
Farm Related Injuries Reported in the Australian Print Media 2010

Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety

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Background

Australian print media provides an avenue to highlight the prevalence of farm related deaths and injuries. The process of media monitoring has been used by the National Farm Injury Data Centre (NFIDC) since 2005 to assist in the collection of information on farm injury events (fatal and non-fatal). This report focuses specifically on data involving on-farm injury events reported in Australian print media in 2010.

Method

Media Monitors Australia is a privately owned company contracted by the NFIDC to scan approximately 2,500 daily, weekly and monthly publications Australia wide. Publications are scanned for various search terms nominated by the NFIDC. In relation to the monitoring of farm related injury events, the following search terms are used: *"Farming/Agriculture/Growers/Producers and Horticulture"* in relation to *"Accident", "Injury", "Death", "Fatalities", "Safety", "Killed" and "Died"*. Additionally, quad bike related injury is monitored for reported events that occur both on and off-farm, the following search terms are used: *"ATV re accidents, injuries or safety on farms or rural properties", "Quad Bike" and/or "Quad bike in re to accidents, injuries or safety on farms or rural properties"*.

Each day's articles are received via email in PDF format, are viewed for relevance and then entered into a *Microsoft Excel* database. Any farm related injury event that has been reported in the media is added to the Media Monitors Farm Injury Register. The Access Liaison Officer at the National Coroners' Information System (NCIS) is notified of any fatal injury events and the NFIDC is then informed of the matching NCIS case numbers. This process allows for timely reporting of farm related fatality cases in Australia, as cases are added to the register regardless of their closure status i.e. open cases are included within the register. Once sufficient information is available from NCIS so that cause of death, mechanism of injury and intent can be accurately defined, these events can then be reported on more comprehensively.

Results

Deaths

There were approximately 2,304 print media articles received by the NFIDC from Media Monitors Australia in 2010. A total of 44 on-farm deaths were reported for this period:

- Seven (16%) of the 44 reported on-farm deaths were children aged 15yrs and under. Four of these cases involved children drowning in dams (n=3) and a sheep/cattle dip (n=1).
- Tractor related deaths (n=7) were reported most frequently. Of the seven reported tractor related fatalities, two cases could not be classified as either a rollover or a run-over incident. Of the remaining five cases, three were reported as run-over and two as rollover incidents.
- Farm Utility Vehicles were the second most frequently reported on-farm death accounting for six deaths (14%). Of the six reported utility vehicle fatalities, details pertaining to the mechanism of injury were unavailable for one case. Of the remaining five cases, two were run-overs; two were rollovers and one a collision with a freight train on a private road on the farm.

Table 1: All on-farm deaths by state and age as reported in Australian print media, 2010

STATE	<15yrs	>15yrs	TOTAL
New South Wales	1	13	14
Northern Territory		1	1
Queensland	4	7	11
South Australia		2	2
Tasmania	1		1
Victoria	1	11	12
Western Australia		3	3
TOTAL	7	37	44

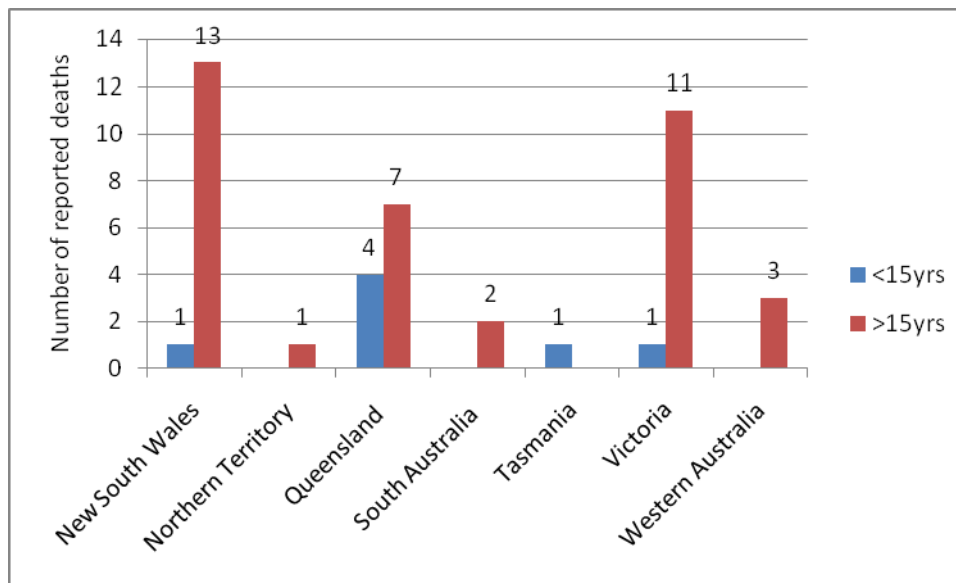


Figure 1: Number of on-farm deaths by state and age as reported in Australian print media, 2010

Table 2: Agent of on-farm non-intentional death as reported in Australian print media, 2010

Category	Agent	<15yrs	>15yrs	Total
Farm Vehicle	Truck		1	1
	Utility		6	6
	Motorcycle 4 wheel		3	3
	Aircraft		3	3
	Farm Vehicle NEC	1		1
Mobile Farm Machinery/Plant	Tractor		7	7
	Tillage/cultivating equipment	1		1
	Earth Moving Equipment		2	2
	Slasher		1	1
	Hay Baler	1		1
	Other tractor mounted load lifting attachments		1	1
Fixed Plant/Equipment	Fixed Plant/Equipment NEC		1	1
Workshop Equipment	Air Compressor		1	1
Materials	Hay Bales, other		1	1
Farm Structure	Dam	3		3
	Silo		1	1
	Powerlines		2	2
	Sheep/Cattle Dip	1		1
Farm Chemicals	Pesticides--herbicide		1	1
Working Environment	Tree, stick, branch		1	1
	Fire/Smoke/Flame		1	1
Other	Firearms		2*	2
	Unknown		2	2
TOTAL		7	37	44

Source: NFIDC Media Monitors Database 01/01/10-31/12/10

*Erratum – in an earlier report on quad bike fatalities for 2010, one case involved a quad bike rider receiving fatal injuries from a firearm while riding.¹ This incident has been moved to reflect the firearm as the agent of injury.

Non-fatal Injury

There were an additional 68 non-fatal on-farm injury events reported in Australian print media in 2010. It is important to note that non-fatal cases that make the media are likely to be far more severe in nature, with many having life-long debilitating effects.

¹ Herde E, Lower T. 2011. Quad bike related deaths and injuries Australia 2010 - Media Monitors Report. Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety, Moree.

Table 3 provides a summary of these by age of person injured and state where event occurred:

- Eight (12%) of the 68 reported injuries on farms, involved children aged 15yrs and under. The leading agent of injury reported for children were quad bikes (40%).
- Quad bikes (22%), Cattle (20%) and Tractors (17%) were the most frequently reported agents causing injury for adults.

Table 3: All on-farm non-fatal injury events by state and age as reported in Australian print media, 2010

STATE	<15yrs	>15yrs	TOTAL
New South Wales	3	19	22
Northern Territory		1	1
Queensland	3	24	27
South Australia		1	1
Tasmania		2	2
Victoria	1	13	14
Western Australia	1		1
TOTAL	8	60	68

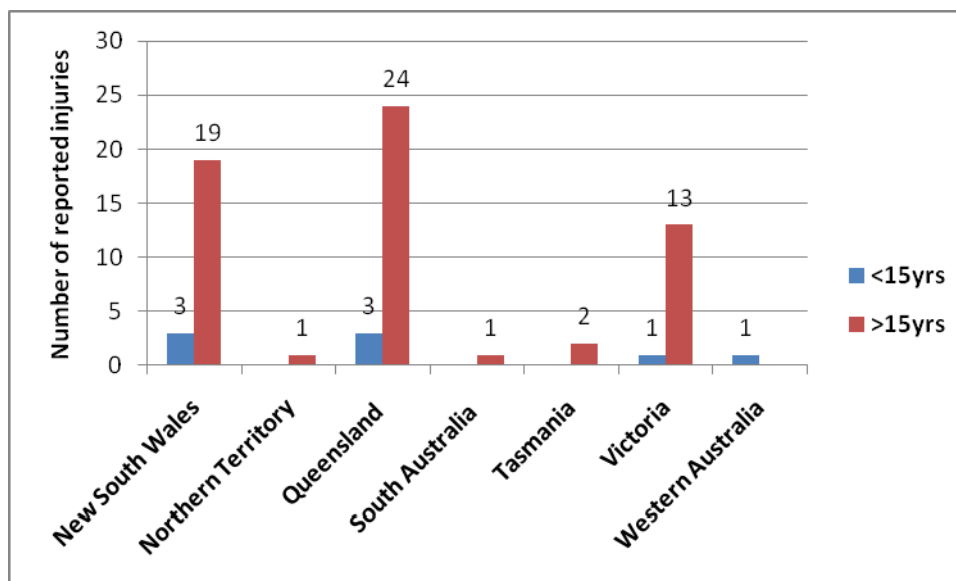


Figure 2: Number of on-farm injury events (non-fatal) by state and age as reported in Australian print media, 2010

Table 4: Agent of on-farm non-intentional injury (non-fatal) as reported in Australian print media, 2010

Category	Agent	<15yrs	>15yrs	Total
Farm Vehicle	Aircraft		2	2
	Farm Vehicle other NEC		2	2
	Motorcycle 2 Wheel	1	1	2
	Motorcycle 4 Wheel	5	13	18
	Trailer		1	1
	Truck		1	1
	Utility		1	1
Mobile Farm Machinery / Plant	Cherry Picker		1	1
	Grain Auger		1	1
	Mobile Farm Machinery/ Plant NEC.		2	2
	Power Take Off (PTO)		1	1
	Slasher		2	2
	Tillage/cultivating equipment		1	1
	Tractor		10	10
Materials	Materials other NEC		1	1
	Steel		1	1
Farm Structure	Dam	1		1
	Powerlines		2	2
Animal	Cattle		12	12
	Horse		1	1
	Dog	1		1
Working Environment	Tree, Stick branch		1	1
Other	Firearms	1	1	2
	Unknown		1	1
TOTAL		9	59	68

Discussion

This study includes all deaths and non-fatal injury events that occurred on farms reported in Australian print media in 2010. Whilst providing a timely snapshot of on-farm injury prevalence, a limitation of this process is that not all on-farm injury events are reported in the print media. For example, a search of the NCIS data for 2010 has revealed a further 12 cases of on-farm injury death that were not reported in the print media. Therefore, these data do underestimate the true prevalence of deaths and injury associated with living and working on Australian farms.

An additional limitation is the depth of available information surrounding fatal events where the case has not been closed by the coroner. As at March 31st 2011, only 32% of all cases for 2010 in the NCIS had been closed, with only one of the 44 deaths reported in the media being among these. As cases are closed by the coroner, significantly more information surrounding the circumstances leading to these deaths will become available.

For children, water bodies including farm dams remain the leading cause of death, while quad bikes are overwhelming the main injury type reported in the media.

For adults, tractors, farm utilities, quad bikes and aircraft are the leading cause of deaths. In respect to injuries, quad bikes, tractors and cattle comprise almost 60% of injuries reported in the media for adults.

Conclusions

Media monitoring continues to provide a useful mechanism for the examination of farm related injury prevalence in Australia. When used in conjunction with NCIS searches, it also proves to be a beneficial data quality assurance measure. The data presented in this report reinforce the need for preventive actions to address these common agents of death and serious injury on farms.