Migrant Worker Struck By Farm Vehicle

INCIDENT

Ana Maria Barrera-Bogarin, aged either 60 or 61, had been working on a lettuce farm in Somerton, Arizona for just two weeks when she went to work on November 26, 2013. She never returned. Barrera-Bogarin was fatally struck by a farm vehicle while walking to her break area. She died, according to the Yuma County Sheriff's office, after pushing a co-worker out of the way of an oncoming tractor.

Barrera-Bogarin and a witness were walking to their break area and did not notice a tractor was backing up with a produce trailer. They attempted to beat the trailer, but were unable to and Barrera-Bogarin pushed the witness out of harm's way… Barrera-Bogarin was struck by the trailer, causing her to fall. She then was run over by the trailer.

Barrera-Bogarin, who lived in San Luis, Arizona, was taken to the Yuma Regional Medical Center, and pronounced dead on arrival. Her co-worker, identified only as Hohana N., returned to work the next day. She appeared on KYMA-TV to describe her deceased co-worker as "an angel." "I keep thinking if she hadn't pulled me away, I would've been the one to die," Hohana said.

Not surprisingly, there were no pictures, acknowledgments or tributes provided or given for Ana Maria Barrera-Bogarin. She died as she lived and worked in the shadows of a billion-dollar country wide business. But Hohana assuredly met an angel on earth.

NEED TO KNOW

Ana Maria Barrera-Bogarin was among the often invisible seasonal and migrant workforce who pluck and peck fruits and vegetables in the fields of America. She died while working in these produce fields.

BUSINESS / REGULATIONS

Hohana N and Barrera-Bogarin were both working for a California-based produce firm at the time of the tragically.

The company inexplicably was not identified in the news accounts of the incident. The industry that Hohana N and Barrera-Bogarin work in supply America with fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. An industry that garners upwards of 30 billion dollars annually.

There are more than three million seasonal and migrant farm workers in the United States, according to the National Agricultural Worker Survey, conducted by JBS international for the U.S. Department of Labor. Seventy-two percent are foreign born, with 68 percent coming from Mexico. One third are U.S citizens, and nearly half are working without legal authorization.

STATISTICS

Farming, ranching and agricultural management are among the ten most dangerous occupations in the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), with a fatality rate of 21.3 deaths per 100,000 workers in 2012. The fatality rate for all U.S. workers, reports the BLS, is 3.2 deaths per 100,000 workers.

In 2012, reports the BLS, there were 204 deaths in the United States among workers engaged in crop production.

PREVENTION

The procedure industry has many safety challenges that need to be addressed, identified and solved. The death of Ana Maria Barrera-Bogarin was caused by a vehicle/pedestrian accident. But the most serious workplace hazards involve the exposure of workers to heat stroke. It is a significant risk for crop workers.

The U.S Centers for Disease Control reports that 68 crop production workers died from exposure to environmental heat between 1992 and 2006, with a fatality rate from this condition that is 20 times greater than the rest of the U.S. workforce.

Despite the risks of working outdoors – often in summer months and at high temperatures – California is the only state in the U.S. that requires employers to provide water and shade breaks to crop workers. California and Minnesota are the only states that have specific standards covering occupational heat exposure.