



Agricultural Health Study

NC OFFICE • BATTELLE • CENTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH & EVALUATION
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Incidence of Cancer

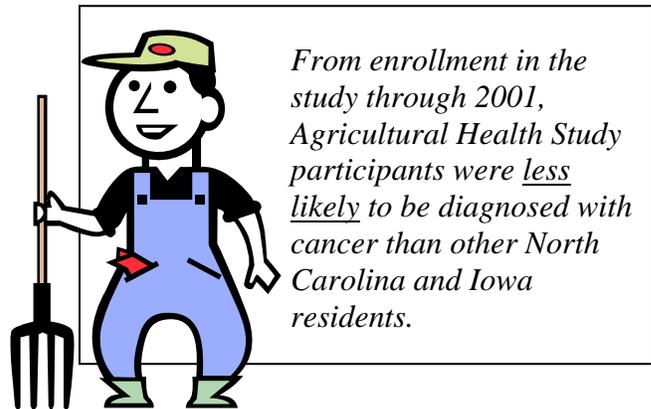
Understanding the incidence of cancer and its causes among farmers, their spouses, and others who are licensed pesticide applicators is an important goal of the Agricultural Health Study.

The design of the study—following a large number of healthy individuals into the future in a long-term and comprehensive way—sets the Agricultural Health Study apart from other studies and allows scientists to study the occurrence of cancer as the study population gets older.

The challenge to the investigators is to determine why some individuals are affected by cancer and others are not. This is very complicated because

- there are many different types of cancer with different protective or risk factors to consider—
- and because the length of time between exposure and onset of the disease can be long.

From its inception, the Agricultural Health Study has been gathering information that will help researchers meet the challenge of understanding more about risk factors for disease.



From enrollment in the study through 2001, Agricultural Health Study participants were less likely to be diagnosed with cancer than other North Carolina and Iowa residents.

Being diagnosed with cancer is a life-changing event for individuals and their families. Since the Agricultural Health Study began in 1993, a total of 3,376 of the 89,658 participants have been diagnosed with cancer for the first time.

The table below shows cancers diagnosed from the time participants enrolled (1993-1997) until the end of 2001.

North Carolina and Iowa Participants
Diagnosed with Cancer
Following Enrollment and Through 2001

Number of Persons Enrolled	89, 658
Prostate Cancer	908
Breast Cancer	431
Lung Cancer	302
Colon Cancer	298
Skin Melanoma	160
Lymphoma	135
Other Types of Cancers	1,142
Number with Cancer	3,376



Aren't farmers healthy?
Why study the incidence
of cancer?

Farm populations do appear to be healthier overall than the North Carolina and Iowa populations, but they may have increased rates for some diseases.

The Agricultural Health Study was initiated in part to answer questions about increased rates for some cancers and other diseases among farmers and others in the agricultural community from earlier studies.

Diseases that may be elevated among farmers include cancers such as leukemia, lymphoma, and soft tissue sarcoma and cancers of the brain, lip, prostate, skin, and stomach, as well as Parkinson's disease and certain non-cancerous diseases of the lung.

Ongoing Research

Scientists at the National Cancer Institute, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, and the US Environmental Protection Agency—agencies that sponsor the Agricultural Health Study—are exploring the questions about cancer from earlier studies.

Since cancer is more likely to occur with aging, it is still too early to know the full story about the incidence of cancer among study participants, but study findings are already providing some answers—and also adding new questions.

The Agricultural Health Study will continue to provide study results about cancer and other diseases and conditions based on updated information from study participants gathered in telephone interviews and from disease registries and vital statistics.

Significant Contribution

The Agricultural Health Study appreciates the significant contribution that pesticide applicators and their spouses in North Carolina and Iowa are making to this major research effort.

It is only through the continuing participation of those who enrolled that study results can be most meaningful. Study participants are invaluable and cannot be replaced. No new participants can be accepted.

Distinctive by its size and by its comprehensive design, the Agricultural Health Study is being watched around the world.

For More Information

Learn more about the study background, the published findings, and the scientists and their interest in collaboration at www.aghealth.org.

The Agricultural Health Study is conducted in North Carolina by the Durham office of Battelle Centers for Public Health Research and Evaluation and in Iowa by the University of Iowa. The project staff can be reached at 1-800-424-7883 (1-800-4-AG-STUDY).

Booklets and other forms of information about the different types of cancer, written and published by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), are available on request by phone, web, or email. Call 1-800-422-6237 (1-800-4-CANCER) or write NCI Public Inquiries Office, 6116 Executive Boulevard, Room 3036-A, Bethesda, MD 20892-8322 or see the web site at www.cancer.gov.

The Agricultural Health Study is a long-term study to investigate the effects of environmental, occupational, dietary, and genetic factors on the health of the agricultural population. This study will provide information that agricultural workers can use in making decisions about their health and the health of their families. The study is conducted in North Carolina by Battelle Centers for Public Health Research and Evaluation and in Iowa by the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Iowa. This study is directed by the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, and the US Environmental Protection Agency. Research results are being developed, peer reviewed, and made available to the scientific, medical, and agricultural communities.

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