

# Worker Injuries on Thoroughbred Farms: What are we learning from farms?

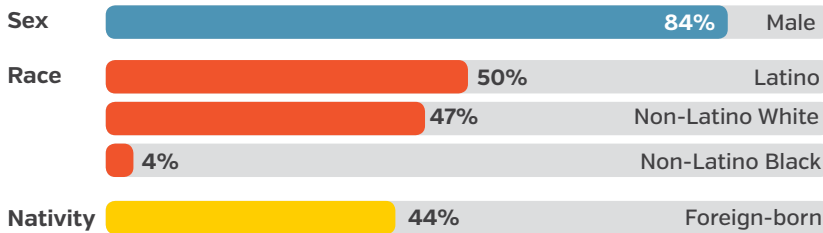
This is part of a series of research briefs reporting the findings from the Thoroughbred Worker Health and Safety Study. **The goal of this brief is to describe the nature of injuries reported on farms, who was injured, and how.** Farms that kept injury documentation, either through OSHA logs, workers' compensation logs, or in-house tracking documents, voluntarily provided this data to researchers. Others provided narrative descriptions of recent injuries, which were then coded by the research team. In all, 22 farms provided information about 284 injuries.

### Situation

*"A guy turned a yearling out, it was really windy and blowing and he got in a hurry and he didn't take his time and the horse kicked him. He had to get some sutures on the side of his eye."*

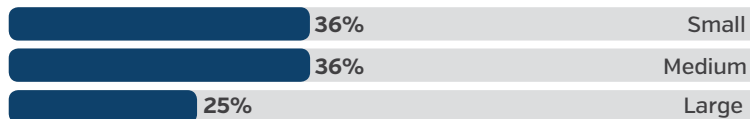
-Small Farm Owner/Manager

## Worker Characteristics Across All 22 Farms (n=568)



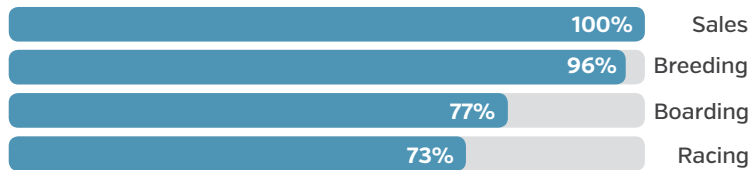
## Farm Characteristics (n=22)

### Farm size by # of year-round employees\*



\*1-10 workers= small farm, 11-25 workers = medium farm, >25 workers = large farm

### Thoroughbred operation includes:



### Also raise other crops/commodities:



### Suggested Solutions

Continuously inform workers:

- You value patience over speed
- Weather can make horses skittish and unpredictable
- When entering the pasture, turn the horse to face the gate before letting go to provide an exit and remain out of kicking range.

## Thoroughbred Worker Health & Safety Study

**WHO?** Researchers at the University of Kentucky and University of Maryland, guided by Industry and Community Advisory Councils, funded by CDC/NIOSH

**WHAT?** Research study to identify farm safety and health challenges, work organization, and farms' best practices

**WHEN?** 2011-2016

**WHERE?** Thoroughbred Farms

**HOW?** Interviews with farm representatives & workers

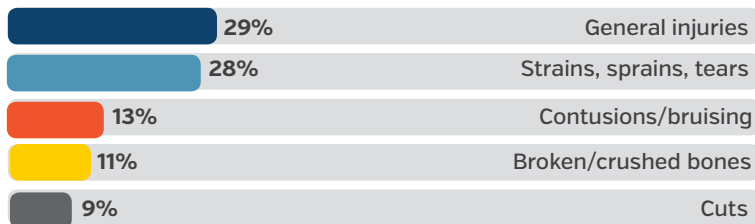
**WHY?** To improve worker health & safety & reduce costs for farms



## Injury Specifics\*

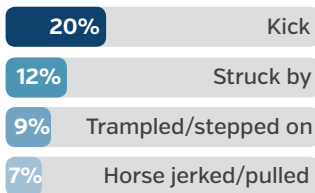
Of the 284 injuries documented, the most frequent diagnoses, causes, and locations are described below.

### Top Injury Diagnoses

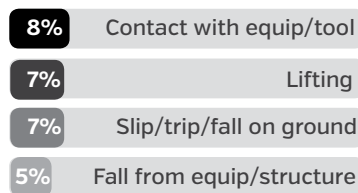


### Top Causes of Injuries

#### Top Horse-Related Injuries (57%)

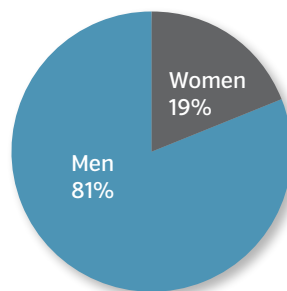
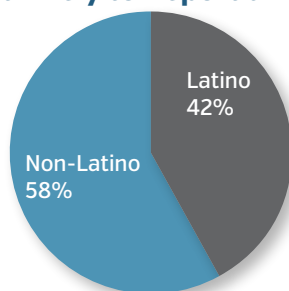


#### Top Non-Horse-Related Injuries (43%)

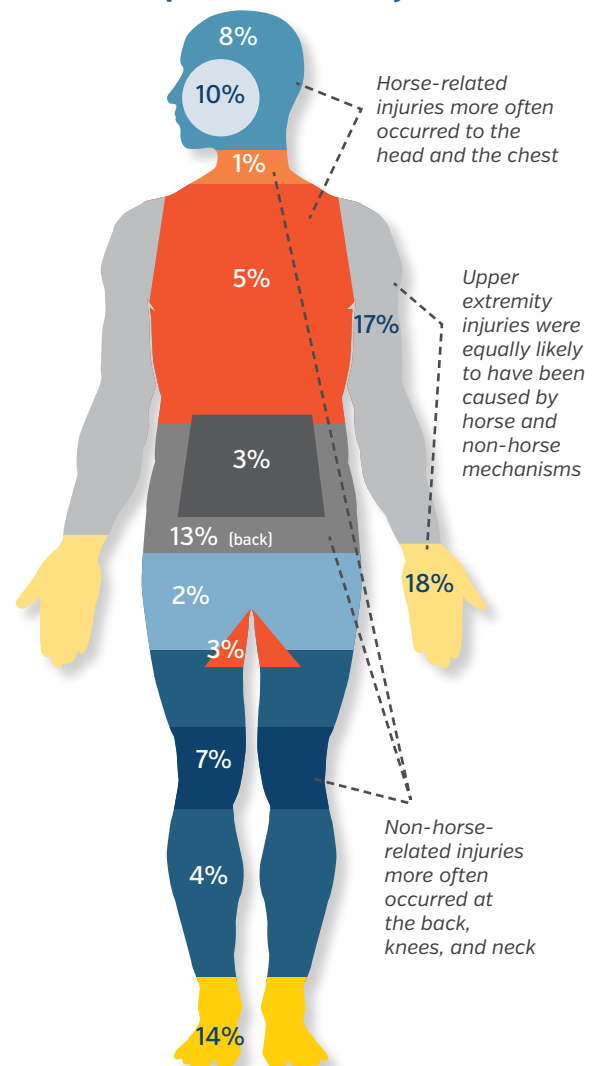


\* % listed are among all injuries. However, they may not equal 100 because not all categories are listed.

### Most Likely to Report an Injury



### Top Locations of Injuries



### Safety Tips

- Teach workers to hold a horse close, but to let go if the horse pulls to the end of the shank.
- Instruct workers on how to properly lift, but if possible, change the environment to avoid awkward postures.
- Provide personal protective equipment such as non-slip gloves or work boots with good tread.

### Management Tips

- Give workers permission to prioritize patience over speed. Even if you think this is clear to them, it may not be.
- Repeat safety messages - a lot. It may take hearing a specific tip several times for workers to internalize it.
- Make horse behavior a central part of the job training.

### Horse Safety Resources

**Saddle Up SAFELY**  
[ukhealthcare.uky.edu/community/programs/SUS/](http://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/community/programs/SUS/)

**How-to Videos**  
[www.discoverhorses.com/all-about-horses/how-to-videos/](http://www.discoverhorses.com/all-about-horses/how-to-videos/)

**Basic Horse Safety Manual**  
[www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/4af/4af05ma/4af05ma.htm](http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/4af/4af05ma/4af05ma.htm)

### Acknowledgements

We thank the participating farms and workers who made this research possible.

This work is supported by the Southeast Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention, University of Kentucky College of Public Health, under CDC/NIOSH Cooperative Agreement 5U540H007547-14. Its contents do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC/NIOSH.

For more information, please contact Dr. Jennifer Swanberg at [jswanberg@ssw.umaryland.edu](mailto:jswanberg@ssw.umaryland.edu), Jess Miller Clouser at [jess.clouser@uky.edu](mailto:jess.clouser@uky.edu), or visit [www.workersafetyandhealth.com](http://www.workersafetyandhealth.com).