



# Take Care on Farm and Remain Safe

by Catherine Hurley B.Agr.Sc  
Dairygold Agri Sales Support Advisor



Agriculture is at the heart of the Irish economy and has been bustling with activity the past couple of months and will only get busier as we enter the main harvest season.

The fatality rate in agriculture is far higher than any other economic sector. A large proportion of all fatal workplace accidents occur in agriculture, even though a small proportion, 173,000 or 7.7% of the workforce is employed in farming according to the CSO Labour Force Survey 2017.

The age profile of those killed is of serious concern. The old and the young are exceptionally vulnerable to death and injury on Irish farms. The level of farm accidents is not decreasing. Similar accidents occur each year. Research indicates that, in general, farmers' attitudes to safety only change after serious injury occurs and this is often too late.

This article is intended to bring your attention to the very real danger that exists in agriculture and remind you to take extreme caution now and always.

A recent Agricultural Science Association farm safety event organised by our own Seamus O'Mahony, Head of Commercial in Dairygold and current ASA President, shared some key actions:

- Educate children with good safety practices at home e.g. use AgriKids webinars that are ongoing at the moment.
- Separate family spaces from workspace on the farm with physical barriers.
- Design safety into all elements on the farm: e.g. handrails to diesel tanks, roller doors versus hinged doors, signage in key areas etc.
- Maintain or outsource maintenance of equipment ahead of when needed to reduce risk of dangerous breakdown.
- Learn from other industries that promote a safety culture for family and staff and across discussion groups.
- June to August are critically the most dangerous periods on Irish farms with silage, harvest, children home from school, parents covering days off etc.

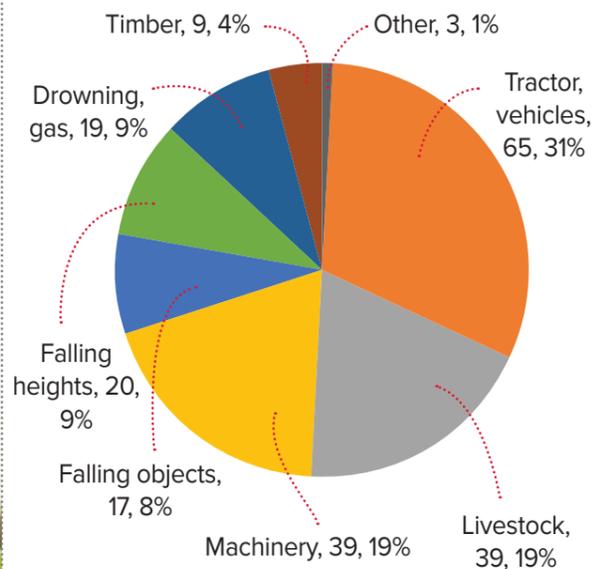
- Ensure staff understand the critical elements of safety before harvest.
- Asking someone from outside your farm to observe safety practices on farm in an objective can be good way of noting risks and preventing accidents.

Already in 2020 there have been thirteen reported fatalities which is a tragic statistic in Irish agriculture and potentially the worst year ever for fatalities if the current trend continues. Speaking at the online event Dr. Jason van der Velde West, Clinical Lead Pre-hospital emergency medicine and lead for west cork rapid response said farming accidents are 'under reported.' Pat Griffin Senior Inspector with the Health & Safety Authority, said that farmers and those involved in farming are 7 times more likely to suffer a fatal injury than any other sector.

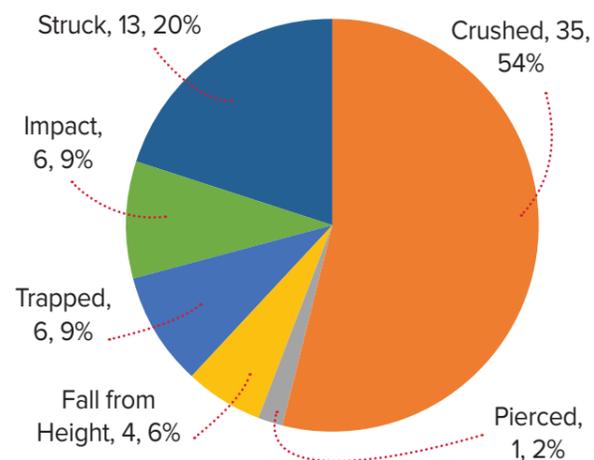
Please do take care of yourself, your family and your team now and always. We would encourage everyone to take time, stop and think, and see what you need to do to improve safety on your farm.

## Some Statistics of Farm Accidents in Ireland – not including 2020

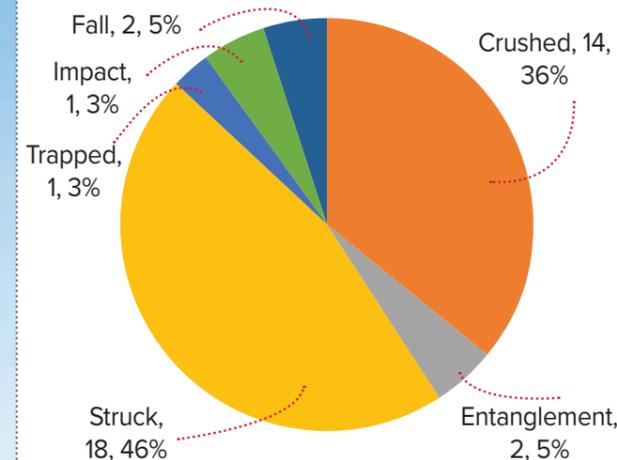
### Main Causes of deaths in Agriculture and Forestry over the last 10 years, 2010 - 2019



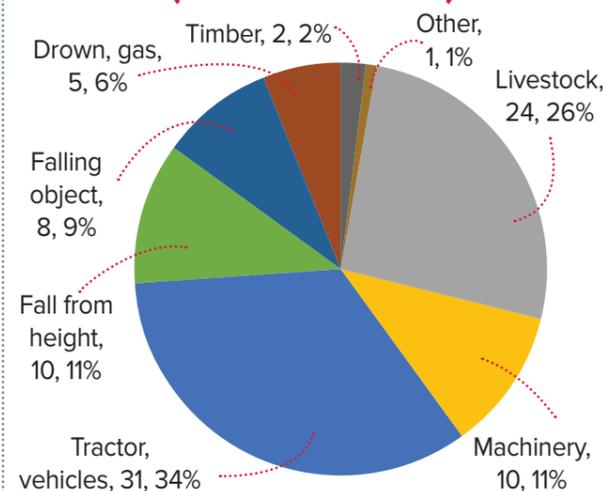
### Deaths due to Tractor and Farm Vehicles 2010 -2019 (30% of Total Fatalities)



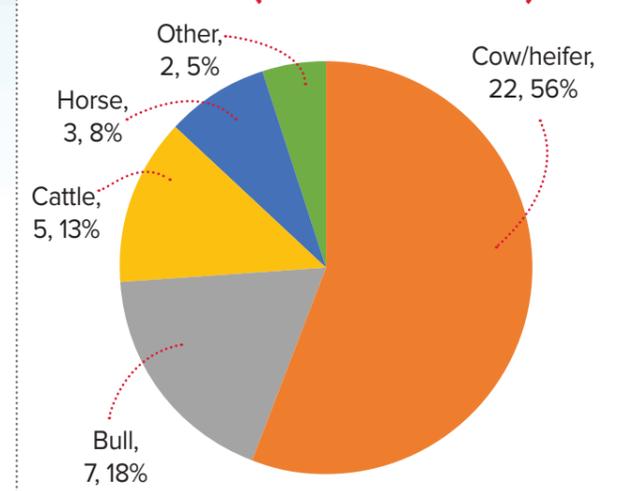
### Deaths due to Machinery 2010 -2019 (18% of Total Fatalities)



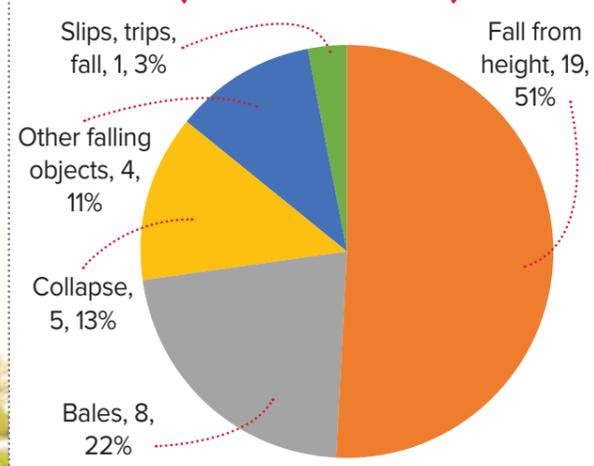
### Deaths to Older Farmers (>65 years) 2010-2019 (43% of Total Fatalities)



### Deaths due to Livestock 2010 -2019 (18% of Total Fatalities)



### Deaths due to Falls and Collapses 2010-2019 (17% of Total Fatalities)



### Deaths of Children on Farms 2010 -2019 (9.8% of Total Fatalities)

