

Farming in older age: Health in focus, safety in action

This information sheet highlights the need to recognise and respect age-related changes by **adapting your work to work for you**.

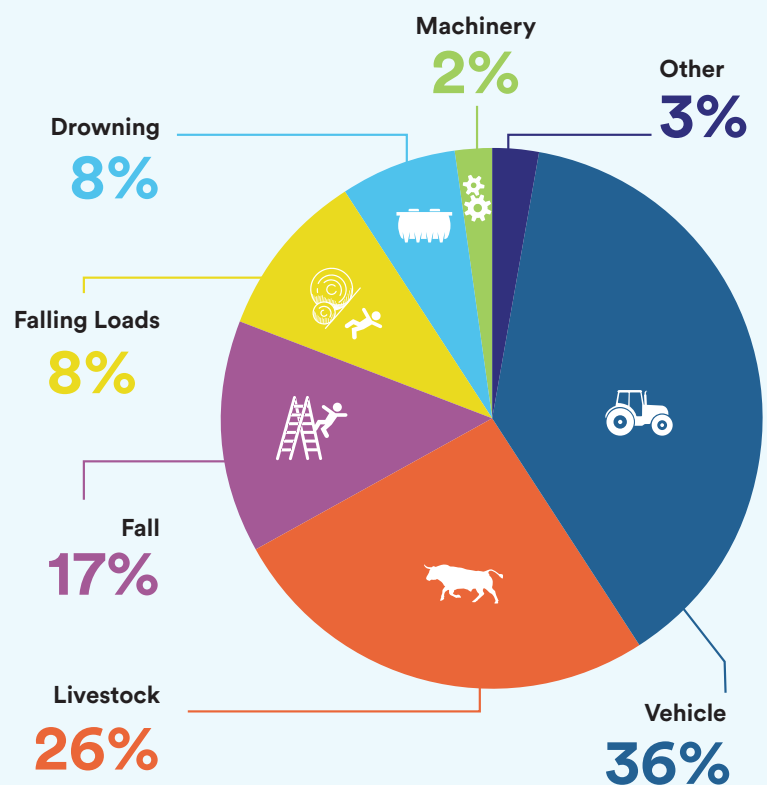


The risk of having a fatal farm accident is greater for older farmers.

From 2015-2024, 53% of fatal accidents on farms involved persons aged 65 or older. While the risk is greater for older farmers, it can be effectively managed. By understanding and acknowledging changes to health and ability, older farmers can make informed choices about how they work and reduce the risk of accidents.

The statistics provided in this information sheet categorise Older Persons as those aged 65 years or more, in line with the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

**Farm fatalities 2015-2024, >65 years
(HSA statistics) Total: 91 fatalities**



From 2015 – 2024
vehicles, livestock and falls
were the biggest contributors to farm fatalities.



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‘Hiring a contractor with the correct equipment, not only makes financial sense, it means I can manage my workload and concentrate on other areas which provide a better return. It makes the best use of my time’.

William, dairy farmer, 65

Risk assess **your farm tasks** with **your health and ability** in focus.

People of the same age can have very different physical and mental capabilities.

Age-related changes can impact **strength**, **endurance** and **flexibility** (affecting heavy physical work), **vision** (making it difficult to see in low light), **hearing** (communication challenges), **balance** (increased falls risk), **memory** (impacting decision making) and **reaction times** (slower responses while operating machinery/handling livestock).

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‘Investing in equipment and facilities saves a lot of time and definitely makes it easier on me. I can do more on the farm, as jobs are less demanding physically’.



Larry, beef & tillage farmer, 73

ADAPTING your work to work for you means:

Acknowledge age-related health issues and have regular health, hearing and eyesight checks.

Discuss farm systems, tasks and hazards with your family and farm workers, with a focus on health, safety and ability. Seek support when you need it.

Assess your need to hire competent contractors for specialised work and tasks you find particularly demanding.

Prepare for emergencies, especially when working alone, e.g. carry a charged mobile phone.

Take notice of your working ability, it can change daily based on health context e.g. illness, medications, joint stiffness, fatigue levels.

Invest in equipment and facilities e.g. tools which reduce the need for manual handling and keep vehicles and machinery in good working order.

Navigate ageing by adapting work practices and farming systems to reduce physical and mental demands and benefit from your experience.

Guide younger farmers when they need help. Succession planning, (look at all options available) can help manage workload and build for the future.



BeSMART.ie

Free Online Safety Statement and Risk Assessment Tool

The TAMS Farm Safety Capital Investment Scheme provides 60% grant aid for farm safety related investments. Examples of eligible equipment include fixed and mobile handling units for cattle and sheep and yard lights. For more information, visit www.gov.ie/TAMS

For further information:
Visit www.hsa.ie/farmsafety