

# Animals Involved in 20 Agricultural Fatalities (FY 94 - FY 02)

## Nebraska Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE)

William Hetzler, MA Arthur Davis, CSC, HCSS

Nebraska Workforce Development, Department of Labor, Safety and Labor Standards

### Abstract

**Nebraska Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (NE FACE) Program: Animal Involved Farm Fatalities in Nebraska, October 1993 through June 2002 -- Davis, A; Hetzler, WE**

**Background:** Nebraska has over 53,000 farms scattered throughout a wide area and farming is one of our most hazardous occupations. Farmers and ranchers perform thousands of daily tasks, many of those around animals. Whether on a livestock or grain producing farm, animal-related incidents are the leading cause of serious farm injuries to both children and adults in Nebraska. These traumatic incidents often result in disabling or fatal injuries.

**Purpose:** To identify and describe trends in animal-related fatalities and disseminate preventive strategies to those who can intervene in the workplace.

**Methods:** Nebraska entered into a cooperative agreement with NIOSH in 1993. Using protocols developed by the NIOSH FACE program, animal-related fatality cases were identified and First Reports and in some cases on-site investigations were conducted. Using the Haddon model, investigators were able to identify multiple causes and develop multiple prevention strategies to help prevent similar types of deaths.

**Results:** 20 cases were identified. 14 cases involved direct involvement with the animal, while 6 involved indirect involvement. 13 cases involved cattle, 4 horses, 1 hogs, 1 dog and 1 llama.

**Conclusions:** Recommendations to prevent future similar fatalities include complying with national safety standards and educating both youth and adults in animal safety practices. To disseminate the recommendations, the NE FACE program developed a FACE FACTS sheet that summarized these 20 cases and detailed the prevention recommendations and collaborated with the Omaha and Lincoln Safety Councils who distributed 2,500 FACE FACTS to businesses throughout Nebraska and Western Iowa. The FACE FACTS sheet will be placed on the NE FACE web site and numerous presentations will be given to the Nebraska agricultural community. This poster was presented at the Nebraska Agromedicine Consortium Annual Meeting and will also be displayed at Husker Harvest Days, the largest Agricultural show in the Midwest.



**Beasts of burden, livestock, pets...no matter which name they go by, farm animals have been involved in 20 fatal accidents in Nebraska since October 1993. Even the most gentle and docile animal can react unpredictably, causing serious injuries when their normal environment and routines are changed. Here are a few examples:**

### Case Examples

#### Case 1: Farmer Killed Herding Cow and Calf Back to Pen

An 85-year-old farmer was herding a cow with a new born calf back to the pen using his farm truck. The truck broke down and he started to walk to his farm to get help. A passerby picked him up. The farmer decided to physically herd them the remaining distance, and was dropped off next to the pair. As the vehicle operator pulled away, they noticed the cow had the victim down on the ground attacking him.

#### Case 2: Farmer Suffers Broken Neck During Rescue Attempt

A 70-year-old farmer noticed the lid to a cistern removed in the barnyard where he kept hogs. It is believed he saw several hogs in the bottom and attempted to climb down and rescue them. When found several hours later, there were hogs, both alive and dead, inside the cistern with the victim. The victim had a

### Case Examples

broken neck, believed to have been caused when more curious hogs fell in on top of him.

#### Case 3: Dog Activates Equipment Controls Killing Farmer

A 57-year-old farmer was using a "stacker" to stack corn stocks into bales. After every 3 loads the stacker had to be cleaned out. The victim got out of the tractor's cab and entered the stacker. It is believed the stacker began to close, and while exiting, the victim's foot got caught. After not returning home by 3:30 a.m., his spouse went to the field to find the tractor running but no victim. She notified authorities and they found the victim crushed between the rear gates of the stacker. It is believed his dog, which had been riding in the cab, bumped or leaned against the control lever, activating it.

#### Case 4: Llama attacks farmer

A 67-year-old rancher who raised llamas was kicked in the back on his ranch by a male llama, suffering massive internal injuries.

### Recommendations

Know how to approach farm animals safely, avoiding their "blind spots." Avoid their "kicking region." Always "announce" your approach using a "touch" to their front or side.

Always leave yourself an "out." When inside a handling facility or enclosed area leave yourself a way to get out safely if necessary. Keep a physical barrier between yourself and livestock.

When moving hogs, always use gates or panels to guide them. Design all pens and handling facilities using recommended plans that maximize safety for animals and handlers.

Keep children and visitors away from livestock handling areas. Label these areas to warn of kicking and biting dangers.

Be aware of female animals and their young (maternal instincts). Male animals are typically larger and more aggressive.

Ensure that adequate communication means are available, numbers posted and employees trained to summon help.

### For More Information

For Nebraska FACE information please contact:

Art Davis or Bill Hetzler  
Nebraska Workforce Development  
Department of Labor  
Safety and Labor Standards  
5404 Cedar St., 3rd Floor  
Omaha, NE 68106-2365

Phone: (402) 595-1216 (Art) (402) 595-2960 (Bill)  
FAX (402) 595-3999

Web Site: [www.NebraskaWorkforce.com](http://www.NebraskaWorkforce.com)

For NIOSH FACE information please contact:

Surveillance and Field Investigation Branch  
NIOSH, Division of Safety Research  
1095 Willowdale Road, M/S P-180  
Morgantown, WV 26505-2888  
Phone: (304) 285-5916 or FAX (304) 285-6047  
Web Site: [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)