



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta  
Health and Safety Authority



# Farm Safety Action Plan 2025 – 2027





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# Foreword from Chairperson



**Ciaran Roche**  
*Chairperson, Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee*

## **Agriculture is of vital importance to the Irish economy and Irish farmers are highly regarded for delivering quality produce.**

The Agri-Food Strategy - Food Vision 2023 has the ambition that Ireland will become a world leader in Sustainable Food Systems over the next decade. I believe that the safety and wellbeing of all who work in farming is critical to this vision. Irish farms can be world leaders in farm safety.

Regrettably, farming has a poor workplace safety and health record with a disproportionate level of fatal and serious injury. Over the last 10 years, 38% of all workplace fatal accidents occurred in agriculture. The Teagasc National Farm Survey estimates that approximately 4,500 accidents occurred on farms in 2020, and we also know that many serious farm safety accidents have life-changing consequences.

While the average number of fatal accidents per year on farms has reduced, as a farming community, we must refocus our efforts to build on this downward trend. Farm injuries and ill health cause much suffering to the individual, their family and farming community and can also lead to significant loss of quality of life and business losses. I would like to extend my sympathy to all farm families and communities affected.

Achieving a sustained reduction in the rate of serious and fatal injuries in the sector will only be accomplished by improving the safety culture and behaviour and ensuring that work is planned and carried out in a safe manner.

Over the course of the last four years, the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC) of the Board of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), has made significant progress in developing guidance and improving safety awareness. In addition, many farmers have made significant investments in safety measures and safety infrastructure during this period.

The support of the Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail and the Minister of State with special responsibility for farm safety at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has been significant over the period of the plan. The importance of the additional investment in farm safety initiatives and grant support for farm safety and farm building infrastructure cannot be underestimated.

The FSPAC's new three-year action plan aims to reduce fatalities, ill health, and serious injuries in agriculture. After reviewing the previous plan's outcomes, the FSPAC identified successes, areas for improvement, and key initiatives to expand. Five critical areas will be addressed by dedicated Working Groups with targeted actions from 2025 to 2027, guided by high-level objectives outlined in this plan.

Lastly, I would like to thank all stakeholders for their commitment to farm health and safety, and I look forward to their continued support over the course of this Action Plan.

**Ciaran Roche,**  
*Chairperson, Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee*

# Message from Interim Chief Executive Officer



**Mark Cullen**

*Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Health and Safety Authority*

**I am proud to introduce the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee's Action Plan for the period 2025 to 2027, a critical initiative aimed at improving health and safety standards across Ireland's agricultural sector.**

The Farm Safety Action Plan 2025–2027 directly supports the Authority's Strategy Statement for 2025–2027, reinforcing our commitment to reducing workplace injuries and fatalities in agriculture through targeted actions, collaboration, and a strong culture of safety.

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of our economy, but it also presents significant risks to those who work within it. Although we are seeing encouraging results over the past 10 years, farm-related incidents continue to contribute to a disproportionate number of workplace fatalities. It is imperative that we continue to act decisively and maintain our focus and commitment to continue this downward trend.

This Action Plan represents a collaborative effort between stakeholders in the farming community, including farmers, industry representatives, government agencies, and safety experts. The goal is simple yet vital: to foster a culture of safety that protects workers, ensure compliance with safety standards, and ultimately save lives. Through a series of specific goals and objectives, this plan aims to tackle the unique hazards that exist on farms and support those working on the ground to adopt safer work practices.

Our partnership approach emphasises shared responsibility and collective action. We recognise that tackling farm safety requires the engagement of everyone involved, from policymakers to the individuals on the farm itself. I am confident that through collaboration, education, and a steadfast commitment to safety, we can make a real and lasting difference in reducing farm incidents and fatalities. Together, we can ensure that the farming community remains strong, resilient, and safe for generations to come.

I would like to thank our inspectors and wider team of this partnership for its collaborative efforts, expertise, and passion for farm safety. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Board members of the Authority have supported advancing farm safety initiatives which is invaluable in driving positive change across this sector.

**Mark Cullen**

*Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Health and Safety Authority*



# Introduction

**Agriculture remains one of the highest risk sectors for workplace fatalities and non-fatal accidents. Addressing health and safety challenges in this sector requires continued strategic and collaborative approaches by all stakeholders.**

Although fatality rates in the agricultural sector have recently fallen e.g. 20 fatalities in 2020 to 12 fatalities in 2024, the fatality rate continues to remain disproportionately higher than in other major economic sectors. The National Farm Survey for 2020 indicated that approximately 4,500 accidents occurred on farms. Maintaining a sustained focus on prevention by all stakeholders is critical to continuing a downward trend in fatalities and address accident rates on the farm.

The Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC) is essential to building and supporting health and safety compliance in this sector and influencing key stakeholders. As an advisory committee to the Board of the Health and Safety Authority, the FSPAC coordinates national efforts by developing an Action Plan for the sector, establishing priorities, and guiding its working groups to achieve their key objectives.

The FSPAC Farm Safety Action Plan 2025–2027 builds on the achievements of the previous 2021–2024 Action Plan, continuing the commitment to improving health and safety across the agricultural sector. Despite good progress being made under the previous action plan, serious accidents and fatalities persist, underscoring the need for renewed focus and action.

This Action Plan aims to reduce fatalities and non-fatal injuries by fostering safer working environments on Irish farms and promoting the adoption of effective safety measures across the agricultural sector. The Action Plan emphasises a proactive, integrated approach to improving farm safety and health by targeting key risk areas and driving cultural change. It will leverage media campaigns and promote research, innovative training technologies and best practices to influence farmers' attitudes to health and safety.

The FSPAC will advocate for practical skills training in safety-critical areas, including vehicle operation, livestock handling and farm construction. Initiatives will focus on vulnerable groups, including children and younger workers. Further interventions to advise and support the older farmer will be implemented. Additionally, targeted efforts will focus on the safe maintenance and operation of machinery, promoting better farmyard design, improving safety when working at heights, and addressing occupational health issues.

Through collaboration with the farming community, industry partners, and government agencies, the Farm Safety Action Plan 2025–2027 embodies a unified commitment to creating safer, healthier working environments for everyone in agriculture. By building on past successes, the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee aims to drive further progress and ensure a safer future for the next generation of farmers.

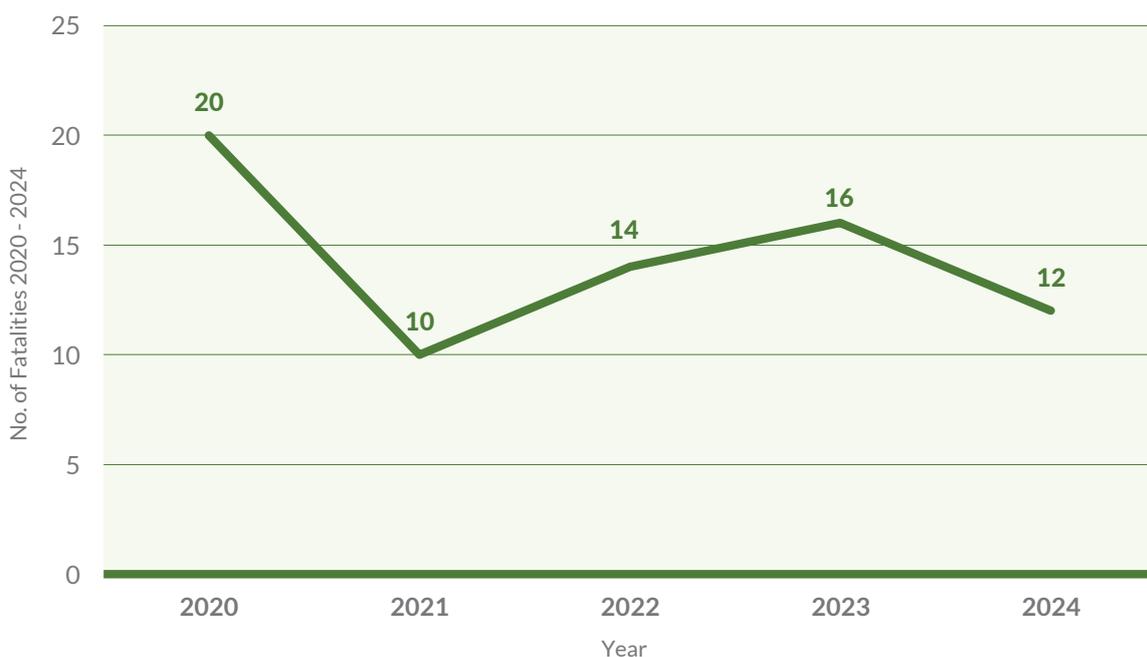
# Background

## In Ireland, the Central Statistics Office Farm Structure Survey 2023 identifies the total number of farm holdings as 133,174.

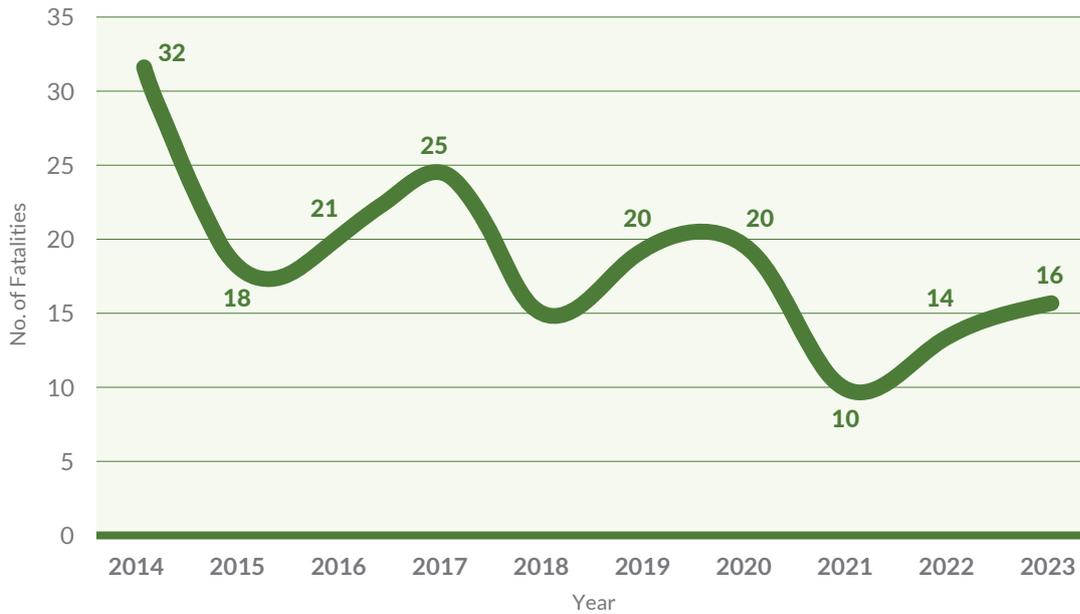
The Labor Force Survey shows 299,725 people worked on farms in Ireland in 2023, including farm holders, family workers and regular non-family workers. This is an increase of approximately 30,000 (+11.2%) workers in the 10-year period since 2013. In 2023, the estimated number of tractors owned on farms was 201,260 and the total area of agricultural land was 4.6 million hectares.

Most farmers are self-employed, and are often self-supervised sole traders, with farms predominately comprised of relatively small farm holdings relying on family labour, both young and older family members.

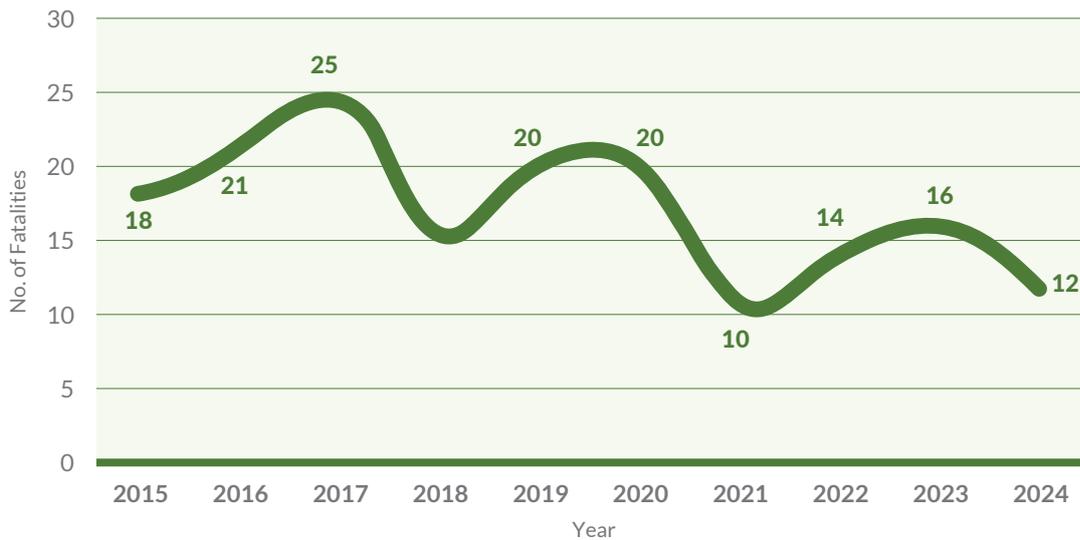
While farming represents approximately 11% of the working population, it frequently accounts for up to 50% of all workplace fatalities and thus represents a major challenge for the sector, the Health and Safety Authority and the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee. The number of farm deaths dropped to the lowest figure on record in 2021 to 10 farm-related deaths but rose again to 14 and 16 deaths respectively in 2022 and 2023. Between 2023 and 2024 there was a reduction by four in farm fatalities.



Ten years from 2014-2023, there were 191 lives lost at farming workplaces.



As seen in the 10-year period from 2015-2024, there were 171 deaths, a reduction of 20.



In the last 10 years, farm vehicles and machinery account for 46% of all farm deaths. In the last 10 years, 7% of all farm deaths involved children under 18 and 53% involved farmers over 65 years old. Such fatalities are generally not present in other economic sectors. Irish agriculture is predominately “livestock farming” which is a significant source of fatal and non-fatal injuries. Therefore, a continued focus on safety with vehicles, livestock, older workers and children remains a priority.

The previous Farm Safety Action Plan (2021–2024) outlined ambitious goals and actions aimed at addressing occupational safety and health for those working in agriculture. The key outcomes achieved during this period are detailed in Appendix 3. Building on these successes, the new FSPAC Action Plan for 2025–2027 will establish evidence-based goals, objectives, and actions designed to further improve safety and health on Irish farms.



# FSPAC Farm Safety Action Plan 2025–2027

This Farm Safety Action Plan sets out three overarching goals for the period of 2025-2027:

1. To **promote** cultural and behavioural changes to improve the health and safety of persons working in the agricultural sector through collaboration, stakeholder engagement, research, education and training.
2. To **implement** initiatives for the protection of the health and wellbeing of all persons working in the agriculture sector, with a focus on the elderly, children and migrant workers.
3. To **establish** initiatives to reduce the level of death and injuries arising from high-hazard activities in the agricultural sector which include tractors, vehicles, machinery, livestock and construction activity.

Five working groups have been established to support these three goals:

1. Behaviour, Education and Training Working Group
2. Vulnerable Persons and Health Working Group
3. Vehicles and High-Risk Machinery Working Group
4. Livestock Working Group
5. Farm Buildings, Construction and Work at Height Working Group

## Working Groups - Objectives

Each of the five working groups have set out high-level objectives, 18 in total, for the period 2025-2027. Specific actions will be developed to support the working group objectives.

### *The Behaviour, Education and Training Working Group will:*

- a) utilise media communication channels and targeted messaging to influence farmer attitudes and behaviours towards farm Occupational Safety and Health (OSH),
- b) promote and influence OSH research, education and training in the Agricultural sector,
- c) promote practical skills training in safety-critical areas in the Agricultural sector, and
- d) promote the adoption of new technologies such as increased use of online tools and training resources, simulator training and virtual reality training.

### *The Vulnerable Persons and Health Working Group will:*

- a) identify opportunities with key stakeholders to promote farmer health and wellbeing,
- b) develop a range of targeted farmers' health, safety and wellbeing promotion activities, and
- c) develop targeted measures to promote the safety and health of children, young persons and older farmers.

**The Vehicles and High-Risk Machinery Working Group will:**

- a) develop targeted actions to promote the maintenance and safe operation of farm vehicles and machinery to prevent death and serious injury
- b) engage with key stakeholders regarding licensing requirements, training and road safety standards
- c) promote tractor, teleporter, forklift and quad operation training and driver assessment, and
- d) promote awareness amongst farmers, forestry employers and workers of the management of timber related risks.

**The Livestock Working Group will:**

- a) develop targeted actions to protect farmers from serious and fatal injury from livestock, including the dissemination of livestock safety guidance,
- b) promote practical skills training in the safe handling of livestock and raise awareness of livestock behaviour, and
- c) promote the design and use of good animal handling equipment and facilities.

**The Farm Buildings, Construction and Work at Height Working Group will:**

- a) identify and implement targeted actions to improve safety knowledge of construction, building maintenance and demolition work on farms,
- b) promote the legal requirement to appoint PSDP and PSCS,
- c) support training initiatives to be given to farm advisors, farm building contractors and farmers in relation to on-farm construction safety and working at heights, and
- d) promote better farmyard and facilities design.

The following table provides an overview of the FSPAC goals, the relevant HSA strategic priority from the [HSA Strategy Statement 2025-2027](#), working group objectives and the intended outcomes for the period of the 2025-2027 Action Plan.



Goals	HSA Strategic Priority	Objectives	Intended Outcome
<p><b>To promote cultural and behavioural changes to improve the health and safety of persons working in the agricultural sector through collaboration, stakeholder engagement, research, education and training.</b></p>	<p>Influence, educate and collaborate.</p> <p>Build and support compliance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Utilise media communication channels and targeted messaging to influence farmer attitudes and behaviours towards farm Occupational Safety and Health (OSH).</li> <li>b) Promote and influence OSH research, education and training in the Agricultural sector.</li> <li>c) Promote the adoption of new technologies such as increased use of online tools and training resources, simulator training and virtual reality training.</li> </ul>	<p>Increased use of media communication and targeted messaging resulting in greater farmer awareness and more positive attitudes towards health and safety.</p> <p>Enhanced promotion of OSH research, education and training strengthening the sector's knowledge base.</p> <p>Increased awareness of new technologies providing more accessible, interactive, and effective learning experiences, improving hazard recognition and proper control measures to mitigate risk.</p>
<p><b>To implement initiatives for the protection of health and wellbeing of all persons working in Agriculture, with a focus on the elderly, children and migrant workers.</b></p>	<p>Influence, educate and collaborate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identify opportunities with key stakeholders to promote farmer health and wellbeing.</li> <li>b) Develop a range of targeted farmers' health, safety and wellbeing promotion activities.</li> <li>c) Develop targeted measures to promote the safety and health of children, young persons and older farmers.</li> </ul>	<p>Targeted health and wellbeing initiatives implemented improving awareness and participation in programmes that address psychosocial and physical health challenges faced by farmers.</p> <p>Tailored safety initiatives for vulnerable groups, including children, young people, and older farmers, reducing their risk of injury and promoting safer farms.</p>

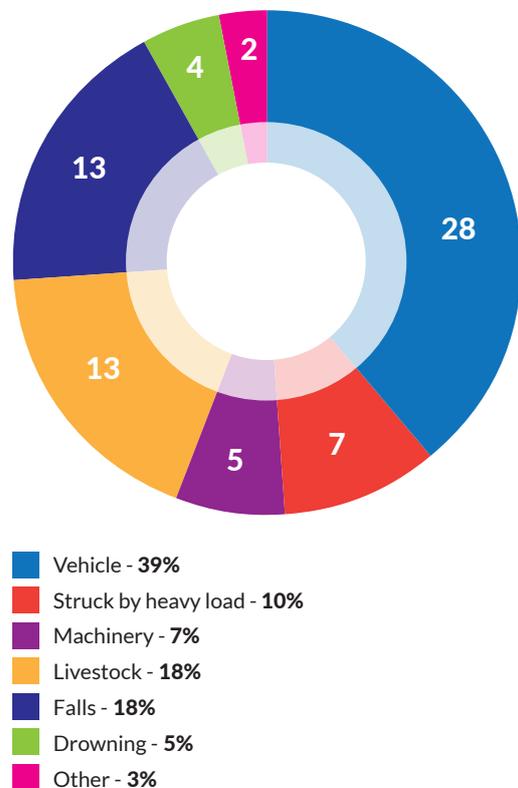
Goals	HSA Strategic Priority	Objectives	Intended Outcome
<p><b>To establish initiatives to reduce the level of death and injuries arising from high-hazard activities in the Agricultural sector which include tractors, vehicles, machinery, livestock and construction activity.</b></p>	<p>Influence, educate and collaborate.</p> <p>Build and support compliance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop targeted actions to promote the maintenance and safe operation of farm vehicles and machinery to prevent death and serious injury.</li> <li>b) Engage with key stakeholders regarding licensing requirements, training and road safety standards.</li> <li>c) Promote tractor, teleporter, forklift and quad operation training and driver assessment.</li> <li>d) Promote awareness amongst farmers, forestry employers and workers of the management of timber related risks.</li> <li>e) Develop targeted actions to protect farmers from serious and fatal injury from livestock, including the dissemination of livestock safety guidance.</li> <li>f) Promote practical skills training in the safe handling of livestock and raise awareness of livestock behaviour.</li> <li>g) Promote practical skills training in safety-critical areas in the Agricultural sector.</li> <li>h) Promote the design and use of good animal handling equipment and facilities.</li> <li>i) Identify and implement targeted actions to improve safety knowledge of construction, building maintenance and demolition work on farms.</li> <li>j) Promote the legal requirement to appoint PSDP and PSCS.</li> <li>k) Support training initiatives to be given to farm advisors, farm building contractors and farmers in relation to on-farm construction safety and working at heights.</li> <li>l) Promote better farmyard and facilities design.</li> </ul>	<p>Increased awareness of maintenance and safe operation of vehicles on farms.</p> <p>Increased collaboration with relevant stakeholders on licensing, training, and road safety standards.</p> <p>Effective promotion of relevant training will improve the practical skills of farmers across a range of safety-critical areas.</p> <p>Improve the management of timber related risks.</p> <p>Improve awareness of livestock safety and uptake of livestock safety control measures.</p> <p>Increased awareness of construction related risks on farms and construction appointments.</p> <p>Improved farmer knowledge regarding safe farm and facility design.</p>

# Overview of Farming Fatalities 2020-2024

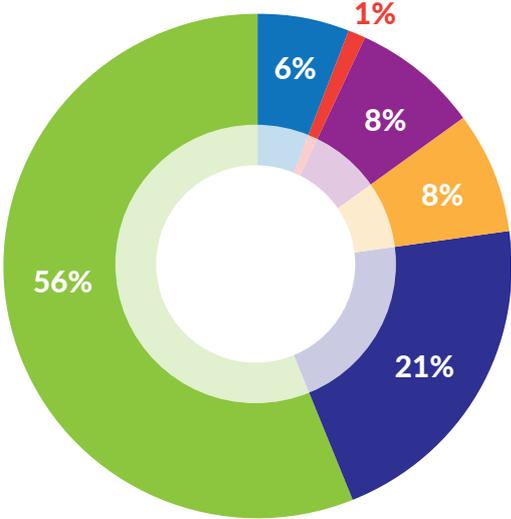
The major causes of farm fatalities are **farm vehicles 39%**, **livestock 18%** and **falls 18%**.

- ▶ Most vehicle fatalities are associated with tractors at 43%, followed equally by excavators/loaders at 14% and trailers also at 14%.
- ▶ Quad bikes (All terrain vehicles, ATVs) accounted for 11%. Given the relatively low number of quad bikes in use, quad bike fatalities have been significant over the last five years resulting in three fatalities and many life-changing injuries. Recent regulations requiring quad bike training and the mandatory wearing of a safety helmet came into effect on the 20 November 2023 following a 24-month lead-in period.
- ▶ In the past five years, 13 people have lost their lives in livestock-related accidents. The leading causes involved bulls (54%), and horses (15%). Attacks by cows with calves accounted for 8%.
- ▶ Over the last five years, there were 44 fatalities because of falls from height in all Irish workplaces, 13 of which occurred on farms. Work at heights is the second highest fatality risk on farms alongside livestock (each 18%). The main hazards when working at height are as follows:
  - 46% of farm falls involve falls from ladders
  - 23% of falls on farms resulted from falls through a roof
  - 16% were slips/trips between bales
  - 15% were falls from vehicles

Farm Fatalities 2020 – 2024: Total 72



**Farming Fatalities by Age Group 2020–2024:  
Total 72**



- 0 - 17 years
- 18 - 24 years
- 35 - 44 years
- 45 - 54 years
- 55 - 64 years
- 65 - 99 years

The above statistics for different age groups clearly identifies that those over 65 years are at greatest risk.

- ▶ In the last five years, 56% of farm fatalities were to those over 65 years with the most significant issues being vehicles 30%, falls 25% and livestock 23%. Preventing fatalities to this age profile is a considerable challenge as farmers tend not to retire and often work into their 80th and 90th year. Whilst some farmers may survive injuries sustained in their 30s and 40s, similar injuries in later years often prove fatal.
- ▶ In the last five years, 6% of all farm deaths involved children under 18 with vehicles causing 100% of these fatalities.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for additional farm safety statistics.





# Appendix 1

## Terms of Reference

The Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC) is an advisory committee to the Board of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and has the following terms of reference for the period 2025-2027.

- ▶ To act as a consultative and advisory forum on the HSA's priorities for the Agriculture Sector.
- ▶ To develop and agree a national action plan, coordinating the actions of working groups and representative organisations.
- ▶ To identify, prioritise and progress key actions related to improving safety and health standards in the Agriculture Sector.
- ▶ To identify and agree the critical areas for action and establish working groups to assist in the achievement of the agreed actions.
- ▶ To coordinate the work of working groups to achieve agreed targets, including a reduction in injury and ill health and an improvement in compliance with occupational safety and health within the sector.
- ▶ To promote, influence and monitor this national action plan.
- ▶ To identify, support and promote appropriate research and liaise with the relevant working group and agricultural organisations in the practical implementation of research findings.
- ▶ To report regularly and formally, at least annually, to the HSA Board and provide a final report with proposed future actions following its 3-year term.



# Appendix 2

## Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee Membership

The Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC) was established to involve key stakeholders in improving occupational safety and health in the agriculture sector.

A member of the Board of the Health and Safety Authority is appointed as chair of the FSPAC.

The organisations below will form the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee for the period 2025-2027.

- ▶ Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- ▶ Teagasc
- ▶ FBD Insurance
- ▶ The Association of Farm & Forestry Contractors in Ireland (FCI)
- ▶ Farm Relief Services Training Limited (FRS)
- ▶ The Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA)
- ▶ The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS)
- ▶ Irish Farmers Association (IFA)
- ▶ Macra Na Feirme
- ▶ Professional Agricultural Contractors of Ireland (PAC)
- ▶ Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU)

Additional organisations will support the FSPAC Working Groups and these will be listed, as appropriate, on the Health and Safety Authority's FSPAC [webpage](#).



# Appendix 3

## Details of Completed 2021-2024 Actions

The Farm Safety Partnership met 13 times over a four-year period since 2021. Its working groups each held several meetings over that same period.

The Farm Safety Action Plan 2021–2024 set out five major goals undertaken by five Working Groups.

The following were the five goals for the Farm Safety Action Plan 2021-2024:

1. To achieve a culture change in the health and safety of persons working in Agriculture through research, education and training.
2. To implement initiatives for the protection of the health and wellbeing of vulnerable persons working in Agriculture, particularly the elderly, children and migrant workers.
3. To reduce the level of death and injury arising from tractor, vehicle and machinery use in Agriculture.
4. To establish initiatives to reduce the level of death and injuries arising from working with livestock.
5. To undertake initiatives to prevent death and serious injury from falls from height and improve the standards of construction activity in Agriculture.

The following five Working Groups were established and these set out their high-level objectives:

1. Behaviour, Education and Training Working Group
2. Health and Vulnerable Persons Working Group
3. Tractor, High-Risk Machinery Working group
4. Livestock Handling Working Group
5. Buildings, Work at Height Working Group

Each working group focused on key issues including safety with livestock, vehicles/machinery, working at height, safety of vulnerable persons and health and wellbeing of all who work on our farms. Education, training and behaviour change was focused on from primary school level and extended to influencing the older farmer.

The Farm Safety Partnership and its five working groups carried out a significant number of actions which supported achieving the overall goals of its Action Plan 2021-2024. Some of the key actions and initiatives are summarised below:

## Several initiatives and campaigns utilised to promote farm safety and farm safety campaigns

- ▶ HSA and the DAFM delivered a national media campaign focused on livestock safety around calving.
- ▶ Farm safety was promoted by FSP partners at key events such as the National Ploughing Championships, Tullamore show and BEEF24 Open Day.
- ▶ A National Farm Safety Week Campaign was run every summer and strongly supported by the FSP members.
- ▶ “National Marts Farm Safety Awareness and Remembrance” events at marts have been delivered by FBD, ICOS, ALM, FSP, HSA and Embrace. Livestock and the safety of the elderly has been a key focus of these campaigns.
- ▶ Teagasc held a number of BeSafe conferences to highlight key farm safety research topics.
- ▶ Farm Safety Signs were produced and disseminated to farms by FBD.
- ▶ DAFM’s joint media initiative with Agriland and AXA Insurance included an instalment on working at height.
- ▶ A seminar was held to address *Securing Farmer Wellbeing: Supporting the Social Sustainability of Farming*.



## Training and education initiatives

- ▶ Teagasc, FBD and the HSA produced a [Managing Farm Safety and Health Video Series](#) with over 20 videos covering safety issues such as Tractors, Machinery, Quads, Livestock, Work at Height and Construction.
- ▶ FRS Training, the HSA, FBD, IFA, Teagasc, FRS Network and number of Irish farm families developed five innovative online farm safety courses for Irish farm families as part of an EIP. This initiative called "[Farm Family CPD](#)" focused on Farm Principals, 12–16 year-olds, over 65s, farm-workers and managing dangers with Livestock, Machinery and Buildings.
- ▶ QQI accredited training for Certificate in Farming required for various grants and aids provided to all entrants on their career in Agriculture by both Teagasc and private providers. Practical skills training was provided as a component of the Certificate in Farming.
- ▶ Half-day training on the Farm Safety Code of Practice was provided to farmers who are approved for DAFM TAMS2 Grant Aid. This training sought to assist farmers to complete the Farm Safety Code of Practice Risk Assessment Document and to positively influence them towards management of farm health and safety.
- ▶ A New Farm Safety Digital Resource for [Primary](#) and [Post Primary School](#) Students was produced by HSA.
- ▶ A module on Farm Health and Safety provided in 3rd Level Technological Universities and Agricultural Science courses.
- ▶ Agri-aware and IFA with support from the DAFM have an ongoing [Farm Safety Schools Program for Child Safety on the Farm](#).
- ▶ Farm safety training was provided to farmers participating in a range of DAFM schemes and where appropriate, included content on farmyard safety, working at height, livestock handling and the layout of buildings.
- ▶ An [electrical farm safety video](#) was produced by the FSPAC with the support of ESB Networks.
- ▶ A review of the half-day Farm Safety Code of Practice course for TAMS applicants was completed in Spring 2024 and the updated curriculum and presentation circulated to all FAS advisors. The training slides now include a major focus on the safety of vulnerable persons, i.e. young and old, farmer health issues including mental health and local services available.
- ▶ CPD training provided to FAS Advisors included training on the risks associated with working at height and construction work on farms. The training highlighted the requirements on the appointment of project supervisors.
- ▶ A HSA e-learning course was developed for seasonal workers entitled: [Health and Safety for Seasonal Workers in Horticulture](#).
- ▶ Range of videos produced, on "[Mental Health & Wellbeing in Farming](#)", "older persons safety" and "child safety".
- ▶ The annual Champions for Safety Seminar was provided in all agricultural colleges and in the UCD School of Agriculture by FBD in partnership with the HSA, Teagasc and the ESB.
- ▶ Farm safety presentations given by HSA inspectors including primary schools, stakeholder meetings, e.g. discussion groups.

## Guidance documents developed, updated and published

- ▶ [How to Make Construction Appointments for Your Farm](#) – Guidance developed in consultation with FSPAC and the Construction Safety Partnership Advisory Committee. The booklet was distributed by DAFM in BISS packs issued to over 127,000 farmers in Spring 2024.
- ▶ [Build in Safey an Advisory Booklet for Farmers.](#)
- ▶ [Farm Safety During Calving and Farm Safety During Lambing.](#)
- ▶ [Farmers' Health and Wellbeing – A guide to staying healthy while farming.](#)
- ▶ [Guidance on Managing Fatigue with Farm Work.](#)
- ▶ [Safety for Seasonal Workers in Horticulture.](#)
- ▶ [Sowing Seeds of Support: Positive Mental Health Guidance for the Farming Community](#) (Teagasc).

## Other initiatives

- ▶ Promotion of regulations governing the safe use of ATV/Quad Bikes in all workplaces (SI 619/2021) came into effect on 20 November 2023.
- ▶ The FSPAC met with our counterparts in Northern Ireland over the course of the previous plan with the ambition to enhance our relationship, and share learnings, knowledge, research and guidance material.
- ▶ Simulators funded by DAFM were supplied to all agricultural colleges which included Tractor and Farm vehicle, Cow Calving and Injection Simulators. Procurement of Sheep Lambing and Welding simulators currently in progress.
- ▶ The DAFM developed a mandatory Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme (SCEP) online training course with input from Teagasc and the HSA. This course is designed to help participants successfully implement the actions within SCEP and advise the best practices in farm safety and livestock handling. SCEP training for participating farmers went live in Spring 2024 and is currently ongoing. It is anticipated that 17,000 farmers will complete this training online and a small number will complete in-person training.
- ▶ DAFM's TAMS 3 Farm Safety Capital Investment Scheme, which opened in 2023, provides 60% grant-aid to all farmers for farm safety related investments including slat replacement, livestock handling facilities and equipment, yard lighting and rewiring of buildings.
- ▶ DAFM's farm buildings specifications updated to highlight the requirements on the appointment of project supervisors, improve farm safety and minimise risks when constructing and using farm buildings.
- ▶ Irish Heart Foundation carried out health checks at the National Ploughing Championships at the Authority's stand.
- ▶ Inspectors and other partners completed *On Feirm Ground* training.
- ▶ All suppliers of bovine tags have agreed to include the safety leaflet in boxes of tags.

# Appendix 4

## Additional Farm Safety Statistics

### Non-fatal injury data

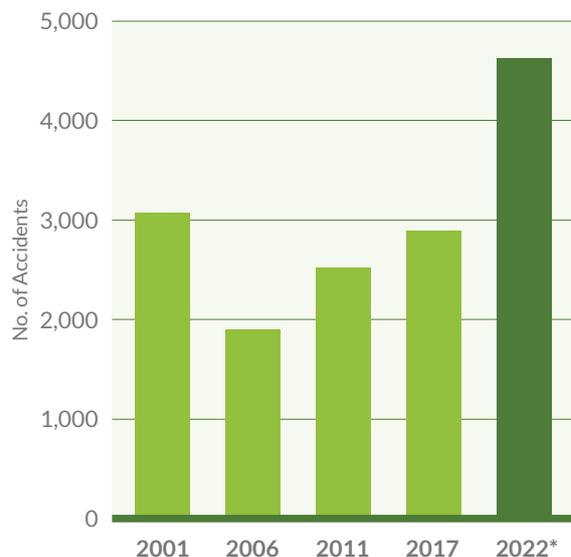
The Teagasc National Farm Survey (NFS) has been conducting farm accident surveys in Ireland for 30 years. The data collected provides farmers, policy-makers and health and safety advisors with estimates of farm accident levels to assist with the design of farm safety initiatives.

Earlier iterations of the surveys probed accident incidence using a five-year recall i.e. farmers were asked whether there had been an accident on their farm in the previous five years. In the most recent survey, reported in 2022 for the year 2020, this approach was modified whereby farmers were asked to recall if any accidents had occurred on their farm in the previous year. Whilst this may seem to be a minor change, it has important implications.

In 2020, 5% of respondents reported an accident having caused injury to them or someone else on their farm. This is reflective of approximately 4,500 farm accidents nationally (see Figure 1). Charted against previous years' surveys, the prevalence of farm accidents in 2020 may seem to have increased. However, the change in methodology, i.e. moving from a 5-year recall to a 1-year recall, means that respondents are more likely to remember and report less serious injuries. Notwithstanding this, of accidents recorded as part of the 2020 NFS survey, 80% required medical treatment according to the survey, with 46% of victims attending a hospital, a further 18% a doctor and 16% requiring first aid.

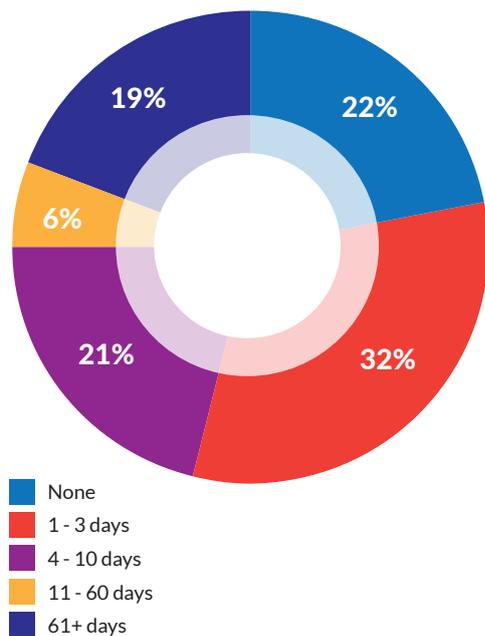
This profile of medical intervention is reflected in the impact of injuries on the ability of farmers to work (Figure 2). In 22% of cases, respondents indicated no work time lost. The highest proportion of respondents (32%) stated they were unable to work for between one and three days. Twenty-one percent reported a work time loss period of between four and 10 days. Two percent and four percent of accidents respectively resulted in a loss of time worked of between 11 and 30 days and 31-60 days, while 19% were unable to work for more than 61 days. An area of concern relates to loss of work time, 32% of respondents lost between one and three days of work time, and almost 40% signalled that they had no replacement labour available.

**Figure 1: Farm Accidents 2001-2022\***  
(year reported)



2001-2017: 5 year recall. \*Data reported in 2022 for 2020.  
Source: Teagasc National Farm Survey.

**Figure 2: Number of days unable to work due to a farm injury (Percent of all respondents)**



### Farm Type and Location

Sheep farms accounted for 37% of reported workplace accidents, followed by dairy farms (25%), cattle-non-suckling (14%) and both cattle-suckling and tillage (12%). According to the 2020 survey, 52% of farm accidents occurred in the farmyard, with a further 26% taking place in farm buildings. One in 10 accidents were in fields, with 1% on farm roadways or lanes.

### Causes

Data collected through the NFS not only quantifies the prevalence of farm accidents, but also their types (as shown in Figure 2). Data from 2020 indicates that almost half of all farm accidents involved livestock (47%) with close to one-third (29%) as a consequence of trips, falls or blows. In a further 11% of cases, the use of farm vehicles or machinery were contributory factors. A further 10% related to other causes, with 2% involving farm buildings.

Causal factors on Dairy and Drystock farms related mainly to livestock. On Drystock farms, 62% of accidents were as a result of an incident involving livestock, with 29% as a result of trips and falls and 9% relating to farm machinery and vehicles. On Dairy farms, accidents relating to livestock accounted for 37% of all farm accidents, with 29% as a result of trips and falls, 28% concerning farm machinery and vehicles and 6% as a result of other factors.

### Victims

The data establishes that a majority of on-farm accidents (89%) involved family members. According to respondents, 80% of the accidents involved the farmer themselves, with 8% involving another family member and 1% the spouse. The remaining proportion of accidents involved farm workers (1%) and unspecified others (9%).

Taking age profile into consideration, the data indicates that 84% of farm accidents (where the farmer indicated their age) related to farms run by those aged over 50. Most, i.e. roughly 50%, are accounted for by farmers in the 50-60 age bracket, with a further 19% relating to farmers aged 60-70 years.

Taking account of the types of farm accident by age group, those involving livestock were the most common across the 50-60 and 60-70 age categories (64% and 62% respectively). Trips and falls accounted for 29% of farm accidents in the 50-60 age category with the equivalent figure across the 60-70 age category also similar at 31%. Farm vehicles or machinery were cited as factors in 3% of accidents on farms in the 50-60 age category, with the figure at 7% on farms in the 60-70 age category.

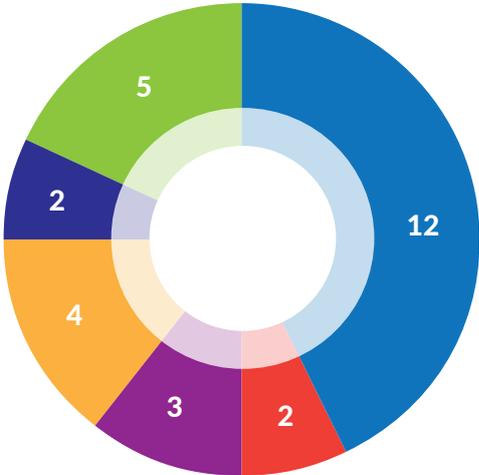
For those farmers aged below 50, over half of accidents (54%) were related to farm vehicles or machinery with 30% relating to trips and falls, 8% involving livestock and a further 8% categorised as other.

The 2020 Teagasc National Farm Survey (NFS) was conducted across a sample of 836 farms nationally representative of over 93,000 farms with a standard output of greater than €8,000 (approximately 16 suckler cows). The dataset does not include pigs or poultry systems. The survey was conducted by means of face-to-face interview on a confidential basis by Teagasc NFS data recorders.

Source: [www.teagasc.ie](http://www.teagasc.ie)

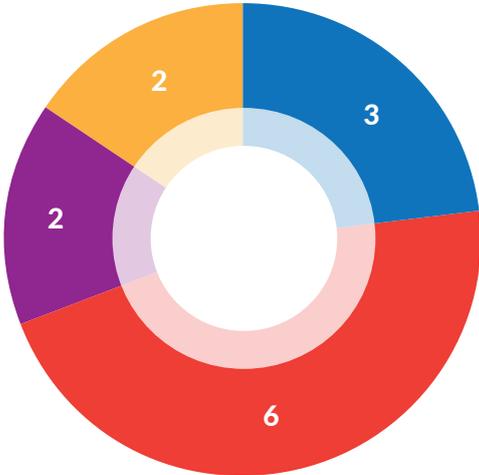
# Fatal statistics for five year period 2020-2024

Farming Fatalities 2020-2024:  
Vehicle Fatalities: 28



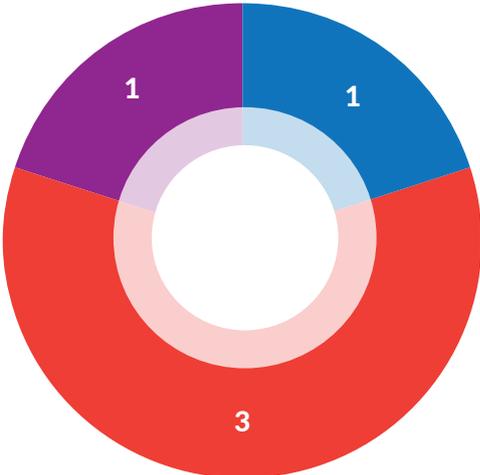
- Tractor - 43%
- Loader/telehandler - 7%
- Quad - 11%
- Trailer - 14%
- Excavator - 7%
- Other - 18%

Farming Fatalities 2020-2024:  
Falls Fatalities: 13



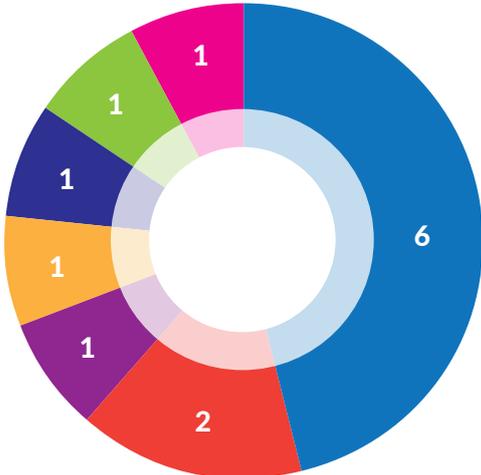
- Fall through roof - 23%
- Fall from ladder/roof - 46%
- Slip, trapped between bales - 16%
- Fall from vehicle - 15%

Farming Fatalities 2020-2024:  
Machinery Fatalities: 5



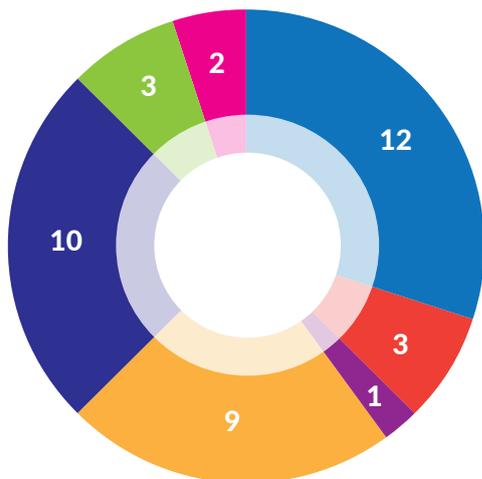
- Crushed - 20%
- Trapped - 60%
- Struck by falling object - 20%

Farming Fatalities 2020-2024:  
Livestock Fatalities: 13



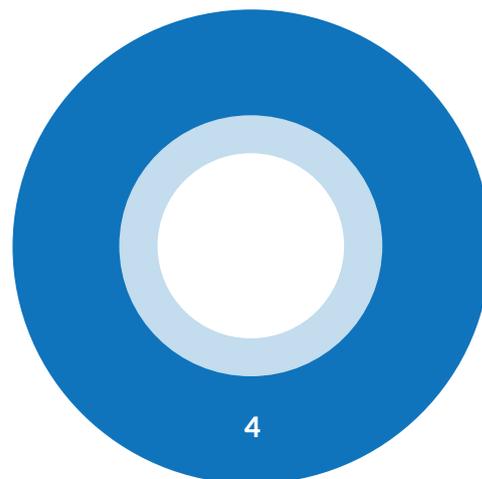
- Attacked by bull - 46%
- Attacked by horse - 15%
- Attacked by cattle - 7%
- Attacked by cattle with calves - 8%
- Knocked by cattle - 8%
- Knocked by bulls - 8%
- Other - 8%

Farming Fatalities 2020–2024:  
Aged over 65 years: 40



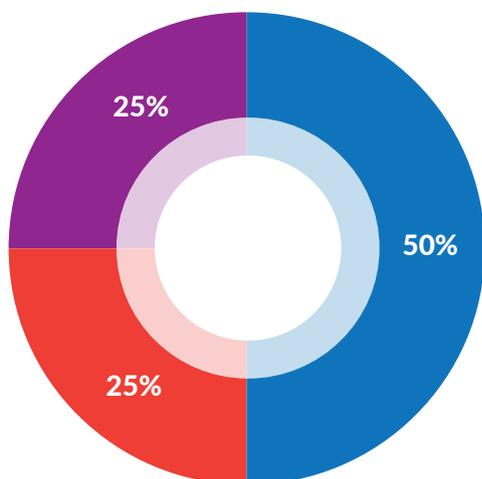
- Vehicle - 30%
- Struck by heavy load - 7%
- Machinery - 2%
- Livestock - 23%
- Fall - 25%
- Drowning - 8%
- Other - 5%

Farming Fatalities 2020–2024: Children/  
Young Person: Aged 1-17 years: Total 4



- Vehicle - 100%

Farming Fatalities 2020–2024:  
Drowning Fatalities: 4



- Vehicle - 50%
- Struck by heavy load - 25%
- Machinery - 25%



# Our Vision:

**To deliver healthy and  
safe working lives and  
contribute to productive  
enterprises**



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta  
Health and Safety Authority

Health and Safety Authority

**Tel: 0818 289 389**

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