FARM FATALITIES DATASET

Explanatory Notes

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AGHEALTH AUSTRALIA

Contents

1. Scope

The scope of this dataset includes all persons who were traumatically fatally injured on a farm across Australia.

2. Exclusions

Deaths which do not occur on a farm

Deaths that take place in locations other than a farm, including transport area and recreational areas outside of agricultural properties are excluded from this dataset. These deaths are not associated with farm-related activities, environments, or incidents.

Deaths due to natural causes

Death due to natural causes refers to a death that results from old age or a medical condition or disease. The National Coronial Information System (NCIS), codes a death as natural causes when the person did not die from external causes. External cause death is any death resulting directly or indirectly from environmental events or circumstances (WHO, 1992).

Deaths due to persons undertaking criminal activity

Person fatally injured while undertaking criminal activities are exclude from this dataset.

Intentional deaths

Deaths resulting from self-harm are excluded from this dataset.

3. Definitions

Unintentional Death

The person died unexpectedly in a violent or unnatural manner.

Farm Fatality

Farm fatalities are defined as those unintentional injuries occurring to farmers and people working in agricultural production, as well as to those in the farm workplace such as bystanders to work being undertaken and/or farm residents/visitors in the course of leisure but harmed by hazards used in farm production. Cases occurring in residential premises are excluded.

Worker

All identified cases of persons who died from injuries sustained while they were working are included.

Note: Some work related fatalities, particularly those related to family members who work on farm but don't get paid, may be missed due to a lack of information available to establish the connection to work activity or exposures. For example, the information in the National Coronial Information System (NCIS) relies heavily on information collected by the police, and the police report may not include sufficient information to identify whether or not the deceased was working at the time of the incident.

Bystander

A bystander to work fatality refers to the death of an individual who is not directly involved in the work activity or task but is incidentally present at or near the worksite and is fatally affected by a work related incident. This may include visitors, or individuals in the surrounding environment who are unintentionally harmed as a result of workplace hazards or activities.

4. Data process

Preliminary fatalities dataset (Farm Injury Media Monitoring Dataset)

Data extraction for farm fatalities involves two interrelated processes (Figure 1). Firstly, a commercial media tracking organisation (Meltwater) is used to scan print media, social media and internet media articles Australia-wide. Media reports are scanned for various designated search terms for example e.g. 'farm*,' 'property,' 'growers,' 'producers,' and 'horticulture'. Where a potential on-farm case is captured, the information is entered into the Farm Injury Media Monitoring dataset as preliminary data. This dataset is then used to populate the Rural Media Farm Injury Dashboard. All data displayed on the dashboard strictly reflects the original media reports and will not be altered. (https://aghealth.sydney.edu.au/rural-media-farm-injury-dashboard/)

Finalising farm fatalities (Farm Fatalities Dataset)

Where a fatal farm injury media report is captured (preliminary data), the corresponding case file number is obtained from the NCIS. Each 'open' case is entered into the Farm Fatalities Dataset. Cases are reviewed on initial entry and then on a regular basis. When additional circumstance around the incident becomes available, details are updated in the fatalities dataset. Any cases identified as natural causes or intentional death being withdrawn immediately from the dataset. Supplementary to this, as not all cases are reported in the media, the second approach to identifying all on-farm cases of relevance relies on location (farm *) searches in the NCIS. Cases located in the search results are then reviewed for unintentional farm injury relevance. Those that are not farm-related (e.g. occurring at a farm house), natural causes or those that are confirmed as intentional death by the coroner are removed from further investigation immediately. As the preliminary data is based on initial information reported in the media, the counts often underestimate the actual number of on-farm fatalities. Consequently, the second approach to identifying cases of relevance relies on a location search of the NCIS (farm*) for each year.
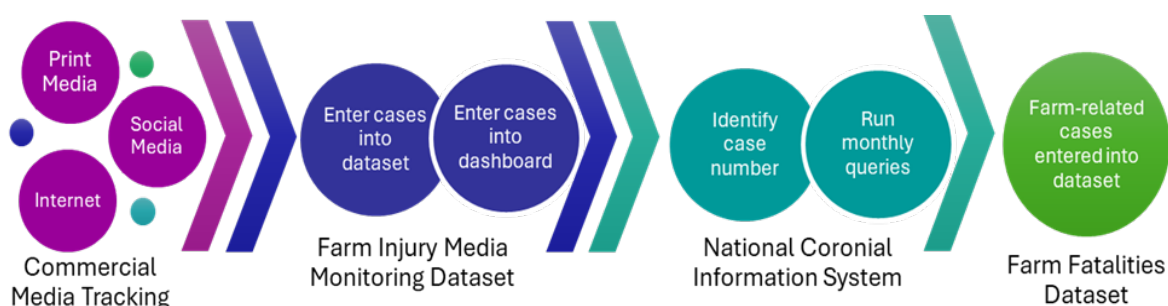

Figure 1: Data extraction for farm fatalities

5. Sources

Meltwater

Meltwater offers comprehensive media monitoring and analysis across online news, social media, print, broadcast, and podcasts, capturing more content and conversations than anyone else in the industry. Their news monitoring tool tracks keywords connected to the topics that matter for individual organisations and aggregates all public online and editorial content that mentions assigned keywords.

National Coronial Information System

NCIS is a national repository containing data on deaths reported to a coroner in Australia (since 2000) and New Zealand. The data source contains demographic information about the deceased, contextual details on the circumstances of the death, and searchable reports including the coronial finding, autopsy and toxicology report, and police notification of death report, where available. Not all deaths are contained in the NCIS. The collection contains data on reportable deaths only.

6. Coding

The available NCIS data for farm cases are coded using the Farm Injury Coding Framework, with fatalities including both work and non-work related activities included. Each case is coded in relation to demographics, role in event (e.g. operator, bystander, passenger), work relatedness, relevant causal agents of injury (dams, tractors, grain augers, quads etc.), mechanism of injury, toxicological results (alcohol/drugs) and other context specific information as applicable such as helmet usage, loads and rollover/runover.