

NORTHEAST AGRICULTURAL AND LOGGING FATALITY REPORT

2023



**NORTHEAST
CENTER**

FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



Bassett Healthcare Network
New York Center for Agricultural
Medicine and Health

INTRODUCTION

Each year, the Northeast Center highlights occupational fatalities among agricultural and logging workers in the Northeast region. We recognize that each person represented in this report died in tragic circumstances and we honor their memory in our mission to prevent future fatalities, injuries and illnesses. The information contained within this report is aggregated primarily through web scraping and review of the AgInjuryNews database.¹

Fatalities are identified through keywords and verified through visual inspection by a research specialist before being uploaded to a database, where specific variables are then coded through the Farm and Agricultural Injury Classification² (FAIC), Occupational Injury and Illness Classification System³ (OIICS), and North American Industry Classification System⁴ (NAICS)

codes. Additionally, available narratives are recorded and appropriate files attached. Descriptive statistics were calculated in Microsoft Excel based on a variety of factors, including age, gender, type of event, and source of injury.

Unlike the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries⁵ (CFOI), which accounts for active agricultural laborers in their data, we include all instances of agricultural-associated fatalities, such as that of a child who was not actively working. As such, fatalities in this report are representative of the entirety of the agricultural sphere, encompassing farmers, farmworkers, children, bystanders, and victims of public roadway collisions involving agricultural equipment and vehicles, in addition to forestry and logging.

While the working conditions of many Americans have improved over the recent decades, some remain stubbornly behind. This is especially evident in rural, remote areas where heritage industries prevail, and alternative occupational opportunities



Figure 1: NEC Region

ABOUT THESE INDUSTRIES

are limited. The health disparities created and exacerbated by these factors are contributing to worsening health outcomes and at times, fatalities, thereby creating further health inequities and ripple effects in these under-served rural communities.

The agriculture and logging industries are emblematic of this overall phenomenon for a multitude of reasons including but not limited to:

1. tasks that often dictate working alone in remote and rural areas
2. operation of dangerous heavy equipment in unpredictable weather in an ever-changing climate
3. small businesses which are frequently strained by changes in international trade agreements, global economics, and regulatory changes
4. the erosion of the rural workforce has made it difficult to ensure adequate staff, squeezing those in the industry to work longer hours with less recovery time

| State | Number of Farms | Land in farms (acres) | Average size of farm (acres) | Number of Producers | Hired Farm Labor |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| CT | 5,058 ▼ | 372,014 ▼ | 74 ▲ | 9,374 ▼ | 11,259 ▼ |
| DE | 2,158 ▼ | 522,834 ▼ | 242 ▲ | 3,812 ▼ | 3,412 ▼ |
| ME | 7,036 ▼ | 1,225,046 ▼ | 174 ▲ | 13,053 ▼ | 11,122 ▼ |
| MD | 12,550 ▲ | 1,978,036 ▼ | 158 ▼ | 23,507 ▲ | 14,820 ▼ |
| MA | 7,083 ▼ | 464,451 ▼ | 66 ▼ | 13,284 ▲ | 14,032 ▲ |
| NH | 3,949 ▼ | 417,187 ▼ | 106 ▲ | 7,209 ▲ | 4,627 ▼ |
| NJ | 9,998 ▲ | 711,502 ▼ | 71 ▼ | 18,591 ▲ | 24,464 ▼ |
| NY | 30,650 ▼ | 6,502,286 ▼ | 212 ▲ | 57,558 ▼ | 56,678 ▲ |
| PA | 49,053 ▼ | 7,058,325 ▼ | 144 ▲ | 90,032 ▼ | 60,475 ▼ |
| RI | 1,054 ▲ | 59,076 ▲ | 56 ▲ | 1,938 ▲ | 1,667 ▼ |
| VT | 6,537 ▼ | 1,173,890 ▼ | 180 ▲ | 12,470 ▲ | 8,331 ▼ |
| WV | 22,787 ▼ | 3,549,104 ▼ | 156 ▲ | 39,109 ▲ | 7,175 ▼ |

Table 1: Agricultural Producers, All NEC Region [7, 8]. Numbers shown indicate 2022 statistics, while arrows indicate trend from 2017 statistics.

ABOUT THESE INDUSTRIES, CONT.

Agriculture

Agriculture in the Northeast encompasses many commodity types ([Figure 2](#)).⁶ Industry trends can be seen in the table below highlighting data from the recent Census of Agriculture ([Table 1](#)).^{7,8}

Farming in this region is made up of an array of business types and sizes—some many generations established, others recent startups. Ag-based businesses make up the economic engine that produces more than \$100 billion in business activity in the Northeast. This requires over half of a million workers tackling a wide variety of tasks, many of which are inherently risky.

Logging

The Northeast and Appalachian forests provide livelihoods for thousands of logging industry workers. Nearly one in nine U.S. logging jobs is located in our service region producing nearly \$13 billion in gross domestic product—from lumber, paper, and cardboard, to pulpwood and biomass for fuel. Before a big haul is trucked out of the woods, a tremendous amount of skill and hard work done by hand and with sophisticated large machinery takes place. Workers often endure extremes—sub-zero cold, long shifts that might start in the middle of the night, far commutes into the depths of remote forest, and potential risk to one’s health and safety. Logging workers also suffer from higher rates of injury, hearing loss, musculoskeletal disorders and chronic illness than those in other industries.⁹

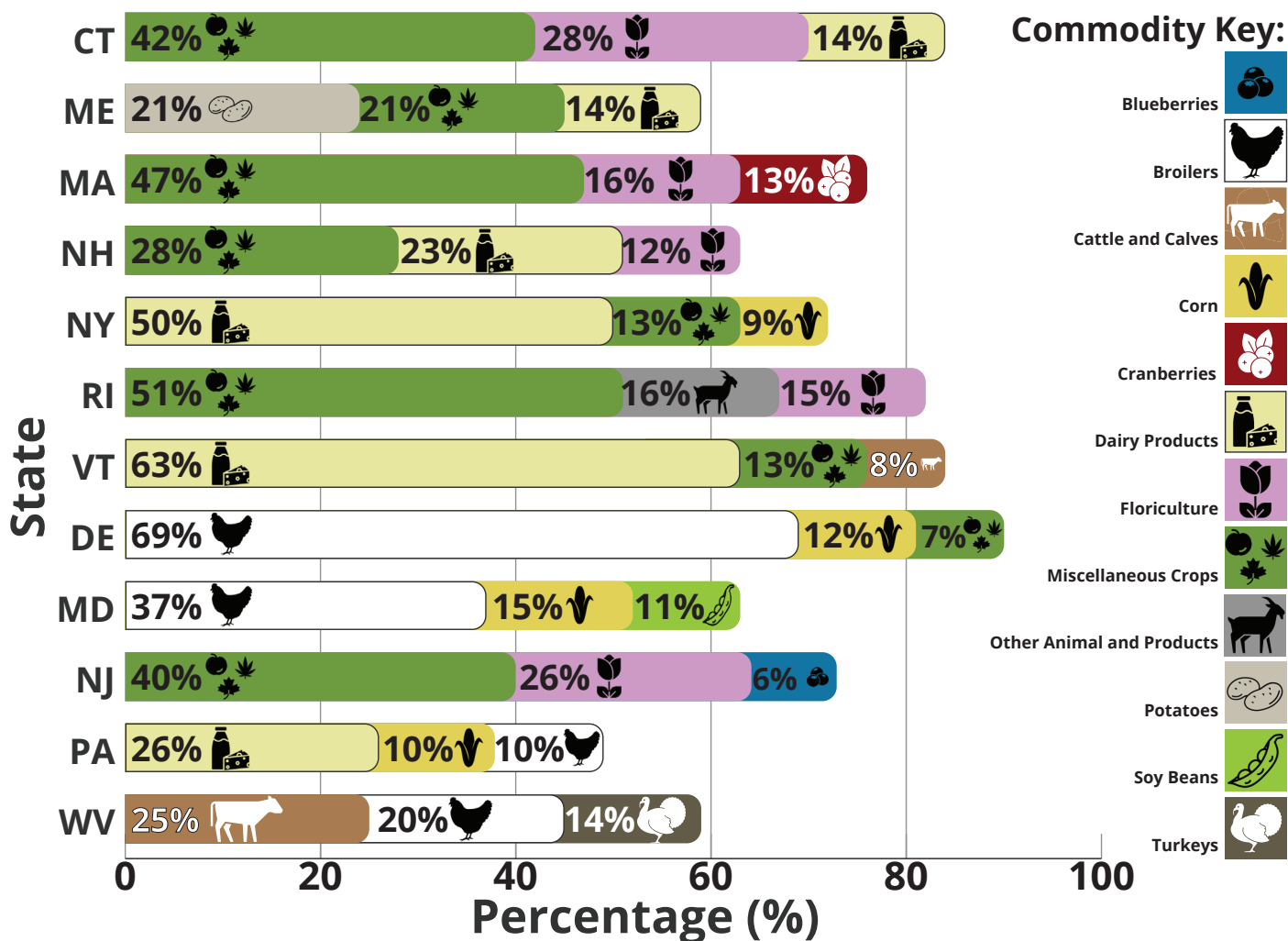


Figure 2: Top Three Commodities by State [6]

FATALITY TRENDS

Across the Northeast, we identified forty (40) fatalities within the agricultural and logging industries. Of these 40 deaths, six were children under the age of 18. Six of the 40 were women or girls.

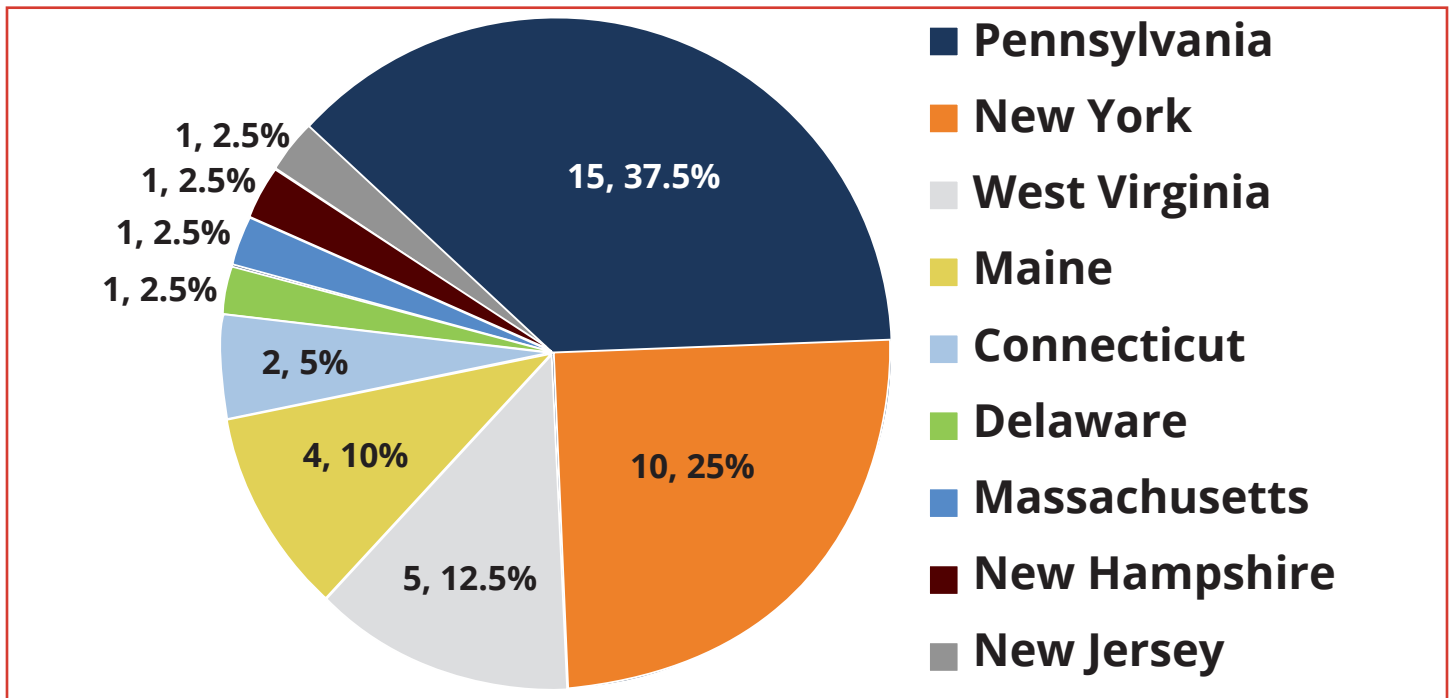


Figure 3: Fatalities per State, Northeast States

Agriculture

Nationally, agriculture remains a dangerous industries in the United States, with the most recent national fatality rates for agricultural workers exceeding the all-worker (average) fatality rate by 5.4 times, respectively.⁵ Within the northeast, the 33 people who died ranged in age from one (1) to eighty-seven (87).

Northeast Region

Nearly 1 in 4 agricultural fatalities occurred on a roadway

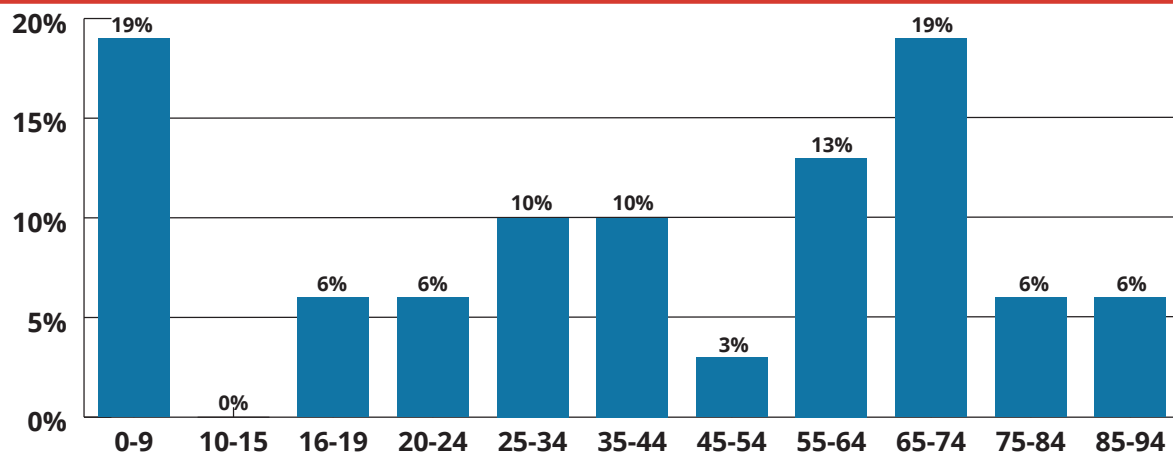


Figure 4: Proportion of Agricultural Fatalities by Age, Northeast States

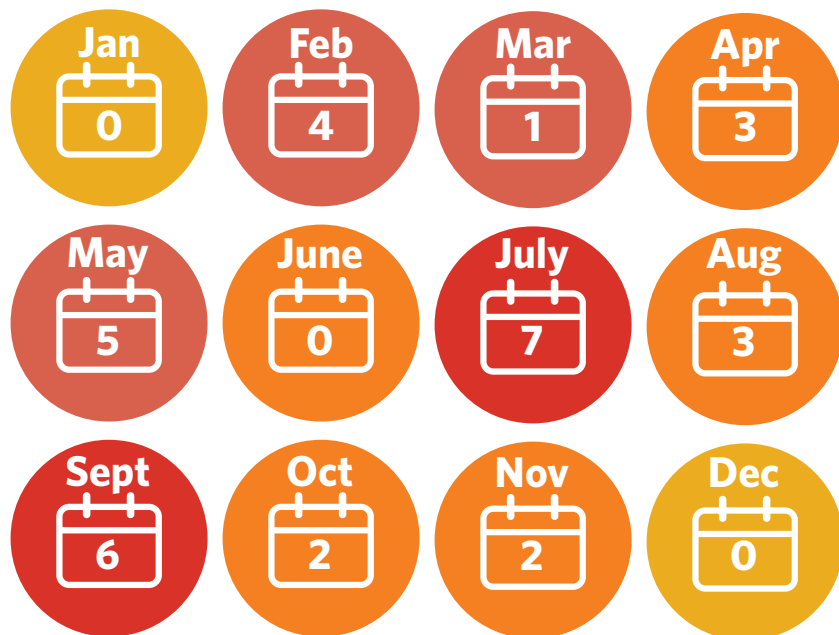
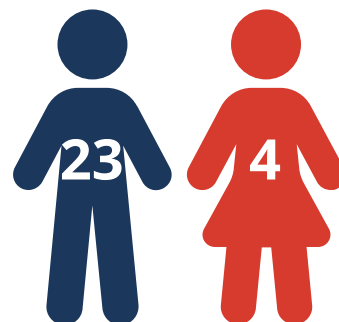


Figure 5: Agricultural Fatalities (All) by Month, Northeast States

Adult



Youth

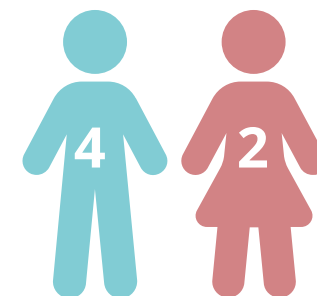


Figure 6: Agricultural Fatalities By Gender

FATALITY TRENDS, CONT.

Adult Fatalities

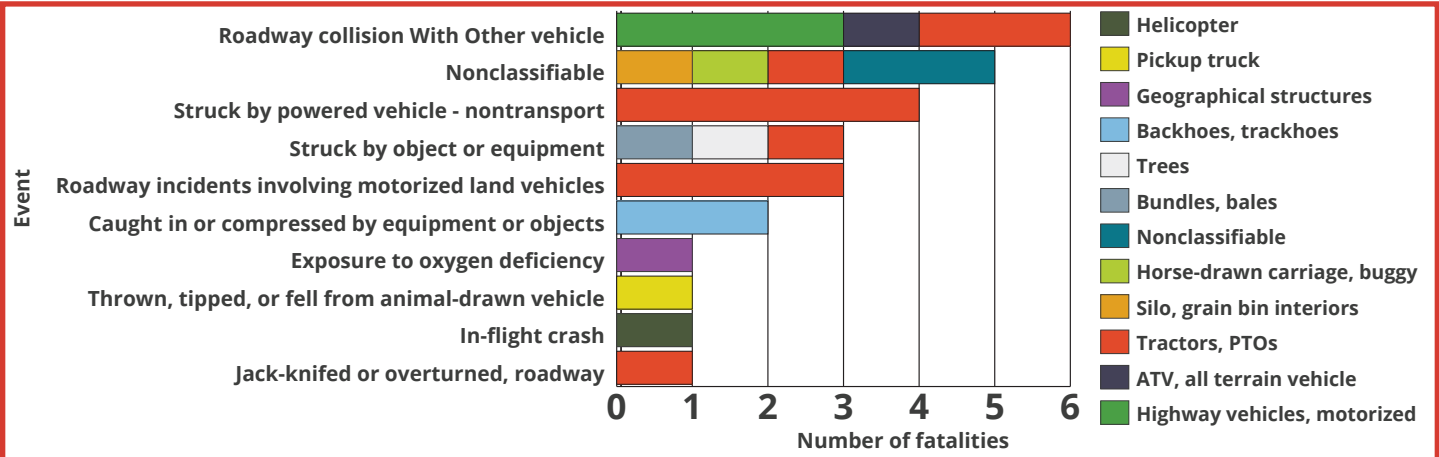


Figure 7: Agricultural Events by Primary Source, Northeast States

Child Fatalities

- 4 boys, 2 girls (all 5 years old or younger).
- Five out of the six child deaths occurred in Pennsylvania, with one in New York
 - Being struck by or entangled in farm equipment claimed three lives
 - Being struck by objects (hay bales, metal pipes) contributed to two deaths
 - Carbon monoxide exposure from a generator claimed another boy's life

Logging

Nationally, the logger fatality rate is twenty-seven (27) times that of the all-worker (average) fatality rate, meaning that this occupation carries the unenviable distinction of being the most fatal job in America¹. Within the Northeast, we identified six men and one young woman killed in logging and log-truck related incidents in 2023

- Three deaths occurred in West Virginia, two deaths occurred in New York, with single fatalities in Maine and New Hampshire
- Three fatalities were caused by falling trees
- An additional fatality was an unspecified slip/trip/fall in the woodlot
- A UTV rollover while skidding a log contributed to a fatality in New Hampshire
- A roadway double fatality in West Virginia involved a log truck versus motorcycle, with authorities citing the motorcycle's speed as a contributor to the crash

Age range: Juvenile (unnamed teenage girl) to 80

PREVENTION RESOURCES

Injury prevention resources are available from the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) and the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety (Northeast Center) by visiting the websites at: nycamh.org and necenter.org, respectively.

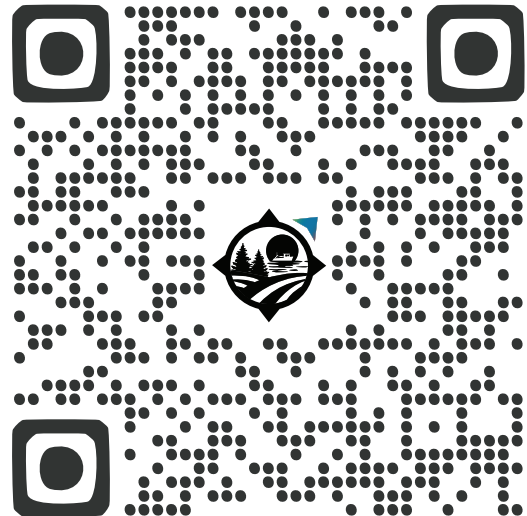
In addition, national resources are available from CDC-NIOSH at cdc.gov/niosh/research-programs/portfolio/aff.html

Further, specific safety programs are available including:

| NATIONAL | NEW YORK STATE |
|--|---|
| Tractor Rollbars: National ROPS Rebate Program | John May Farm Safety Fund |
| Power Take-Off (PTO) Shielding | Farm Safety Trainings/Site Walkthroughs |
| Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | |



NYCAMH Homepage



Northeast Center Homepage

CITATIONS

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REPORT PREPARED BY

John Huber, Cristina Hansen Ruiz, and Erika Scott
Bassett Healthcare Network
Cooperstown, NY 13326

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Northeast Center (NEC) is to enhance the health of AgFF workers by identifying priority health and safety issues and working with AgFF communities and stakeholders to develop prevention solutions.

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INFO@NECENTER.ORG
800.343.7527
NECENTER.ORG

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