

# The Festival of Safety

Work Safe Week,  
October 25-29, 2010





# Farm safety – why we need to do something about it

## “Farm fatalities - the last straw”

Ross Pilkington

Director Manufacturing, Logistics & Agriculture Division

# Today

What does WorkSafe do?

The big picture

Regional and farm fatalities

Injuries

What are we doing about it?

Our expectations – your obligations



# WorkSafe Victoria's job

## WorkSafe:

- **Administers Victoria's workplace health and safety & workers compensation legislation**
- **Helps prevent workplace deaths and injuries**
- **Educates through guidance material, events and enforcement**
- **Investigate incidents**
- **Prosecutes serious breaches of the law**
- **Provides financial and other support for injured workers.**

# Victoria's big picture

- 2.4 million workers
- 240,000 workplaces
- 46,000 visits to businesses last year
- 13,500 Improvement and Prohibition Notices
- 149 OHS prosecutions last year
- 60,000 phone calls to the advisory service
- 600,000 individual website visits
- 21,500 requests for publications
- Regional offices in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Mildura, Shepparton, Traralgon, Wangaratta & Warrnambool.



# Principles of health and safety

**All people have the  
highest level of  
protection**

**Those in control are  
responsible for  
eliminating risks**

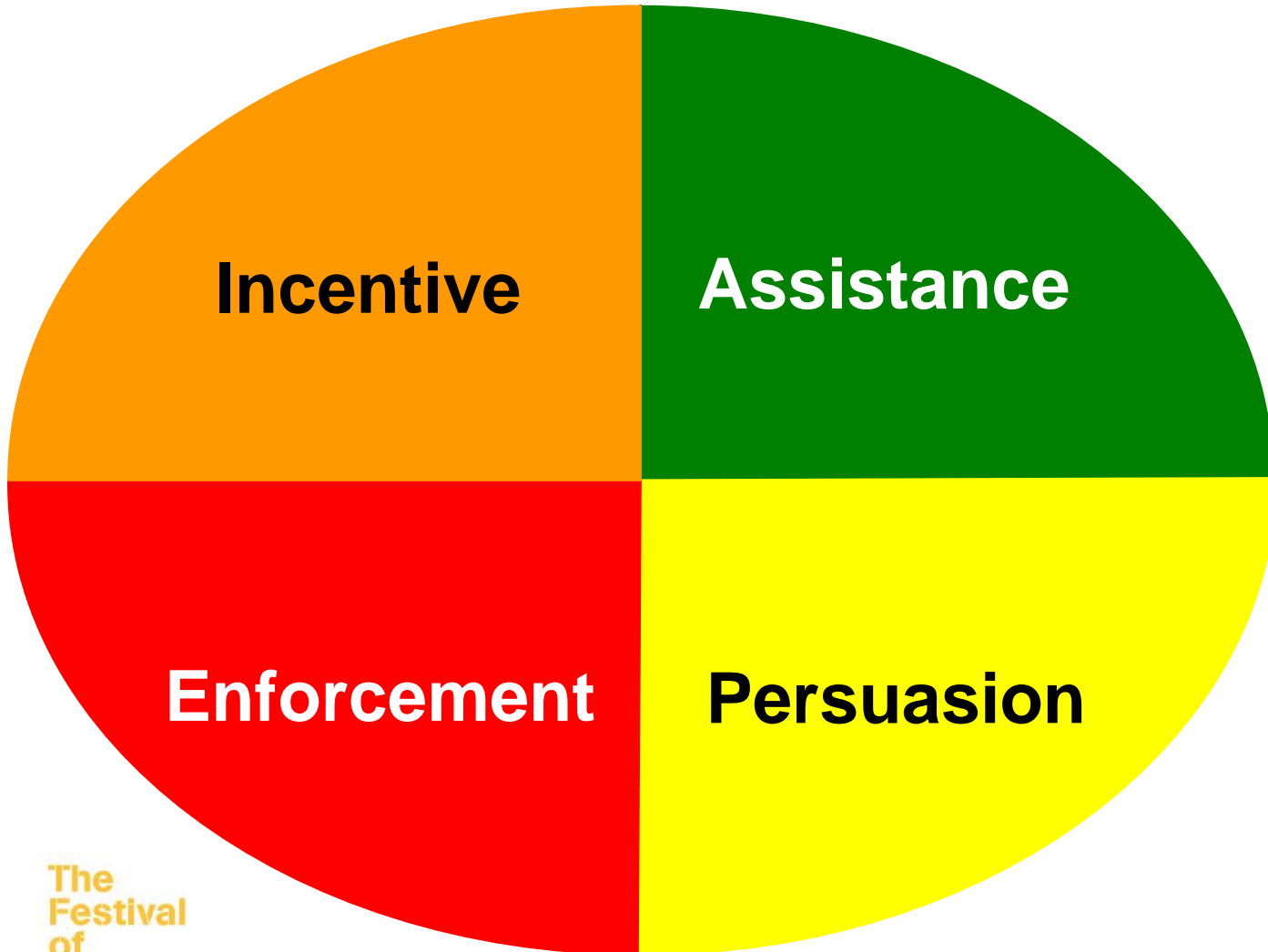
**OHS Act  
2004**

**Employees are  
entitled to  
representation**

**Employers should  
be proactive**

**Information should  
be shared about  
risks and controls**

# A balanced approach



WorkSafe uses all of these tools because different people need different things at different times.

**Incentive** – Small business grants and education.

**Assistance** – hands-on help from the inspectors, Work Safe Week, sponsorship (VFF, CWA, field days).

**Persuasion** – Media and advertising, targeted campaigns.

**Enforcement** – Notices, potential prosecution.

# WorkSafe's objectives

We can help the agriculture sector to:

- improve/increase OHS awareness, knowledge, skills;
- build the capacity to manage hazards & risks;
- Implement systems & controls;
- Take 'ownership' of H&S for your own, your family's and industry's benefit.
- Doing this will result in fewer claims, injuries, fatalities and trauma for regional families and communities.



# Issues in agriculture

- Agriculture reported **9** fatalities to WorkSafe in 2009-10 (up from 7 in 2008-09). There were 26 work-related deaths state-wide, down from 27.
- Two thirds of deaths in agriculture are men over 40.
- The industry's median age is substantially higher than others. A high proportion of these are sole-traders and not registered with WorkSafe for workers compensation purposes.

(Yes, there is no ROPS on the tractor)



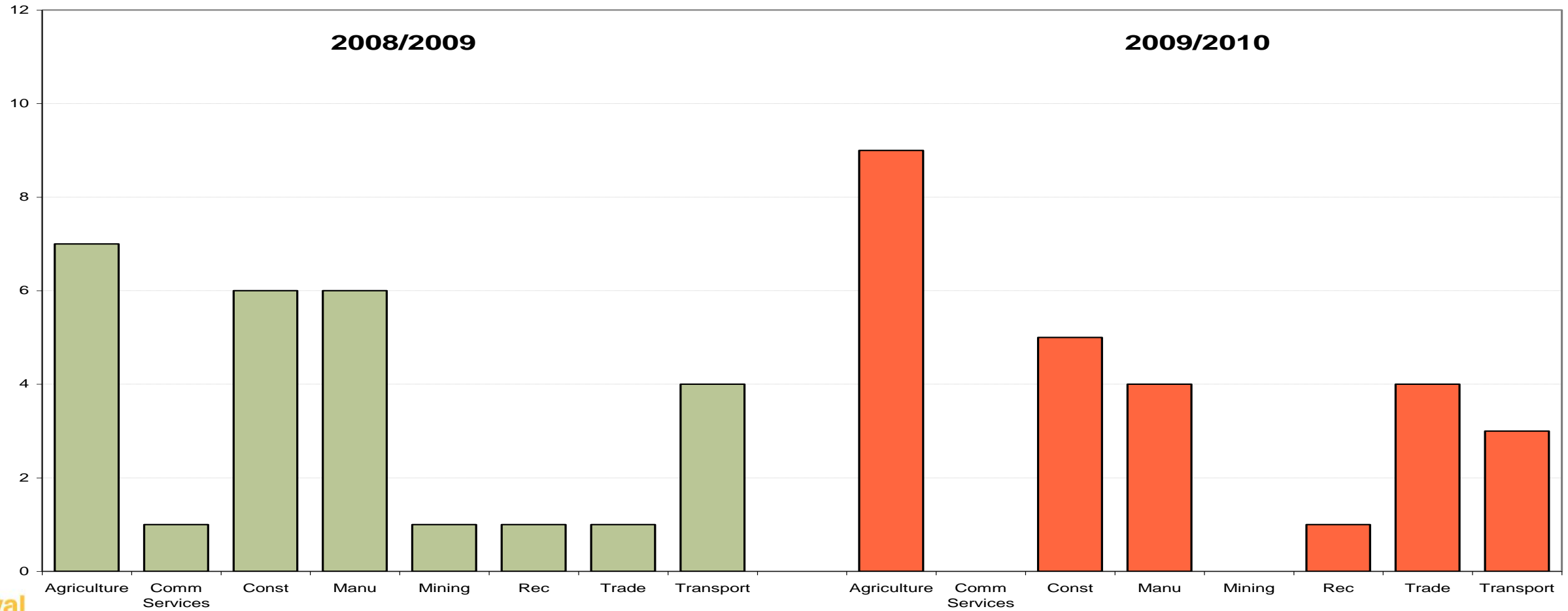
# Giving your life to the land



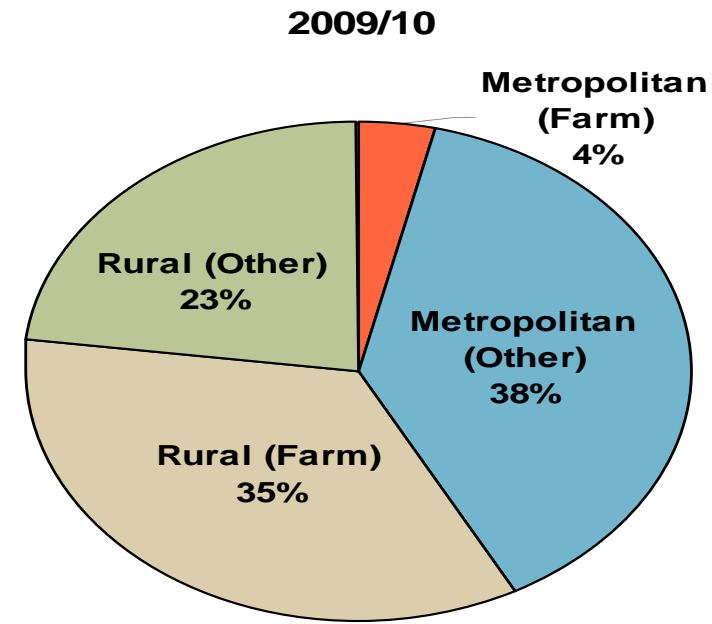
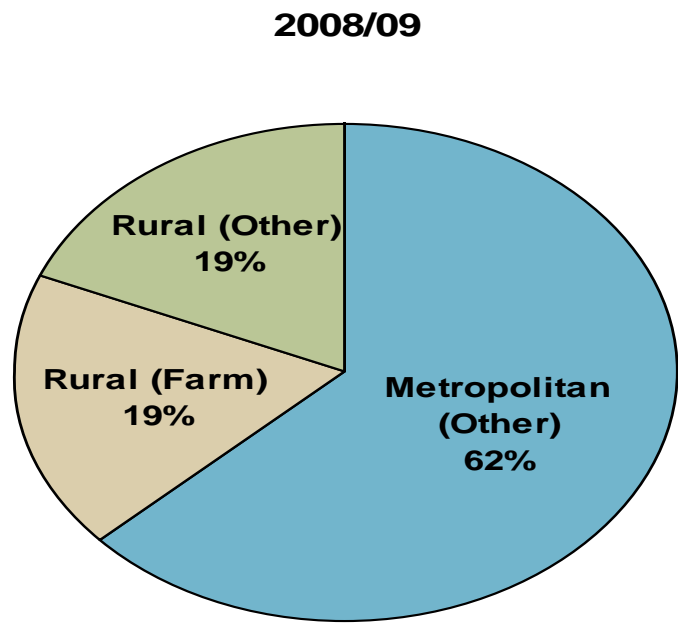
**FACT: Most safety improvements cost nothing more than a bit of discussion, thought and doing something**



# Most reported fatalities are in agriculture

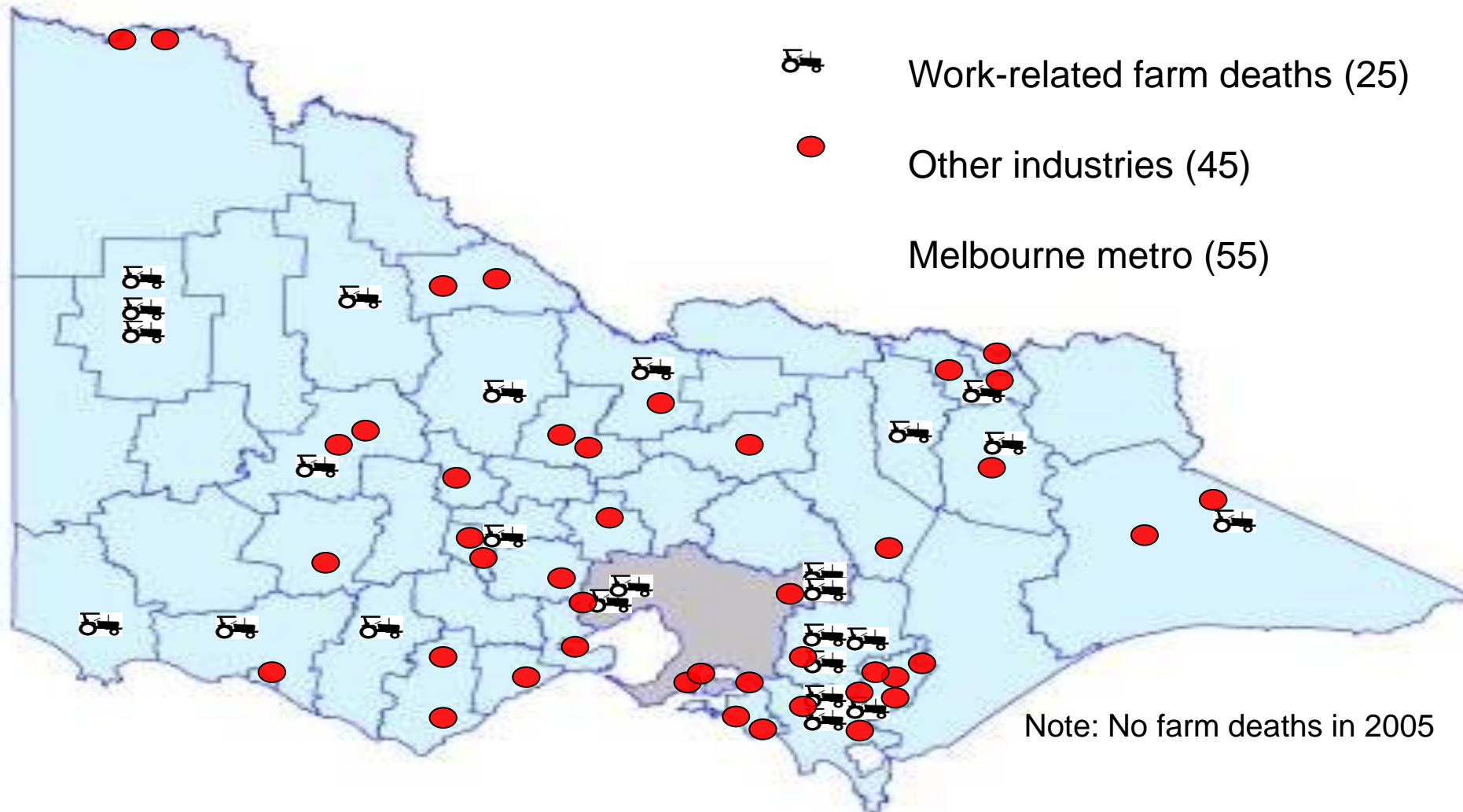


# The proportion of reported fatalities in rural locations rose in 2009/10

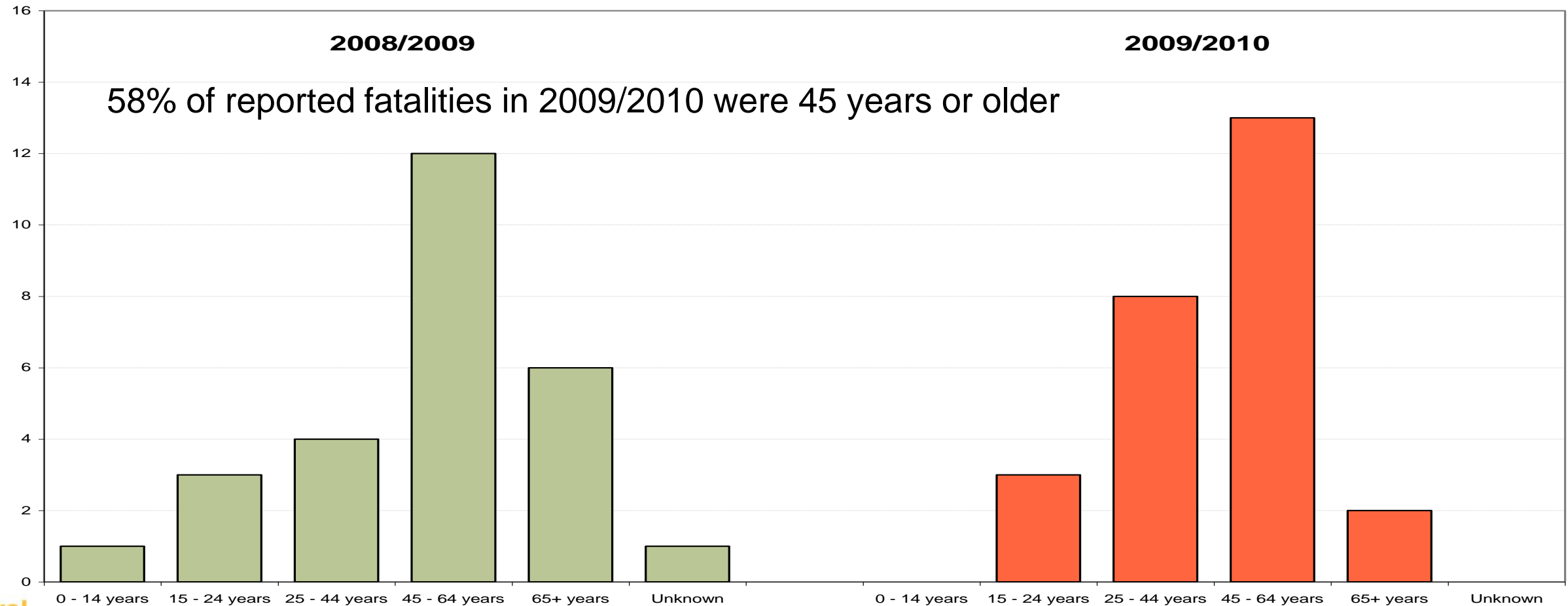




# Regional Victoria's safety gap. Work-related deaths Jan 2005-Sept 2010



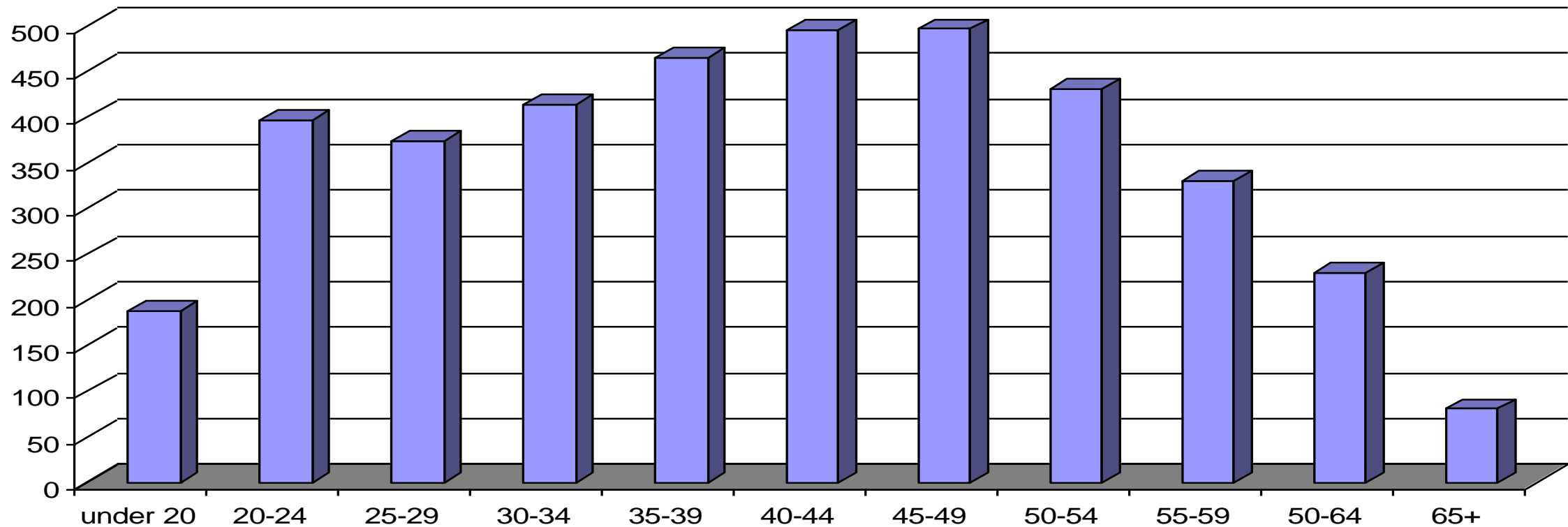
# Hands up if you're over 45





# Reported injuries in the agriculture sector by age group

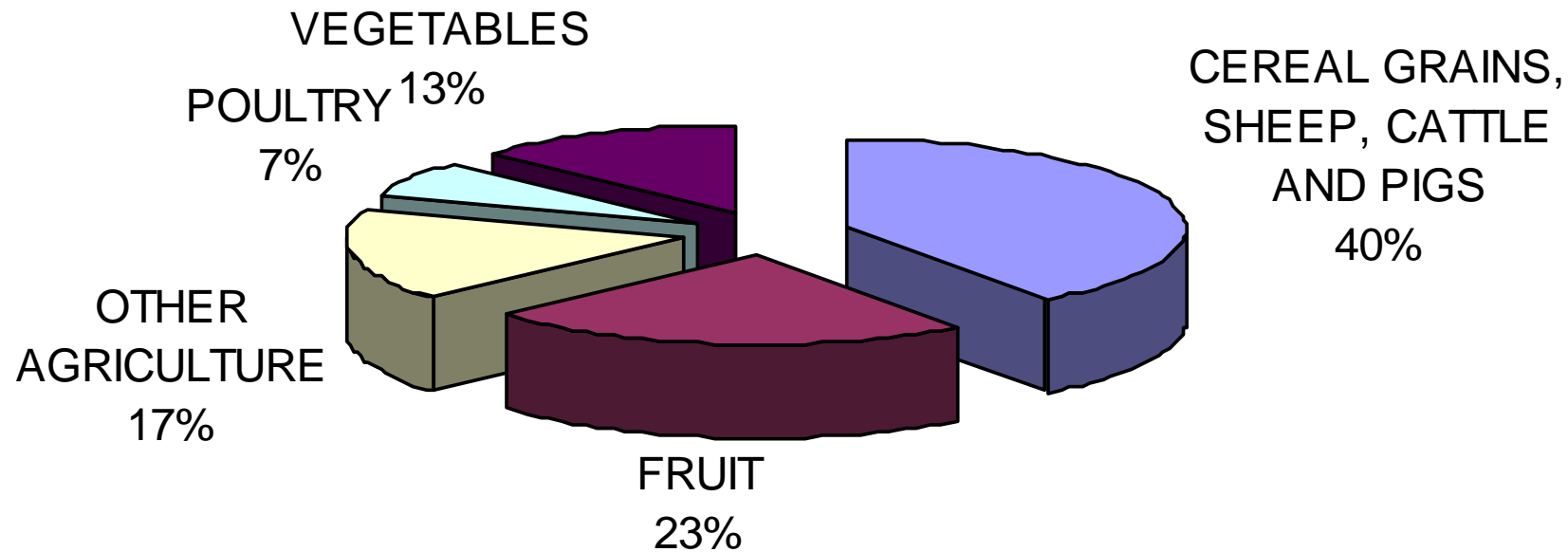
INJURIES BY AGE GROUP  
1985 to 2009-10



# Injury claims by agriculture commodity sector

## INJURY CLAIMS BY INDUSTRY SECTORS

Approx half of all run for more than four weeks





# The tip of the iceberg – Ag injuries reported to WorkSafe in 2009-10

Industry subdivision	Manual handling claims		Fracture claims		All	
	Claims	%	Claims	%	Claims	%
Cereal grains, sheep, cattle and pigs	51	65.4	18	23.1	78	100
Fruit	32	62.7	6	11.8	51	100
Services to agriculture	30	68.2	8	18.2	44	100
Other agriculture	35	81.4	2	4.7	43	100
Vegetables	22	75.9	1	3.4	29	100
Forestry and logging	16	64	4	16	25	100
Poultry	12	75	2	12.5	16	100
Fishing	6	75	1	12.5	8	100
All	204	69.4	42	14.3	294	100

# How are farmers being hurt?



## Main Affliction

Musculoskeletal disorders  
Fractures  
Bruising/crushing  
Open wounds  
Digestive system (including hernia)

## Main mechanism

- Body stressing
- Being hit by moving objects
- Falls, trips and slips
- Vehicle accident
- Hitting objects
- Chemicals and substances



# What's going on?

## Are farmers:

- risk takers who view injuries as a normal part of farming?
- of the belief that only 'common sense' is required to avoid injury?
- prioritising the need to make a living above safety because profitability is subject to seasonal & environmental factors and volatile market forces?
- of the view that (non-farmer) OHS regulators are telling farmers what to do in the business they know best?
- reluctant to train because employees are often engaged on a part-time and/or seasonal basis?

# What WorkSafe is doing...

- Conducting 12 month statewide campaign targeting high risk / harm sectors and the main mechanisms of injury and deaths;
- Listening and talking with the farming community through field days, grants and sponsorships;
- Improving the industry's capacity to manage H&S by developing and distributing guidance harmonised with other states;
- Encouraging take-up of small business assistance program;
- Media campaign to raise awareness of farm safety issues;
- Targeting machinery manufacturers / suppliers to deal with safety issues and upstream solutions;
- Sponsoring VCFL and netball as a means of influencing regional communities.



# Statewide campaign – first quarter findings

Targeted statewide campaign in 2010-11

- First quarter 218 visits

Notices issued -

- Plant - 120 - (e.g. unguarded machinery, no ROPS)
- Manual handling, slips, trips and falls - 17 - (fall protection, hazardous manual handling)
- Chemicals - 14 - (placarding, MSDS, hazardous goods register, protection of tanks from vehicles)
- Other - 29 - (Livestock handling, electrical, inadequate fire-fighting equipment, confined space work)
- Most have been complied with or in the process of being so (95%)





Important  
information

# ...what about you?

- Find the hazards – Employers are legally obliged to consult on known or potential health and safety issues.
- Develop a plan (talk to people) fix the problems.
- Review the situation regularly, especially if there's a significant change such as to access or the purchase of bigger machinery, new personnel.
- Get involved – employers, workforce, family neighbours and medical practitioners. Everyone has something to offer
- Keep records of training or instructions to workers about safety.

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# Death or injury – what's at stake?

- Hands up anyone who needs more paperwork?
- Lost productivity – you and / or employees.
- Life changing impact on family, friends & wider community;
- Increased workers compensation costs;
- Reputation – people talk, media coverage;
- Potential legal costs – civil action by injured person or their family, WorkSafe prosecution.





# Summing up

- Challenge the habits of a lifetime
- Adopt safer ways of working or you keep losing valuable and productive members of your community.
- Don't rely on your skills and experience. Think through every job even if you've been doing it for decades.
- If its not safe to do the job, change it.
- Talk to WorkSafe, your workers, family, and neighbours about how to improve survivability.
- Know your limitations and that of your equipment





# A happy ending?



## this scene could have been prevented?





# Questions?

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