

**Project Number:** 9278847

**Project Title:** Emerging Issues in Injury Surveillance

**Division:** DSR

**Project Officer (PO):** Dawn Castillo

**PO Degree:** Masters

**PO Area of Expertise (scientific discipline):** Public Health

**Project Start Date:** 10/1/1985

**Project End Date:** 9/30/2015

**Total Budget over the Project Period:** \$213,751

**Goal/Sub-Goal:**

Goal, Priority Populations At Risk: To reduce the risk of negative occupational health outcomes among subgroups of the U.S. working population determined to be at very high risk for occupational injury and illness, or been found to be underserved by traditional occupational health approaches.

Sub-Goal, Protection of Children on Farms, Understanding the Exposures: To prevent injuries, illnesses, and chronic diseases among children working on farms by understanding and reporting the hazards that children on farms are exposed to and controls to eliminate or reduce these exposures.

**Challenge/Issue:**

This project provides for the improvement of existing surveillance systems, development of improved new surveillance methods, and better dissemination of surveillance and field investigation research to users. It should not only allow DSR to address important emerging issues in occupational injury, but also help identify gaps in our knowledge that need further effort. It will play a major role in NIOSH responses to various recommendations and legal standards directed at occupational injury prevention. The project relates to the NIOSH NORA priority areas of Traumatic Injuries and Surveillance Research Methods; and the Healthy People 2010 Objectives aimed at reducing fatal and nonfatal occupational injuries (10.1, 10.2).

**Activities:**

This project supported work on developing and implementing the NIOSH Surveillance Strategic Plan published in 2001. This plan highlighted the need for improved surveillance in the agricultural sector. This project subsequently supported the development of a project proposal that was funded to conduct surveillance of adult farm workers (CAN 927 7135). This project supported continued work on NIOSH recommendations for changes to child labor laws that was initiated in CAN VLB 8806 and continued in CAN 927 7187R. NIOSH made recommendations for numerous changes to existing child labor laws in the agricultural sector based on analyses of numerous occupational surveillance databases and literature reviews. Legislators and young worker safety advocates continue to call for U.S. Department of Labor action upon NIOSH recommendations. The Department of Labor reports that they are actively considering NIOSH recommendations for changes to child labor regulations, including those specific to agriculture.

**Collaborators**

Governmental Agency (other)

- US Department of Labor

### **Intermediate Outcomes:**

In the 3-years since its release, over 31,000 copies of the NIOSH Young Worker Alert have been distributed. Examples of groups through which it has been disseminated include:

- Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) Training and Education -- 100 copies distributed in their Teen Train-the-Trainer program
- Virginia Department of Labor & Industry -- 50 copies used for consultation program
- Massachusetts Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation program -- 560 copies sent to the Massachusetts Department of Education
- Nebraska Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation program – distributed at every presentation, briefing, or booth attended by program staff, including “Husker Harvest Days” and “Farm Safety Day Camps”

In 2003, the Farmworker Justice Fund called for DOL to revise the Hazardous Orders for youth in agricultural occupations, citing the NIOSH recommendations as the basis for these revisions [Farmworker Justice Fund, Inc. 2003].

In 2005, the Child Labor Coalition (CLC) prepared a report entitled *Protecting Working Children in the United States: Is the Government's Indifference to the Safety and Health of Working Children Violating an International Treaty* [Child Labor Coalition 2005]. The CLC is a group of non-governmental organizations whose mission is to end child labor exploitation in the U.S. and abroad and to protect the health, education, and safety of working minors. The CLC report was submitted in June 2005 to the ILO Committee of Experts, which is an independent body charged with examining the application of ILO conventions in member states. In the report, the CLC questions whether the U.S. is in compliance with ILO Convention No. 182 (Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour), with particular emphasis on Hazardous Orders and children working in agriculture. Several pages of the report are devoted to a discussion of needed revisions to agricultural HOs 1, 6, 7, and 9. Data and rationale from the NIOSH Hazardous Orders report are used as the primary justification for changes. The report urges USDOL, ESA to take action on NIOSH recommendations, particularly those which focus on the agricultural HOs.

At the 2006 annual meeting of the ILO in Geneva, Switzerland, the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards discussed the U.S. application of Convention No. 182 (Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour) as it relates to children performing hazardous work in agriculture. The Committee of Experts report used as a resource by the ILO Conference Committee mentions the NIOSH recommendations on Hazardous Orders, noting that the U.S. Government has indicated that it is “in the process of determining which recommendations concerning the Hazardous Orders will be presented in a first round of proposed rules” [International Labour Organization 2006, p. 231]. The Conference Committee requested that the U.S. Government provide copies of any new HOs when adopted. In addition, the Conference Committee requested the U.S. government to “indicate, in its next report to the Committee of Experts, the measures taken or envisaged (including but not limited to legislation) to ensure that work performed in particular in the agricultural sector was prohibited for children under 18 years where it was hazardous work within the meaning of the Convention” [International Labour Organization 2006, p. 230].

**End Outcomes:**

None given

**External Factors:**

None given

**Future Directions:**

There continue to be a number of gaps in agricultural injury surveillance. Surveillance is specifically needed of migrant and seasonal workers.

The project will continue to monitor progress on the implementation of the NIOSH Child Labor Recommendation provided to the USDOL in 2002.