Hazards and Eye Protection on the Farm Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. People involved in agriculture and farm-related activities are at greater risk of eye injuries.
2. Eye injuries are common and a leading cause of preventable unilateral blindness worldwide. Trauma is more common during the farming season.
3. Stick injuries are common in children and farmers, sometimes causing a penetrating injury that can result in the affected eye quickly becoming infected. Blunt trauma is common among children, who can be injured with a flying object. The dusty environment is a common cause of corneal, conjunctival and sub-tarsal foreign bodies injuries.
4. Due to working in the sun, dust, and wind, eye injuries are common among agricultural workers. Short-term conditions include eye irritation and sensitivity, while long-term conditions such as cataracts and retinal damage are also possible.
5. Farmers are at risk for eye injury from activities such as grinding and cutting metal, welding, and drilling and from other diverse activities on the farm for which eye hazards may not have been anticipated.

STATS

- Unpublished data from the National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey showed that, of the participants who had a history of eye injury, over half (53%) were farmers.
- Of those without a history of eye injury, only 39% were farmers.
- A 5-year hospital review of people with eye injuries showed that more than two-thirds of all eye injuries were sustained on a farm. Although non-penetrating eye injuries were more

common, 15% of people were already blind in the injured eye at presentation.

- In a multi-centre retrospective review of ocular trauma among older people, eye injury most commonly occurred on the farm (37.2%).
- Farm activities of grinding or cutting metal accounted for 11 (27.5%) of the eye injuries, welding for 3 (7.5%), and drilling for 2 (5%). The other 24 eye injuries were related to diverse farm activities.