Health and safety in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in Great Britain, 2017

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Summary

The document can be found at: [www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/industry/agriculture/agriculture.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/industry/agriculture/agriculture.pdf)

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<td>27</td>
<td>Fatal injuries to workers in 2016/17 (RIDDOR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>Non-fatal injuries to workers each year (LFS)</td>
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**Work-related ill health by illness type**
(Source: LFS annual average estimate 2014/15-2016/17)

- Musculoskeletal disorders: 45%
- Other illness: 54%

**Fatal injuries to workers by most common accident kinds**
(Source: Fatal injuries reportable under RIDDOR, 2012/13-2016/17)

- Struck by moving vehicle: 23%
- Fall from height: 18%
- Injured by animal: 15%
- Struck by object: 11%
- Contact with machinery: 10%

**Non-fatal injuries to employees by most common accident kinds**
(Source: Non-fatal injuries reported under RIDDOR 2014/15-2016/17)

- Slip, trip, fall on same level: 20%
- Injured by animal: 14%
- Lifting/handling: 13%
- Fall from height: 12%
- Struck by object: 12%
- Contact with machinery: 10%

**Note:**
LFS: Labour Force Survey (annual average estimates in 2014/15-2016/17). Illness estimates include both new and longstanding cases.
RIDDOR: Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
The most common accident kinds included in the charts above are those that account for 10% or more of injuries.
Introduction

This report provides a profile of workplace health and safety in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. Agriculture, forestry and fishing includes three broad industry groups:

- Agriculture – this division includes two basic activities, namely the production of crop products and production of animal products;
- Forestry and logging – this division includes the production of roundwood as well as the extraction and gathering of wild growing non-wood products (e.g., mushrooms, berries and nuts); and
- Fishing and aquaculture

and accounts for around 1% of the workforce in Great Britain.

Also considered in this report is work-related illness and injury to workers in ‘Skilled agricultural and related trade’ occupations. This occupational group includes occupations such as farmers, horticultural trades, gardeners and groundsmen. These occupations are widely employed in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, but also in the industry group ‘Landscape service activities’ (Code 81.30 of the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification).

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1 The ‘Agriculture, forestry and fishing’ sector is defined by section A within the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification. See www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/standard-industrial-classification/index.html for more details.
3 ‘Skilled agricultural and related trade’ occupations are defined by occupation group 51 within the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification. For more details see www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/index.html.
Work-related illness and workplace injury in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector

Work-related illness

All work-related illness

Figure 1: Estimated annual number of cases of self-reported work-related illness in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector

Between 2014/15 and 2016/17:

- Annually, around 15,000 workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in GB were suffering from an illness they believe was caused or made worse by their work.
- Many of these illnesses were long standing ill-health conditions.
- Musculoskeletal disorders was the most common work-related ill-health condition in workers in the sector.

Source: LFS, annual average 2014/15-2016/17

Figure 2: Estimated rate of all self-reported work-related illness (per 100,000 workers) in

(i) the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector

Expressing the total number of work-related illness cases as a rate, annually between 2014/15 and 2016/17:

- around 4.4% of workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in GB were suffering from an illness that they believe was caused or made worse by their work in the sector.
  - This rate is statistically significantly higher than the rate for workers across all industries (3.1%).

(ii) ‘Skilled agricultural and related trade’ occupations

The rate of work-related illness in ‘Skilled agricultural and related trade’ occupations is of a similar order (4.4%) - though not all such workers will be employed in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, with some employed in industries such as Landscaping services.
  - This rate is statistically significantly higher than the rate across all occupations (3.1%).

Source: LFS, annual average 2014/15-2016/17
Musculoskeletal Disorders

On average, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) account for around half of the self-reported work-related illness cases in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. (Source: Labour Force Survey).

Expressing the total number of musculoskeletal disorder cases as a rate, annually between 2014/15 and 2016/17:

- around 2.0% of workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector were suffering from a musculoskeletal disorder they believed was work-related.
- This rate is statistically significantly higher than the rate across all industries (1.3%).

The occupational group 'Skilled agricultural and related trades' shows a similar elevated risk of musculoskeletal disorder – the rate is about double that seen in workers across all occupations.

Source: LFS, annual average 2014/15-2016/17
Other work-related illness conditions

Self-reports of work-related ill health from the Labour Force Survey gives the best indication of the overall scale of work-related ill health in Britain today. However, since estimates are based on a sample survey, this source is limited when looking at less common work-related ill health cases. We therefore have a range of supporting ill health data sources to supplement the Labour Force Survey estimates.

Occupational lung disease

Farmers lung

- Farmers lung is the most common form of the condition ‘allergic alveolitis’ and arises from the inhalation of dust or spores arising from mouldy hay, grain and straw;
- Allergic alveolitis (including farmers lung) is a recognised occupational disease under the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit’ scheme (IIDB): there were 80 newly assessed cases for disablement benefit in total during the period 2007-2016.
- The number of annual deaths where farmer’s lung (or a similar condition) was recorded as the underlying cause is generally of a similar order of magnitude with 75 deaths over the last decade (2006-2015) with eight in the most recent year, 2015. The disease only rarely progresses to a life-threatening level, suggesting that there are substantially more non-fatal cases of farmers lung occurring each year than those receiving IIDB compensation.
- Evidence from the chest physician reporting scheme for occupational respiratory disease (www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/sources.htm#thor) supports this with the estimated number of new cases identified by chest physicians averaging 34 per year over the last ten years

Occupational asthma

- The chest physician reporting scheme for occupational respiratory disease (THOR-SWORD) shows that jobs associated with Agriculture, forestry and fishing are not among those with the highest rates of occupational asthma, although small numbers of cases associated with these jobs are routinely reported.

Skin Disease

- The dermatologist reporting scheme for occupational skin disease (THOR-EPIDERM) provides no indication that the incidence of contact dermatitis in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector is any higher than the average for all industries combined.

Occupational cancer

- A research study on the occupational burden of cancer in Great Britain shows that occupational exposure to solar radiation resulted in about 1,500 non melanoma skin cancer registrations in 2004, with around 100 of these cases in workers across the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector.
Changes over time

Figure 4: Estimated rate per 100,000 workers of self-reported work-related illness in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector:

(i) all work-related illness

(ii) musculoskeletal disorders

Over the last decade or so the rate of total self-reported work-related ill health, and specifically musculoskeletal disorders, showed no clear trend.

The work-related illness estimates for Agriculture, forestry and fishing are based on a relatively small number of sample cases, hence the estimates have wide confidence intervals around them (representing the uncertainty due to sampling). This makes it difficult to detect any trend that may be present.

Source: Labour Force Survey
Workplace Injury

Fatal injuries

There were 27 fatal injuries to workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in 2016/17, broadly the same as the annual average for 2012/13-2016/17 (29). This brings the total number of fatal injuries to workers in the sector over the last five years to 144.

Figure 5 below shows the breakdown of these 144 fatal injury cases by accident kind.

- Over half of all worker fatalities over the last five years were accounted for by just three accident kinds: being struck by moving vehicle, fall from a height and being injured by an animal
- Injuries caused by other accident kinds (8% of total cases) include deaths due to contact with electricity or electrical discharge (five cases, 3%), slips trips or falls on same level (two cases, 1%), being struck against something fixed or stationary and exposure to fire (one case each, 1%). The remaining three deaths were categorised as ‘another kind of accident.

Figure 5: Fatal injuries to workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector by accident kind, 2012/13-2016/17

The worker fatal injury rate in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (7.61 per 100,000 workers in 2016/17) remains higher than any other main industry sector: around six times that in construction and 18 times that across all industries.

Figure 6: Rate of fatal injuries to workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector and other selected main sectors per 100,000 workers, 2016/17

Source: RIDDOR
Non-fatal injuries

Figure 7: Estimated annual cases of self-reported workplace injury in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector amongst workers

Between 2014/15 and 2016/17:
- Annually, around 13,000 workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector sustained an injury at work.

Source: LFS, annual average 2014/15 - 2016/17

Figure 8: Estimated rate of all self-reported workplace injury (per 100,000 workers) in:
(i) the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector

Expressing the total number of workplace injury cases as a rate, annually between 2014/15 and 2016/17:
- around 4.0% of workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in GB sustained a workplace injury.
  - This rate is around double that seen in workers across all industries (1.9%).

(ii) ‘skilled agricultural and related trade’ occupations

Similarly, the occupational group ‘Skilled agricultural and related trades’ shows an elevated risk of workplace injury.

Source: LFS, annual average 2014/15 - 2016/17
The survey estimates of non-fatal workplace injury numbers presented above give the best indication of the scale of workplace injury within the sector. A further source of intelligence on workplace non-fatal injuries comes from statutory notifications from employers under the ‘Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence’ regulations (RIDDOR). However, RIDDOR data need to be interpreted with care since it is known that non-fatal injuries are substantially under-reported, especially for the self-employed. Variations in reporting rates both between industries and over time make such comparisons difficult. However, RIDDOR (as a data source) may sometimes be useful in providing analysis at a detailed level not available through the LFS, mainly around the type of accident itself.

Figure 9: Employer reported non-fatal injuries to employees in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector

- Provisional figures show over 850 employer reported non-fatal injuries to employees in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in 2016/17.
- Reported non-fatal injuries are categorised as either specified (a pre-defined list of certain injury types which includes for example fractures, amputations, serious burns) or as resulting in over 7-days off work.
- Around 40% of the injury reports in 2016/17 were for specified injuries.

Source: RIDDOR 2016/17p

- Around half of employer reported non-fatal injuries to employees were accounted for by three accident kinds: slip and trip injuries, injuries involving animals or lifting and handling injuries.
- While struck by a moving vehicle was the most common cause of fatal injury to workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (figure 5), it accounted for less than 5% of all reported non-fatal injuries.

Figure 10: Employer reported non-fatal injuries to employees in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector by accident kind

- Slip, trip, fall on same level 20%
- Injured by animal 14%
- Lifting/handling 13%
- Fall from height 12%
- Struck by object 12%
- Contact with machinery 10%
- Struck against something fixed or stationary 3%
- Struck by moving vehicle 3%
- Other 13%

Source: RIDDOR 2014/15-2016/17p

It is estimated that, across all industries, around a half of all reportable non-fatal injury to employees are actually reported.

For the full list of specified injuries, see www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm
Over the last 30 years or so the rate of fatal injury for agricultural workers has shown no clear trend although there are some signs of improvement in the last five years.
Non-fatal injuries

Figure 12(i): Estimated rate per 100,000 workers of all self-reported workplace injury in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector

![Graph showing estimated rate per 100,000 workers of all self-reported workplace injury over time.](image)

Source: Labour Force Survey

Fig 12(ii): Rate (per 100,000 employees) of employer reported non-fatal injury to employees in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector

![Graph showing rate per 100,000 employees of employer reported non-fatal injury over time.](image)

Source: RIDDOR

- The rate of self-reported non-fatal injury to workers showed some signs of a downward trend.
- These signs are supported by downward movements in the rate of non-fatal injury to employees reported by employers (which only includes certain injuries).
Workplace risks

A 2014 survey, commissioned by the European Union Occupational Safety and Health Agency (in collaboration with the Health and Safety Executive), explored the extent that various risks are present in the workplace (regardless of whether the risk is under control), as reported by the person who knows most about safety and health in the workplace. Figure 13 shows the extent of these various risk factors in workplaces in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in the UK. Full details of the UK results, including measures of how risks are managed within the sector can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/oshman.

Figure 13: Percentage of workplaces in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector with 5 or more employees reporting the presence of various workplace risks (regardless of whether risk is under control), 2014

- Physical risks are more commonly reported than psychosocial risks.
- The most common reported physical workplace risks are the ‘risk of accidents from machines or hand tools’ (present in 80% of workplaces), ‘accidents with vehicles’ (78%) and chemical or biological substances (76%).
- While the ‘risk of accidents from machines or hand tools’ is the top reported workplace risk, ‘accidents with machinery’ account for only around 10% of both reported fatal and non-fatal injury within the sector (see Fig 5 and 10).
- Almost 60% of workplaces reported ‘Slips, trips and falls’ to be a risk factor in their workplace; this is the most common kind of non-fatal injury (see Fig 10).
- The main psychosocial risks reported by business relate to and length/irregularity of working hours and time pressure (present in 54% and 43% of workplaces respectively).
Impacts of health and safety failings

Economic cost

Figure 14: Economic cost of workplace injury and new cases of work-related ill health in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in 2015/16 (2015 prices)

Workplace injury and ill health impose costs: both financial (for example in terms of lost output and healthcare costs) and non-financial (the monetary valuation of the human cost of injury and illness in terms of loss of quality of life, and for fatalities, loss of life). Taken together, this gives the total economic cost to society.

- The total economic cost of workplace injury and new cases of work-related illness in Agriculture, forestry and fishing in 2015/16 is estimated at £245 million (95% confidence interval £158 - £333 million), accounting for around 2% of the total cost across all industries (£14.9 billion).
- This cost is shared between individuals (e.g. the monetary valuation of the human costs), employers (e.g. sick pay costs) and government/taxpayers (e.g. healthcare costs).

Note: the costs estimates for the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector are based on a small number of sample cases hence the wide confidence interval around the estimates. For such estimates it is preferable to quote the 95% confidence interval rather than the estimate itself to reflect the uncertainty in the precise size of the estimate.

Enforcement

Figure 15: Enforcement notices issued in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector by HSE, 2016/17p

HSE and local authorities are responsible for enforcing health and safety legislation. For the most serious offences, inspectors may serve improvement notices and prohibition notices and they may prosecute (or in Scotland, report to the Procurator Fiscal with a view to prosecution).

- Provisional figures for 2016/17 show a total of 165 notices issued by HSE inspectors in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector: 124 improvement notices and 41 prohibition notices.
  - This figure is comparable to the 172 notices issued in 2015/16, but slightly down on the number issued in the three previous years (average 225 per year 2012/13-2014/15).
- There were 21 prosecution cases6 in 2016/17p; all cases resulted in a guilty verdict for at least one offence.
  - The resulting fines from these prosecutions totalled over £713,000, with an average fine per case of £34,0007.

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6 This figure reflects proceedings instituted by HSE, and in Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. Cases refer to a prosecution against a single defendant. The defendant may be an individual person or a company. There may be one or more breach of health and safety legislation (offences) in each case.

7 2016/17 is the first full year where new sentencing guidelines have been in effect. A feature of these guidelines is that fines are related to the turnover of organisations and, as a result, large organisations convicted of offences are receiving larger fines than seen prior to these guidelines.
Annex 1: Sources and definitions used

The Labour Force Survey (LFS): The LFS is a national survey run by the Office for National Statistics of currently around 37,000 households each quarter. HSE commissions annual questions in the LFS to gain a view of self-reported work-related illness and workplace injury based on individuals’ perceptions. The analysis and interpretation of these data are the sole responsibility of HSE.

- **Self-reported work-related illness:** People who have conditions which they think have been caused or made worse by their current or past work, as estimated from the LFS. Estimated total cases include long-standing as well as new cases. New cases consist of those who first became aware of their illness in the last 12 months.

- **Self-reported injuries:** Workplace injuries sustained as a result of a non-road traffic accident, as estimated by the LFS.

Specialist physician surveillance schemes (THOR): Cases of work-related respiratory and skin disease are reported by specialist physicians within The Health and Occupation Reporting network (THOR) surveillance schemes.

Ill health assessed for disablement benefit (IIDB): New cases of specified ‘prescribed diseases’ (with an established occupational cause) assessed for compensation under the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit scheme.

RIDDOR: The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, under which fatal and defined non-fatal injuries to workers and members of the public are reported by employers. Certain types of work-related injury are not reportable under RIDDOR, hence excluded from these figures. Particular exclusions include fatalities and injuries from work-related road collisions.

European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER): A large Europe-wide survey of establishments with five or more employees including all sectors of economic activity except for private households (SIC 2007 Section T) and extraterritorial organisations (SIC 2007 Section U). The surveys asks those ‘who know best’ about safety and health in establishments about the way safety and health risks are managed at their workplace, with a particular focus on psychosocial risks.

HSE Costs to Britain Model: Developed to estimate the economic costs of injury and new cases of ill health arising from current working conditions. The economic cost estimate includes estimates of both financial (or direct) costs incurred, either in terms of payments that have to be made or income/output that is lost and the monetary valuation of the impact on quality and loss of life of affected workers.

HSE Enforcement data: The main enforcing authorities are HSE and local authorities. In Scotland, HSE and local authorities investigate potential offences but cannot institute legal proceedings and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) makes the final decision whether to institute legal proceedings and which offences are taken.

Enforcement notices cover improvement, prohibition and deferred prohibition. Offences prosecuted refer to individual breaches of health and safety legislation; a prosecution case may include more than one offence. Where prosecution statistics are allocated against a particular year, unless otherwise stated, the year relates to the date of final hearing with a known outcome. They exclude those cases not completed, for example adjourned.

**Rate per 100,000:** The number of annual injuries or cases of ill health per 100,000 employees or workers

**95% confidence interval:** The range of values which we are 95% confident contains the true value, in the absence of bias. This reflects the potential error that results from surveying a sample rather than the entire population

**Statistical significance:** A difference between two sample estimates is described as ‘statistically significant’ if there is a less than 5% chance that it is due to sampling error alone.

For more information, see [www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/sources.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/sources.pdf)
Annex 2: Links to detailed tables

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National Statistics

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority’s regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Health and Safety Executive’s responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected by National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

An account of how the figures are used for statistical purposes can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/sources.htm.

For information regarding the quality guidelines used for statistics within HSE see www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/about/quality-guidelines.htm

A revisions policy and log can be seen at www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/about/revisions/

Additional data tables can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/.

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