Ladder Safety for Agriculture Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. **Damaged ladder parts can collapse under load**, especially on farms where ladders are exposed to moisture, rust, and heavy wear — leading to sudden structural failure during use.
2. **Uneven or soft ground makes ladders shift or sink**, a common farm hazard when working on dirt, gravel, mud, or grass instead of firm, level surfaces.
3. **Carrying tools or buckets while climbing removes proper hand contact**, increasing the chance of slipping or losing balance on farm ladders.
4. **Using the wrong ladder height forces workers to overreach**, a leading cause of sideways tipping when accessing barn lofts, silos, or fruit trees.
5. **Wet or muddy boots reduce traction on ladder rungs**, especially around irrigation areas, cleaning zones, or early-morning farm work.
6. **Metal ladders used near electrical lines or equipment can energize**, creating a severe electrocution hazard around irrigation pumps, lighting, or power lines.
7. **Poor ladder inspections let cracks, rot, and loose rungs go unnoticed**, increasing the risk of failure — especially in wooden ladders commonly stored in barns.

STATS

- In 2020, there were 161 fatal work injuries in the US involving ladders as the primary source, with agriculture contributing significantly due to orchard and farm maintenance tasks.
- Nonfatal ladder injuries in the US remained stable at 22,710 cases in 2020, many in agricultural settings like crop harvesting where uneven terrain increases slip risks.

- From 2020 to 2024, ladder-related accidents resulting in serious injury or death decreased by 21% in the US, though agriculture saw persistent risks from portable ladder use on farms.
- In Canada, approximately 14,000 workers are injured annually from falls from heights, with ladders involved in the majority, including agricultural operations like barn repairs.
- Agriculture-related fatalities in Canada averaged 70 per year from 2006-2020, with ladder falls as a leading cause in non-transport incidents on farms.
- Ladders account for about 2% of all occupational accidents in Canada, equating to roughly one serious injury per 2,000 agricultural workers annually due to farm-specific hazards.