

Work factors that increase risk of injury on horse farms: What are we learning from workers?

This is a 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 characteristics of Thoroughbred farm workers experiencing a work-related injury in the past year and to describe factors that may influence worker risk for sustaining an injury.** All 225 Latino Thoroughbred farm workers who participated in the Thoroughbred Worker Health and Safety Study were asked about work-related injuries resulting in medical attention. Workers were also asked about work factors that may be associated with increased risk of injury.

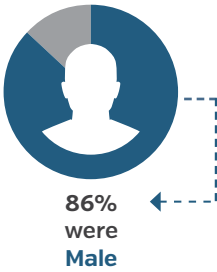
Work-Related Injuries



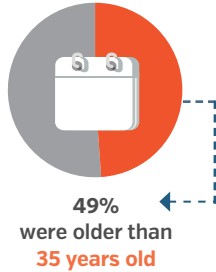
of Latino Thoroughbred workers received medical attention for a work-related injury in the past year.

Worker characteristics

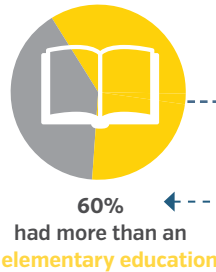
Gender



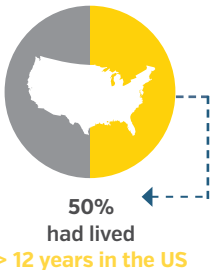
Age



Education



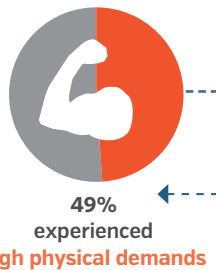
Length of time in US



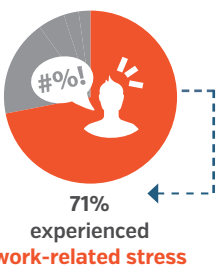
Longer tenure at farm



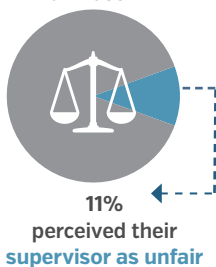
High physical demands*



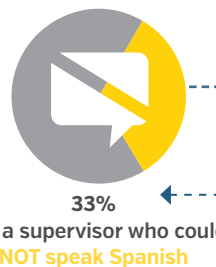
High work-related stress



Perceived supervisor fairness**



Supervisor Spanish ability



"I was taking a weanling to its mother. I let it go and turned to see where its mother was. When I turned back toward the weanling it kicked me with its back legs, opening my head and I had to get 6 stitches."
- Thoroughbred worker

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 & health challenges, work organization & farms' best practices

WHEN? 2011-2016

WHERE? Thoroughbred Farms

HOW? Interviews with farm representatives & workers

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



* Physical demands include moving loads more than 50lbs; hard physical work; standing for a long time, etc.
** Workers were asked if their supervisor treated them fairly.

Factors Associated with Injury in past year



Work-related stress

Workers who felt stressed because of work were **6.7x** more likely to be injured in the past year.



What Do These Findings Mean?

Experiencing **work-related stress** may distract workers or cause them to cut corners. Reasons why workers may feel stressed at work could include long work hours, feeling pressure to work well or quickly, or having poor relationships at work.



Perceived supervisor as unfair

Workers who thought they had an unfair supervisor were **3.3x** more likely to be injured in the past year.



Although few workers perceived their **supervisors as unfair**, those that did were more likely to be injured in the past year. Reasons workers may perceive their supervisors as unfair could include believing they are being assigned to difficult tasks or being overlooked for promotions. Conversely, employees who perceive their managers as fair tend to be more committed and have better morale.



Longer tenure at current farm

Workers who'd been at their current farm more than 4.2 years were **2.7x** more likely to be injured in the past year.



Workers with **longer tenure at current farm** may have more responsibilities or be assigned more difficult tasks [e.g., working with more challenging horses]. They may also have longer exposures to workplace stressors, which may increase risk of injury.



Spanish-speaking Supervisor

Workers with a supervisor who **DID NOT** speak Spanish were **2.3x** more likely to be injured in the past year.



Latino workers without a **Spanish-speaking supervisor** may not understand health and safety messages and may be embarrassed to admit it. They may also be reluctant to voice safety concerns, particularly if they do not speak English well.

Management Tips

- Provide bilingual and graphic-based resources and offer frequent, bilingual health and safety training to your workforce.
- Encourage workers and managers to attend English or Spanish classes (See Brief #7). Some farms offer an hourly wage to workers or managers who attend language classes.
- Help workers find ways to manage work loads and work stress such as adjusting schedules, prioritizing job tasks, or clarifying roles and responsibilities.
- Create a fair, positive work environment and provide equal opportunities to all workers. Promote cultural sensitivity and awareness.
- Provide supervisor training and professional development [e.g., train supervisors on handling adverse situations or inclusivity].

Resources

Safety on the Farm: A bilingual guide in images for the Throughbred Worker.
workersafetyandhealth.com

KEMI Sample Horse Safety program

- *English:* www.kemi.com/safety/resources/sample_horse_safety_program.pdf
- *Spanish:* www.kemi.com/safety/resources/sample_horse_safety_program-sp.pdf

Blue Grass Farms Charities

Offers bilingual worker cultural training courses
[859] 219-0910
www.bgfcky.org

Horse Sense Training

Free courses on working safely with horses
noncredit.msu.edu/listSections.action?catalogid=3&offerin-gid=801

Groom Elite Horsemen's Education Program

Classes to enhance grooms' professional skills
www.groomelite.com/groom.shtml

Acknowledgements

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