
176



Tractors and machinery (particularly vehicles) consistently account for over 50% of deaths on Irish farms. Being crushed by or under a vehicle is the number one individual cause.

Fatalities have been consistently high in Cork, where there is a high concentration of dairy farms. Research shows dairy farming is the most hazardous due to the combination of machinery, livestock and long hours.

Farm deaths by age



+35%

Teagasc carried out a national farm survey in 2012 and came up with evidence showing that non-fatal farm injuries had risen by 35% over the previous five years. Farm family members suffer almost 90% of farm injuries.

“He managed to escape from the cab, out from under the vehicle, into the mud. He was found the next morning by a neighbour, lying in the lane

permit a view forward. He was making a turn through a gateway when the unbalanced tractor rolled over onto its side. He managed to escape from the cab, out from under the vehicle, into the mud. He was found the next morning by a neighbour, lying in the lane.

→ The victim had reversed his tractor and sheep trailer close to a shed. He went around to the back and when he opened the trailer door the tractor slipped back, crushing him against a wall. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

→ The deceased was walking beside the main storage shed in the farmyard when he was struck on the head by the bucket of a wheel loader, causing fatal injuries.

→ The deceased was erecting shuttering pans and, while making adjustments to them, they toppled and pinned him underneath.

→ The farmer was manoeuvring a tractor in his farmyard when he fatally injured the victim.

→ The deceased was found lying on the ground beside his round bale wrapper machine with head injuries. The pin for the lifting arm had been removed which allowed the lift arm fall.

→ The victim was helping his nephew to move cattle from one field to another. He entered the field with his dog and was attacked by a cow which had recently calved. The attack was initially on the dog but when the victim tried to intervene, he was trampled on a number of times by the cow. He was taken to Letterkenny General Hospital and died a short time later.

→ The deceased was assisting his father in agitating slurry. He was overcome by fumes and collapsed into the slurry tank where he became entangled in the agitator.

Fatal accidents in 2014

→ The farmer died when he was pinned between the body and chassis of a trailer.

→ The deceased fell from a trailer attached to a moving tractor that was drawing tree branches from the farmyard to the rear of farm. He received crush injuries as the trailer wheel went over him and was pronounced dead at the scene.

→ The victim went into a shed to feed cattle and came in contact with spikes (used to lift bales of hay) which were part of a front-end loader on a tractor. The tractor was parked at the time and the loader was in a raised position with the spikes 1.4m off the ground. One of the spikes

injured/cut his neck. He went back into his house and went unconscious.

→ The deceased was herding two cattle from a field down a public road and into a pen. The cattle were

almost in the pen when one heifer turned and ran, knocking down the farmer. He fell and hit his head on the ground. He passed away a week later at Beaumont Hospital in Dublin.

→ The victim was found crushed between a silage bale on the front loader of his tractor and a feed gate on the front of a slatted unit.

→ Indications are the

deceased was transporting a silage bale on the front loader of his tractor, along a lane on his land. The ground was very uneven, with deep potholes filled with mud. He had the bale raised, presumably to

TACKLING FARM DEATHS

It was about half an hour after he was due back in the house, which isn't that unexpected, but I got a bad feeling when he hadn't come back, so myself and Ryan went to find him. **We landed and saw his body. It was awful.**

Patrick Donohoe spoke to Diane Banville who lost her husband, Kevin, earlier this year as a result of a farm accident

"I'm taking it an hour at a time, I know it's going to take a long time to get over it. It was like a knife through my heart."

On St Patrick's Day this year, just four months ago, Diane Banville and her two-year-old son, Ryan, found the body of her husband Kevin (33) after an accident on the farm. Their second son, Cillian, was just two weeks old when Kevin passed away.

Kevin was out feeding cattle on the farm in Carrigadaggin, Newbawn, Co Wexford, on the morning of 17 March when he was crushed between a bale of silage and the front loader of the tractor:

The pair were married just 11 months prior to Kevin's death and plans were being made for the couple's first wedding anniversary the following month, as well as going to the local St Patrick's Day parade later in the day.

"It was about half an hour after he was due back in the house, which isn't that unexpected, but I got a bad feeling when he hadn't come back, so myself and Ryan went to find him. We landed and saw his body. It was awful," Diane said.

"Ever since it has been just hectic and manic – it doesn't feel real," she added.

At the time, Kevin was the fifth farm death of 2014. There have been another eight deaths since on Irish farms. Diane said the local community have helped her through the difficult time.

"I'm not from a farming background so I don't know much about it but the neighbours and the people locally have been great. They have been taking care of everything on the farm for me, working and making sure everything is fine," Diane said.

Diane admitted that Ryan had considerable difficulty in coming to terms with the loss of his father:

"It was difficult for the first 10 days or so. He said he wanted to cry but couldn't. I told him it was okay to cry ... He's slowly coming to terms with it but it's not easy. If you fall and cut your knee, you can put a plaster on it but it's more difficult, this," she said.

Kevin's death has opened up a complex financial situation for Diane to deal with. She hopes that legislation can be changed to help her and others like her.

"Kevin was 33 and had no will ... so everything has been frozen now. We didn't have joint accounts. It was a situation where if something needed to be paid for, I'll pay those bills, Kevin would pay these ones. It was a normal situation like so many others out there.

"But I can't get access to the farm account. I spoke to the bank afterwards and they were as helpful as they could be but it doesn't do much either. I can pay into the account but I can't get money out of it. We were married but it's technically like we were single because we didn't have the joint account. I have two kids to look after and bills to pay," Diane said.

"I hope that legislation can be changed to help me and others in my situation. It's not fair that people like me would be treated this way. I would urge the Government to take a look at this again."

Diane admits that the future will be tough, but she knows that she has to remain strong for her children.

"I have two boys and they're great. I have to be strong for them. I'm showing Ryan videos of Kevin and I'm always encouraging him to talk to him.

"I hear him rowing with Kevin still about eating his dinner – he can still make Ryan eat his dinner all the same."

Justin McCarthy, Editor
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The feeling of getting down from a tractor **not knowing the fate of a five-year-old girl lying between the front and back wheel** is something I will never forget.

Very few of us have any right to throw the first stone when it comes to farm safety. At some point we have all had that sick feeling in the pit of the stomach or the cold shiver that instantly engulfs the body when we realise how close we were to something going wrong.

Unfortunately, I have had first-hand experience of being involved in a serious farm accident. In my teenage years, I came within six inches of taking my younger sister's life, having run over her with the front wheel of a tractor.

Over 20 years on, I can still recall the incident as if it happened yesterday. The feeling of getting down from a tractor not knowing the fate of a five-year-old girl lying between the front and back wheel is something I will never forget.

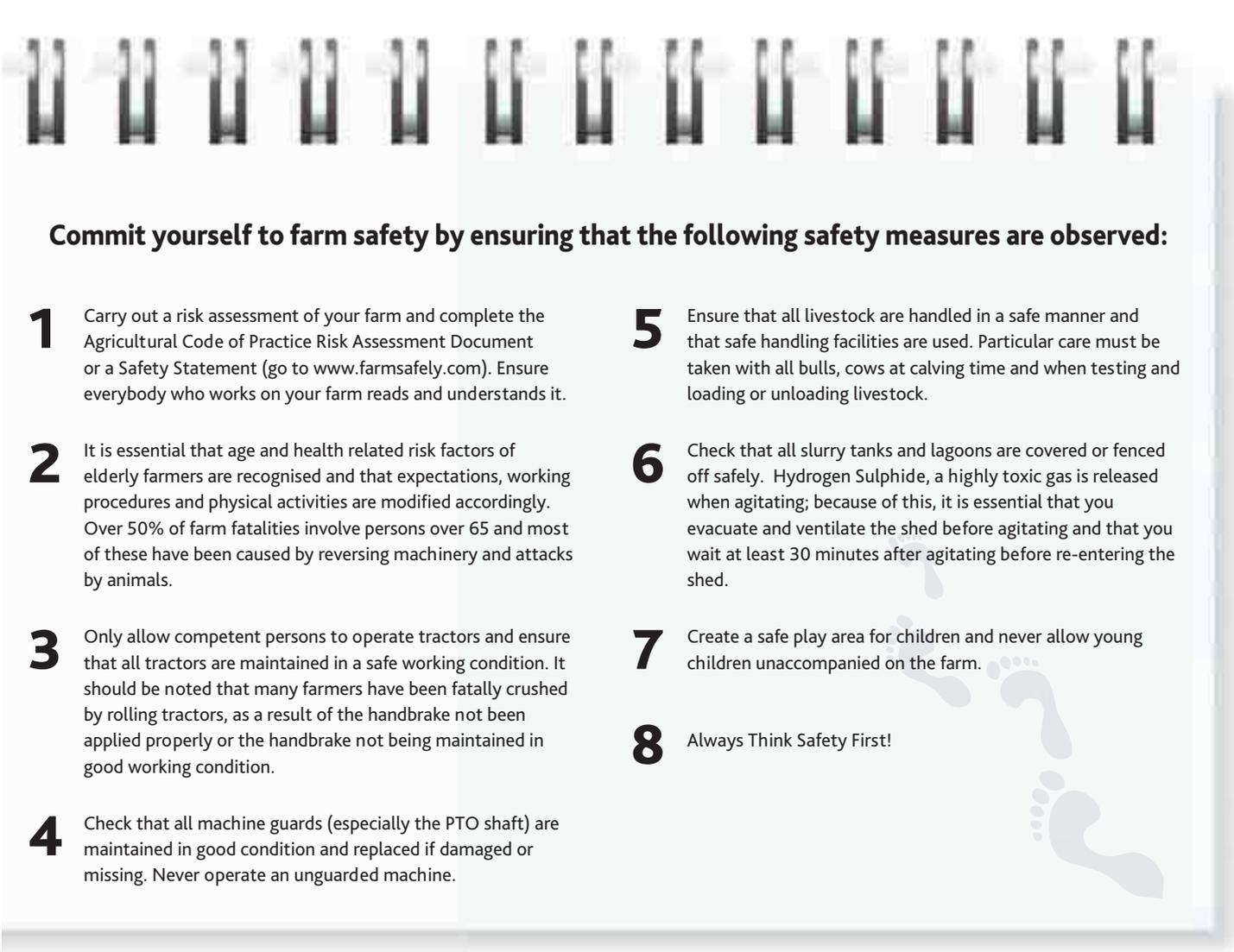
Thankfully, my sister escaped with minor injuries, all of which she recovered from fully. The outcome could have been so very different. Luck was actually on our side – I had taken the small two-wheel-drive tractor which had a large weight on the lift arms, significantly reducing the weight on the front axle. I often think of the outcome had I taken a larger tractor or had I not stopped in time. I just can't begin to comprehend how it must be for a family where the outcome of an accident was tragic.

A combination of working with live animals and large machinery means that farming will always be a dangerous profession. However, there are steps/processes that can be taken to reduce the risk. Simply taking time out to assess work practices and the working environment will help. What one measure will you take to improve safety? It can be as simple as replacing a guard on a PTO shaft or fixing a light switch in a shed.

The dangers on-farm are elevated further due to the recreational nature of the business. The lines between work and pleasure on most farms are undefined. Children quickly develop a passion for livestock and/or machinery. Ensuring this passion grows alongside a sense of respect for the dangers associated with farming is one area that is not being adequately addressed. Our education system has an important role to play in this regard.

8 Steps to Farm Safety

by Ciaran Roche, FBD Risk Manager and Vice Chairman, Farm Safety Partnership



Commit yourself to farm safety by ensuring that the following safety measures are observed:

- 1** Carry out a risk assessment of your farm and complete the Agricultural Code of Practice Risk Assessment Document or a Safety Statement (go to www.farmsafely.com). Ensure everybody who works on your farm reads and understands it.
- 2** It is essential that age and health related risk factors of elderly farmers are recognised and that expectations, working procedures and physical activities are modified accordingly. Over 50% of farm fatalities involve persons over 65 and most of these have been caused by reversing machinery and attacks by animals.
- 3** Only allow competent persons to operate tractors and ensure that all tractors are maintained in a safe working condition. It should be noted that many farmers have been fatally crushed by rolling tractors, as a result of the handbrake not been applied properly or the handbrake not being maintained in good working condition.
- 4** Check that all machine guards (especially the PTO shaft) are maintained in good condition and replaced if damaged or missing. Never operate an unguarded machine.
- 5** Ensure that all livestock are handled in a safe manner and that safe handling facilities are used. Particular care must be taken with all bulls, cows at calving time and when testing and loading or unloading livestock.
- 6** Check that all slurry tanks and lagoons are covered or fenced off safely. Hydrogen Sulphide, a highly toxic gas is released when agitating; because of this, it is essential that you evacuate and ventilate the shed before agitating and that you wait at least 30 minutes after agitating before re-entering the shed.
- 7** Create a safe play area for children and never allow young children unaccompanied on the farm.
- 8** Always Think Safety First!

FBD urge all farmers to think safety first and make safety a priority. Sadly, far too many lives have already been lost on farms this year. Farming is a dangerous occupation and more fatal accidents occur on farms than in any other workplace. This is a disturbing fact that we can and must change. The sadness and pain that accompanies each fatality and serious injury is heartbreaking, and our sympathy goes out to all the families who have lost loved ones.

NOW IS A TIME FOR ACTION

It is a fact that 90% of fatal and serious farm accidents could be prevented by managing health and safety on the farm. Therefore, it is essential that farmers take a more proactive role in promoting farm safety and put health and safety issues at the top of their agenda.

FBD would also want to remind farmers that Monday the 21st of July is the **IFA NATIONAL FARM SAFETY AWARENESS DAY**. This is a day that the Association is asking all farm families to set time aside to review safety on their farm. It is an opportunity for farm families to really think about health and safety on their farms; to identify potential danger areas; and to consider ways to minimise risks.

