2014 Childhood Agricultural Injuries Fact Sheet released

Farm injury rates among children younger than age 10 are on the rise, despite a continued overall decline in the rate of childhood agricultural injuries in the U.S.

These trends are highlighted in the 2014 Childhood Agricultural Injuries Fact Sheet compiled by the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety.

“There is no central database on childhood agricultural injuries,” said Barbara Lee, PhD, director of the National Children’s Center, one of 10 agricultural centers funded by NIOSH. “In putting together this fact sheet we draw upon the best available data from a variety of sources.”

Since 1998, the overall rate of non-fatal child injuries per 1,000 farms has declined by 61 percent. Dr. Lee attributes the sustained decline to several factors, including leadership and funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), high-quality research, privately-funded community-based safety programs, National Children’s Center initiatives to establish consensus-driven safety guidelines, and a willingness of farm owners and parents to bury unsafe traditions and adopt new practices involving children and young workers.

Still, on average, a child dies in an agriculture-related incident every three days, and 38 children are injured each day (approximately 115 deaths and 13,996 injuries per year).

Rates of injury among children ages 10 and younger rose from 6.6 per 1,000 farms in 2009 to 11.3 per 1,000 in 2012, according to the 2012 Childhood Agricultural Injury Survey recently released by NIOSH. More than half of these injuries were incurred by non-working children, including, for example, young children brought into the worksite by parents in order to “keep an eye on them.”

In the wake of several high-profile runover deaths this summer in which children as young as 1 were riding tractors as passengers, the National Children’s Center is renewing its campaign to “Keep Kids Away from Tractors.”

The economic toll of childhood agricultural injuries is also heavy, costing U.S. society an estimated $1 billion per year and deaths cost society $420 million per year (2005 dollars).

For additional child agricultural injury data, go to http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/childag.