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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AIAC)

Overview of fatal incidents involving cattle

Summary

1. Following on from the paper presented to AIAC 'Current trends in agriculture machinery fatal incidents' (reference number AIAC 14/11/01) this paper gives an overview of fatal incidents involving cattle
 - (a) Enable AIAC members to consider the current trends in agriculture accidents involving cattle
 - (b) Discuss relevant factors and identify where further work could be focussed to reduce the number of accidents

Background

2. This paper considers fatal accidents in agriculture where cattle have been involved from April 2000 to March 2015. It includes provisional data for the year 2014/15 which may be subject to change; these changes are likely to be minor and will not affect the conclusions of the paper.
3. The conclusions of this examination of the data were presented at the IOSH Rural Industries Group 'Managing Cattle Safely' event in October 2014. Additionally the information has been shared with the Farm Safety Partnership Cattle Handling Group.
4. Recent operational guidance, produced to prompt staff of the information to be gathered during investigations of all incidents involving cattle, whether fatal or not, was issued in early February as a result of discussions with a Member of Parliament
5. For the purposes of the analysis a fatal accident where cattle have been involved includes fatal accidents to farmers, workers and members of the public.

Statistics

6. Since 2000 there have been 74 fatalities involving cattle recorded by HSE.
7. Eighteen of these fatal accidents have involved members of the public, the remainder [56] have been fatal accidents involving people at work.

8. Of the 18 members of the public, all were present on public footpaths or commonly used rights of way, all but one were accompanied by a dog and with exception of one man who had wandered away from a family group, all were lone walkers or accompanied by one other person. Additionally, of the 18, only one was under the age of 50 and 13 were over the age of 60.
9. Where the information is recorded 10 of these accidents involved cows with calves. Only one involved a bull, although this was subsequently not proven in court.
10. The remaining 56 fatalities involved workers engaged in farm work, farmers, farm workers and other staff. Seven were under the age of 50 and 37 were over the age of 60. Seven were over the age of 80.
11. Forty four of the deaths were to farmers, the balance (12) to workers or helpers; only four of the workers were 50 or under and one worker was 87.

Age	20 – 29	30 – 39	40 – 49	50 – 59	60 –69	70 - 79	80 +
MOP			1	4	8	5	
Farmers		2	3	8	10	13	7
Workers			2	3	4	2	1
TOTALS		2	6	15	22	20	8

* Age not recorded in one case

12. In the case of members of the public and farm staff being killed in accidents involving cattle breed does not appear to be an issue; both dairy and beef breeds are involved in both categories.
13. Of the farm staff accidents 11 of the 56 involved newly calved cows and 23 were attacked by bulls. Again the breed of the cattle does not cause an obvious trend.

Conclusions

14. Accidents to members of the public have the following common factors
 - (a) Most involve dogs
 - (b) Most involve calves
 - (c) Most involve single walkers or a couple of walkers
 - (d) Age seems to be an issue
15. Accidents to farm workers and farmers show the following patterns
 - (a) 87.5% of fatalities to those working on farms are over the age of 50
 - (b) 12.5% were over the age of 80
 - (c) 50% of deaths involved a bull
 - (d) 20% involved a newly calved cow

Recommendations

16. It is recommended that AIAC members consider the following
 - (a) Where ever possible farmers should avoid keeping cows and calves in fields with public footpaths
 - (b) Where this is not possible appropriate signage and optional protected walkways should be considered

- (c) As 87.5% of fatal accidents on farms involve those undertaking work activities over the age of 50, age should be considered as an element when undertaking risk assessment, formally or otherwise
- (d) As 70% of these deaths involved either a bull or newly calved cow activities with these category of stock should be very carefully planned.
- (e) Members may wish to use the statistics to remind the agriculture community of the groups most likely to be killed in farm accidents involving cattle.
- (f) Members are asked to remind the agriculture community to assess honestly their capacity for handling cattle particularly over the age of 50

Action

- 17. Members are asked to work with organisations within their sphere of influence to develop new strategies to address old problems.

Contact

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