25-27th June 2025
Cracow, Poland

Prevention's Role in Advancing Social Sustainability in Agriculture

Safe Habitus

UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE IN KRAKOW

CIOP PIB

AGRO Ubezpieczenia

PAŃSTWOWA INSPEKCJA PRACY

Colloquium venue: University of Agriculture in Krakow, Poland

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

41st INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION OF THE ISSA ON PREVENTION IN AGRICULTURE

25-27th June 2025, Cracow
Poland

Introduction

The 41st International Colloquium of the International Section of the ISSA on Prevention in Agriculture *Prevention's Role in Advancing Social Sustainability in Agriculture* took place in Cracow, Poland on 25th-27th June 2025.

It was organised by the International Section of the ISSA on Prevention in Agriculture in cooperation with the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (KRUS), the University of Agriculture in Cracow, and the SafeHabitus project « Strengthening Farm Health and Safety Knowledge Innovation Systems ».

The International Section of the ISSA on Prevention in Agriculture is one of the fourteen sections of the Special Commission on Prevention of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) which was founded in 1927 under the auspices of the International Labour Organization. The objectives of the Section are to improve occupational safety and health in agriculture, livestock farming, horticulture and forestry through international cooperation. For this purpose, every three years the Section organises a colloquium dedicated to prevention of occupational accidents and diseases in agriculture, as well as well-being of people working in agriculture, and related areas.

SafeHabitus (2023-2026), funded under Horizon Europe, is a multi-actor project that aims to strengthen Farm Health and Safety Knowledge Innovation Systems (FHS KIS) and support the EU transition to social sustainability in farming.

The 41st International Colloquium of the Section focused on the role of prevention in sustainable social development in agriculture and a discussion on the economic and social aspects of preventive measures in the agricultural sector.

Prevention in agriculture plays a key role in achieving sustainable development that takes into account the ecological, social, and economic needs of farmers and society. Preventive environmental protection measures help minimize the negative impacts of agricultural production on the environment, such as water pollution, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss. At the same time, these measures improve farmers' quality of life by increasing farm productivity and reducing the costs associated with repairing environmental damage and the adverse effects of extreme weather events.

The programme of the colloquium also included references to the international ISSA Vision Zero Strategy, a strategy whose primary goal is to achieve an accident-free work environment and eliminate occupational diseases by protecting the lives, health, and well-being of people working in agriculture sector. The colloquium facilitated the exchange of international experiences among experts in occupational health and safety and modern solutions for preventing occupational accidents and diseases. Particular attention was drawn to the fact that climate change, restrictions related to pandemics and disease epidemics affecting livestock, economic pressures, and political instability pose a significant challenge to the agricultural sector worldwide. These challenges worsen farmers' well-being, which negatively impacts their mental health. The colloquium focused on how to effectively support farmers' well-being to prevent negative phenomena such as suicide. The event provided an opportunity to learn about the latest achievements and best practices in the field of prevention in agriculture in its many aspects and provided an opportunity to promote scientific achievements and implement technical solutions internationally.

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Regional Directorate of State Forests in Cracow (Regionalna Dyrekcja Lasów Państwowych w Krakowie)
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PROGRAMME

25th June 2025

13.00–14.00	VIP panel

Mr Dariusz Rohde

Chairperson of the ISSA Agriculture Section, KRUS President

Prof. dr hab. inż. Marcin Rapacz
Vice-Rector for Science of the University of Agriculture in Krakow

Dr David Meredith,
Project coordinator „SafeHabitus: Strengthening Farm Health and Safety Knowledge Innovation Systems"

Mr Krzysztof Bielecki,
chief specialist of the Prevention and Promotion Department at the Chief Labour Inspectorate

Mrs Agnieszka Szczygielska,
Director of the Central Institute for Labour Protection – National Research Institute

14.00–14.10	coffee break
14.10–16.30	panel I – Sustainable Agriculture: Challenges and Solutions
14.10–14.20	Mr Paweł Dzięgielowski – Forest District Manager, Forest District Brzesko, Poland
14.20–14.40	ISSA's prevention approach: social security, Vision Zero, sustainability – Mr Bernd Treichel, ISSA, Switzerland
14.40–15.00	Critical safety and health hazards, issues, challenges and needs in agriculture – Safehabitus priority needs report – Dr Jarkko Leppälä, Luke, Finland and Prof. Risto Rautiainen, University of Nebraska/Luke, USA/Finland
15.00–15.20	Farming profiles in Europe: Challenges and Insights from CoP Countries – Dr Laura Girdziute, Dr Anastasija Novikova and Dr Algirdas Staugaitis, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
15.20–15.40	The Impact of Climate Change on Occupational Safety and Health: Insights from Vision Zero Fund – Ms Kristina Kurths, ILO – Vision Zero Fund, Switzerland
15.40–16.00	Regulatory normalisation of pesticides and strategic assumptions to protect biodiversity and human health- Prof. Monika Król, University of Łódź, Poland
16.00–16.20	Taking into account the liveability of agricultural systems to build a sustainable agriculture – Mrs Andy Silini and Mr Florian Dassé, CCMSA, France
16.20–16.30	Panel Discussion

26th June 2025

09.00–10.10	panel II – Managing Safety and Health Risks in Agriculture
09.00–09.15	Wellbeing for farmers – Mr Cezary Nobis, KRUS, Poland
09.15–09.30	Update of the European Commission's non-binding guide on protecting health and safety of workers in agriculture, livestock farming, horticulture and forestry – Dr Pedro Delgado Cobos and Mr Fernando Chacón Giménez, University of Cordoba, Spain
09.30–09.45	Occupational Hazards and Risks in the Agricultural Sector – Mr Isaac Abril-Muñoz, INSST, Spain
09.45–10.00	Prevention of Safety and Health Risks on Farms – Mr Krzysztof Bielecki, Chief Labour Inspectorate, Poland
10.00–10.10	Panel Discussion
10.10–10.25	coffee break
10.25–11.45	panel III – Managing Safety and Health Risks in Agriculture – country cases
10.35–10.50	Exposure to airborne microbial pollutants at poultry farms – lessons learned from the HE-FARM Project (Horizon Europe) – Prof. Rafał Górny, CIOP-PIB, Poland and Prof. José Luis Pérez Díaz, University of Alcala, Spain
10.50–11.05	Women at work: an asset to agriculture – Mrs Magalie Cayon, CCMSA, France
11.05–11.20	Risk assessment systems and tools in the occupational safety and health in South Korea: Application in the agricultural sector – Mr Jung Wongeon, Rural Development Administration, Korea
11.20–11.35	Insurance in agriculture – Mr Daniel Zahorenko, AGRO Insurance – Mutual Insurance Company, Poland
11.35–11.45	Panel Discussion
11.45–11.55	coffee break
11.55–13.25	panel IV – Promoting safety and well-being - International Insights
11.55–12.10	Understanding the relationship between stress and wellbeing in Irish male dairy farmers – Dr Diana van Doorn and Dr David Meredith, Teagasc Ireland
12.10–12.25	How do occupational health services in agriculture help to preserve farmers' mental health in France? – Dr Véronique Barbat, CCMSA, France
12.25–12.40	Farmers Work Ability Scale – a new tool for prevention in agriculture – Mrs Päivi Wallin and Mrs Pirjo Saari, Mela, Finland

12.40–12.55	Social and Economic Dimensions of Prevention in Agriculture: The Role of Extension Agents in Promoting Occupational Safety and Well-being Among Farming Communities in Pakistan- Prof. Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, University of Agriculture Peshawar, Pakistan and Mrs Gulshan Zafar, Pakistan
12.55–13.10	National efforts to improve agricultural health and safety in South Korea – Dr Kyungsu Kim, Rural Development Administration, Korea
13.10–13.25	Panel Discussion
13.25–14.50	lunch
14.50–16.30	panel V – „SafeHabitus: Supporting the prevention of injuries and ill health in farming in the EU"

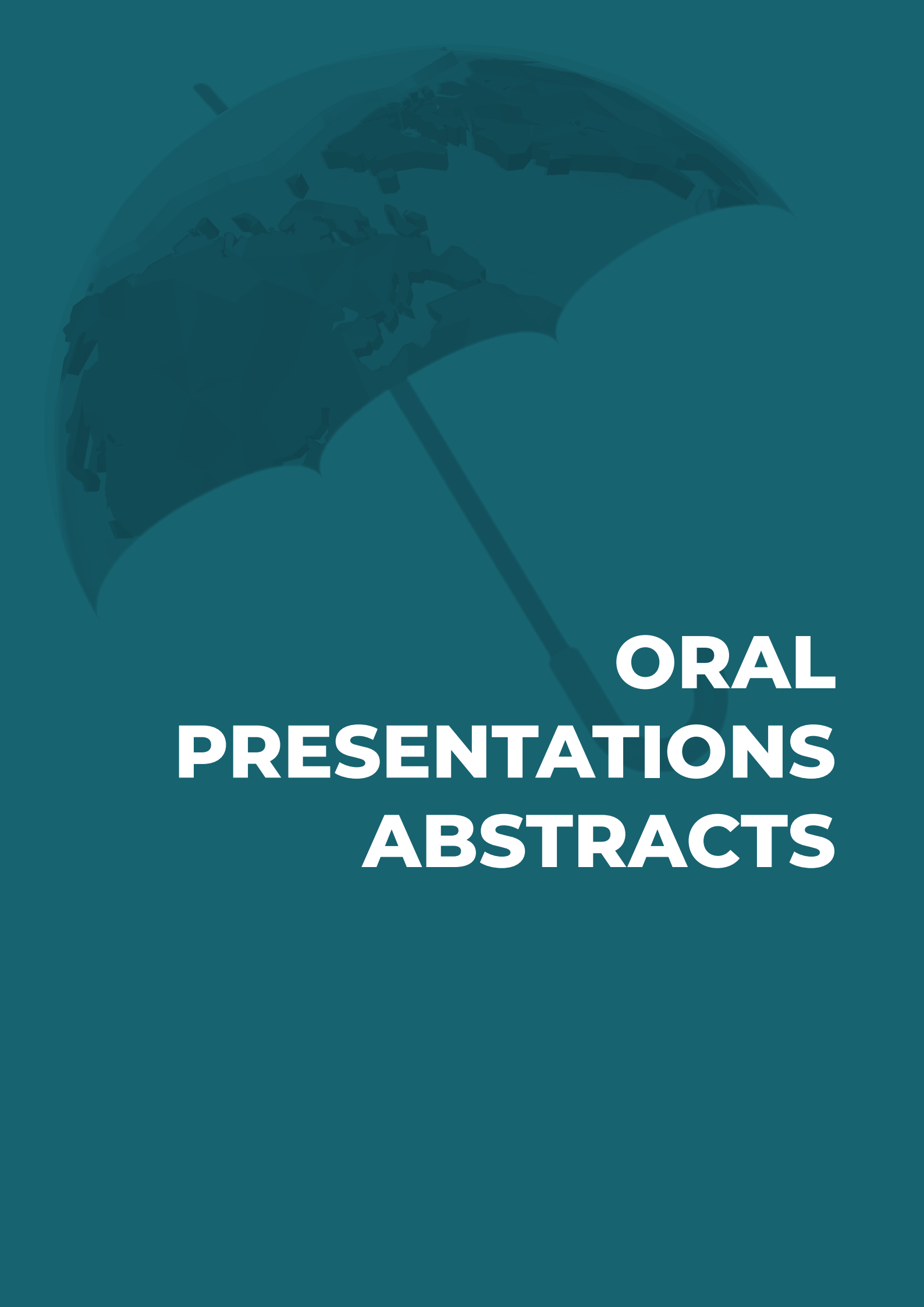
Introduction and Context

Panellists:

- Dr Diana Van Doorn (Multi-actor Approaches to Enhance Safety, Reducing Occupational Stress and Enhancing Quality of Life)
- Prof. Sally Shortall (Evidence for Policy Makers, Gender)
- Ms Sarah Ozturk (Multi-actor Approaches to Enhance Safety)
- Mr Mario Béjar Fuentes (Evidence for Policy Makers, Reducing Occupational Stress and Enhancing Quality of Life)
- Mr Carlos Ruiz Ramirez (Reducing Occupational Stress and Enhancing Quality of Life)

Theme 1: Evidence for Policy Makers
Theme 2: Multi-actor Approaches to Enhance Safety
Theme 3: Reducing Occupational Stress and Enhancing Quality of Life
Panel Discussion
Summary

16.30–16.40	coffee break
16.40–17.40	panel VI – Protecting Vulnerable Groups on Farms
16.40–16.55	Threats occurring on farms and methods of reducing them in the face of and with the use of new technologies – Mr Szymon Kokot and Mr Marcin Jankowski Fundation cfbt.pl, Poland
16.55–17.10	Protecting EU farm workers from injury and stress – who is responsible and how is it done? – Prof. Sally Shortall, Newcastle University, UK, and Dr David Meredith, Teagasc, Ireland
17.10–17.25	BioInfo - online knowledge database on harmful biological agents in the working environment – Dr Małgorzata Gołofit-Szymczak, CIOP-PIB, Poland
17.25–17.40	Panel Discussion
17.40–18.00	Conclusion



ORAL PRESENTATIONS ABSTRACTS

Panel I

Sustainable Agriculture: Challenges and Solutions

Abstract 1.2

CRITICAL SAFETY AND HEALTH HAZARDS, ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS IN AGRICULTURE – SAFEHABITUS PRIORITY NEEDS REPORT

Dr Jarkko Leppälä, Luke, Finland and **Prof. Risto Rautiainen**, University of Nebraska/Luke, USA/Finland

In this study we recognize some regional and national differences in safety and health hazards and priority needs in agriculture. Farmers and agricultural workers in the EU face considerable safety and health risks in their work environments. Despite prevention programs and policies, accident rates remain high, indicating a need for new prevention strategies. Recent EU initiatives have focused on the role of safety culture and societal factors in improving safety and health.

This study outlines the priority needs in agricultural safety and health in the eleven EU countries participating in the four-year SafeHabitus project. The eleven participating countries are Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Spain. The study is based on the work of Safehabitus project Community of Practice (CoP) multi-actor networks established in each participating country since the project's inception. These networks include representatives from farmers' organizations, research institutes, universities, educational institutions, extension services, government, and private companies.

The CoPs convened in Spring 2024 to evaluate their country's farm safety and health priority needs and challenges. The findings were compiled into a safety and health priority needs register. As a result, we synthesize the identified priority hazard issues, challenges and needs, along with some solutions and measures to be further developed as the SafeHabitus project progresses. Ensuring safety and health in agriculture need greater attention among farmers and farm workers on farms, but also among other stakeholders. This focus is crucial to reducing the significant human and financial costs of injuries and illnesses, attracting new entrants to the agricultural sector, and maintaining competitive agricultural production and a stable food supply in European countries. Farmers should not be left to address farm safety on their own; they need the support of other stakeholders.

Keywords: health, safety, hazards, agriculture, safehabitus

Abstract 1.3

FARMING PROFILES IN EUROPE: CHALLENGES AND INSIGHTS FROM COP COUNTRIES

Dr Laura Girdziute, **Dr Anastasija Novikova**, **Dr Algirdas Staugaitis** Vytautas Magnus University

Agriculture plays a vital role in shaping the European economy and society toward a sustainable future. In the coming years, European farmers will face numerous challenges as they work to produce both food and non-food products while actively contributing to this transition. These challenges encompass various aspects, including climate change, resource scarcity, infrastructure constraints, and shifting food demand and dietary preferences (Bock et al., 2020). In this context, it is essential to understand the predominant farming profiles across European countries and how farmers' well-being differs among them. This study aimed to identify the current farming profiles in selected (COP) countries – Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Finland, Ireland, Spain, Germany, Estonia, and France – and to assess the well-being factors associated with each profile. To achieve this objective, the study utilized an expert evaluation method, gathering insights from experts in the selected countries. The findings revealed that most European countries recognize four main farming profiles: Adaptive – diversified, Intensive – specialized, Patrimonial – tradition and family, and Corporate. The overall farmers well-being of corporate and Intensive – specialised was evaluated with the highest scores, while the overall wellbeing of Adaptive – diversified profile was identified as lowest. The study also revealed some insights and problems farmers well-being such as: Great inequality between companies' profit received and farm worker wages (Spain, Romania); Lack of workforce in agriculture/low availability of labour (Spain, Finland); Overall wellbeing is (quite)low/uncertain (Spain, Finland, Germany); Majority of farmers are willing to adapt to climate changes (Finland, Germany, Poland); Significant gender unbalance (Germany); In family farms children are not willing to continue work in farming/less people are willing to work for this sector (Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia); Farmers are generally well-organised and represented through various farming organisations (Ireland, Lithuania, Romania).

Abstract 1.4

THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH: INSIGHTS FROM VISION ZERO FUND

Ms Kristina Kurths, ILO – Vision Zero Fund, Switzerland

The International Labour Organization's Vision Zero Fund (VZF) aims to reduce work-related accidents and diseases in supply chains. Since 2022, after receiving a mandate from the G20, the Fund has been implementing pilot activities in Mexico and Vietnam to address the impact of climate change on occupational safety and health.

In Mexico, the Fund is partnering with the University of Colorado's Center for Health, Work & Environment and the Mexican Institute of Social Security to address the impact of increased temperatures on the safety and health of workers in the chili pepper and tomato supply chains. In Viet Nam, the Fund commissioned a feasibility study to identify opportunities to address occupational safety and health challenges linked to climate change in agricultural supply chains with a focus on rice, coffee and fruits & vegetable cultivation.

This presentation showcased the results achieved so far.

In Mexico, a methodology was developed and implemented to measure heat exposure and heat stress among agricultural workers and the perceived and direct impacts on the health and productivity of workers. The findings have informed the design, implementation and monitoring of workplace adaptation measures to reduce or mitigate workers' exposure to heat. The adaptive measures include health promotion, behavioural and educational interventions combined with increased workplace health surveillance, and adjustment of working hours, among others.

In Vietnam, the study commissioned by VZF identified four primary climate change-related hazards impacting safety, health and well-being of agricultural workers, namely extreme weather events, such as drought and floods; rising temperatures; sea level rise and salinity intrusion; and increase in biological hazards. Synthesizing these results led to the development of a framework for prioritizing adaptive strategies, incorporating prevention and implementation through the hierarchy of controls.

Abstract 1.5

REGULATORY NORMALISATION OF PESTICIDES AND STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND HUMAN HEALTH

Prof. UŁ dr hab. Monika A. Król, University of Lodz, Poland

Chemical pesticides used in agricultural production have an impact on human health and health and life, but also undeniably on the state of various elements of the environment, including biodiversity. Pollinating insects are representative of the animal world that is particularly sensitive to the modern environmental threats posed by agriculture. The New Green Deal strategy and its complementary strategies (Biodiversity Strategy, Farm-to-Fork Strategy) assume the elimination and reduction of pesticides.

The aim of this article is to analyse and evaluate the legislation on plant protection products, which has been adopted with a view to preventing the excessive use of chemicals in agriculture and thus ensuring food safety.

The subject of the study is the legal conditions for the authorisation and use of substances, which at the same time ensure benefits for plant production without harmful effects on human and animal health and unacceptable effects on the environment. Particular attention was paid to the authorisation of products containing neonicotinoids or glyphosate under special conditions.

Abstract 1.6

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE LIVEABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Mrs Andy Silini and **Mr Florian Dassé**, CCMSA, France

Agriculture is a professional sector very much affected by contextual changes (political, environmental, social, societal, etc.). These changes, while necessary to meet global challenges, underline the need for an integrated approach to viability of agricultural structures, which goes beyond simple economic profitability or environmental protection.

Raising the question of farms' sustainability becomes central. It is therefore imperative to take into account the social liveability of farming, translated into the ability of professionals to carry out their work, while preserving their health and safety, over time.

Thinking about the future means creating sustainable working conditions enabling farmers to maintain a balance between economic performance, health development and control of environmental and social impacts. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to an environmental or economic vision, but also rests on a foundation of social equity. Agriculture, as part of the rural fabric, contributes to social cohesion and dynamism of rural and urban areas. So working to create sustainable working conditions means contributing to the sector's attractiveness, to the retention of employees and, consequently, to the rural areas vitality.

Finally, in a changing context, the government is often busy drawing up new prescriptions to guide new agricultural practices. However, this process, which often imposes standards, calls into question our ability to create truly sustainable agricultural systems. Indeed, according to the equity principle that the sustainability model implies, the challenge seems to us to lie in striking a balance between standardisation and local adaptation. To achieve this, any transition to a sustainable model requires a participatory, evolving and adaptable approach, in which farmers play a central role.

In part, on the basis of interventions accounts, we shall attempt to demonstrate how the Mutualité Sociale Agricole's (MSA) occupational health services tries to respond to these issues through a prevention approach centred on people and their work.

Panel II

Managing Safety and Health Risks in Agriculture

Abstract 2.2

UPDATE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S NON-BINDING GUIDE ON PROTECTING HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK FARMING, HORTICULTURE AND FORESTRY

Dr Pedro Delgado Cobos and **Mr Fernando Chacón Giménez**, University of Cordoba, Spain

The non–binding guide to best practice with a view to improving the application of related directives on protecting health and safety of workers in agriculture, livestock farming, horticulture and forestry, was published in 2016 by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission.

Vision Zero is an innovative approach to prevention that integrates the three dimensions of safety, health and well-being at all levels of work. The 39th International Colloquium of the International Section of the ISSA on Prevention in Agriculture, was held at the University of Cordoba (Spain) in 2019 and during the Colloquium was launched Vision Zero as the World Prevention Strategy in Agriculture.

As the launch of the Vision Zero strategy is after the publication of this European Commission guide, it is necessary to update this guide.

A new chapter on Vision Zero strategy in Agriculture could be included, mentioning the Vision Zero Seven Golden Rules and the two Vision Zero guidelines, one for individual farmers and one for agriculture companies, published in 2019 by the International Section of the ISSA on Prevention in Agriculture.

Other new chapter on well-being could also be included, bringing together information on this topic currently fragmented in other sections (combating isolation, access to healthcare, etc.) and adding, among others, new content on mental health and psychological well-being, measures to protect workers from extreme weather conditions and integration of migrant workers.

Abstract 2.3

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS AND RISKS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Mr Isaac Abril-Muñoz, INSST, Spain

The agricultural sector in Spain and the EU is recognized as one of the most hazardous, due to factors such as handling animals, operating machinery, working alone in remote areas, seasonal tasks, and a workforce often characterized by older age and limited training in occupational risk prevention.

Spanish official statistics from 2023 indicate that the agricultural sector has a lower overall accident rate than industry and construction but a higher rate of fatal accidents. However, these figures are likely underreported, potentially capturing only 60% of actual fatalities, as they often exclude self-employed workers, family members, retirees, and those not primarily engaged in agriculture.

To improve safety, farmers and agricultural workers can take several steps: implementing the Vision Zero strategy, conducting risk assessments and OSH management plans, providing training, ensuring health surveillance, investing in infrastructure safety, incorporating safety and ergonomic design in agricultural practices, replacing non-ROPS tractors and outdated machinery, and investing on new technologies. These measures can help create a safer and healthier work environment in the agricultural sector.

European and National preventive policies to improve risk prevention in the agricultural sector should be launched. It may include the development of a national action plan on safety and health, the implementation of a sector-specific awareness campaign, the integration of safety and health in agricultural education, research and information systems, and the increase of labour inspection in agriculture. It should be also considered the application of social conditionality of the CAP and sectorial solutions of the CAP.

It could be concluded that the level of fatal accidents and illnesses at work in agricultural sector are unacceptably high, and that there are many solutions that can be implemented to improve OSH in the sector and create a true culture of prevention.

Abstract 2.4

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATE LABOUR INSPECTION'S ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF INDIVIDUAL FARMING

Mr Krzysztof Bielecki, State Labour Inspection, Chief Labour Inspectorate, Poland

The State Labour Inspection's remit for labour protection in agriculture encompasses two main areas of activity: inspection and supervision, and prevention. Under Polish law, an individual farmer who does not employ anyone is not an employer and, in accordance with the Act on the State Labour Inspection, is not subject to inspections. However, in this case, our office initiates initiatives aimed at preventing and eliminating hazards in the work environment. These activities include occupational health and safety training, farm inspections, technical advice, the publication of brochures and preventative materials, and participation in industry trade fairs and exhibitions.

Trainings yield measurable preventative results and are most often organized in collaboration with institutional partners, such as the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (KRUS), agricultural advisory centres, and the police.

Inspections are a tool for responding to threats on an ad hoc basis. They are conducted on farms, but also at locations where field work and agricultural transport are carried out. During inspections, PIP inspectors also pay special attention to the safety of children on farms.

Another large group of activities aimed at rural audiences are occupational health and safety competitions. They are organised independently or in collaboration with partners. Adult farmers, as well as older youth, participate in these competitions and knowledge olympiads on occupational health and safety. Art competitions are organized for younger children.

It is important to note that the current generation of farmers is more willing to invest resources and time in improving their own safety and that of their families. It is also important to emphasize that rural youth and children are an important target group for the State Labour Inspection's preventive and promotional activities. Depending on their level of preparation for safe agricultural practice, they will contribute to improving working and living conditions in rural areas in the future.

Preventive activities, implemented for many years, constitute an important impetus for cultural change, as positive effects are being observed in terms of needs and attitudes towards safe and hygienic agricultural work, health protection, and rural life.

Panel III

Managing Safety and Health Risks in Agriculture – Country Cases

Abstract 3.2

WOMEN AT WORK: AN ASSET TO AGRICULTURE

Mrs Magalie Cayon, CCMSA, France

In France, one in 3 farmers is a woman, and 4 out of 10 farm workers are women. Taking into account the specific characteristics of women working in agriculture is a way of helping the farming world to meet the challenges of generational renewal. In this way, improving working conditions for this population benefits all agricultural workers.

There are many obstacles to the integration of women into the workplace: inequalities in status and pay, the risk of occupational accidents and illnesses, unsuitable farm equipment, difficulties in reconciling professional and personal life, etc. Yet women are particularly involved and present in livestock farming and small-scale structures.

They have a specific vision and a particular sensitivity to the current challenges in agriculture: sustainable development, taking account of societal demand, etc. In this respect, they are developing innovative practices that are of benefit to all those working in agriculture.

The MSA's future OHS plan for 2026-2030, which is currently being drawn up, sets out the institution's ambition to support the challenge of changing generations, focusing in particular on the importance and benefits of taking an interest in women's work, through their capacity to innovate in order to improve their working conditions.

The presentation highlighted the specific characteristics of women in French agriculture, both as employees and as farmers, and showed initiatives to support women's groups in the field to improve their health at work.

Panel IV

Promoting Safety and Wellbeing – International Insights

Abstract 4.1

UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND WELLBEING IN IRISH MALE DAIRY FARMERS

Dr Diana van Doorn and **Dr David Meredith**, Teagasc Ireland

European public health policy increasingly recognises mental health, particularly for vulnerable groups, including farmers. Farming is a high stress occupation due to factors like uncertain weather, fluctuating market prices, demanding workloads and challenging working conditions. Current policies highlight stress reduction to improve wellbeing. This research seeks to explore the extent to which there is a relationship between stress frequency and wellbeing among Irish male dairy farmers.

This study analysed longitudinal data collected from 199 male dairy farmers, at two time-points: baseline (2018-19) and Week 52 (2019/20). Stress frequency was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, and wellbeing was measured using the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. Descriptive analyses and adjusted standardised residuals (ASR) were used to explore patterns and relationships between stress frequency and wellbeing.

By Week 52, more farmers reported low stress frequency (27.6%) compared to baseline (18.1%). Moderate stress frequency increased from 56.8% at baseline to 65.8% at Week 52. Very high stress frequency remained unchanged (2.5%). Whilst low stress frequency and 'excellent' wellbeing had a significant association at baseline (ASR 3.0) and Week 52 (ASR 2.6), no significant link was found between high stress frequency and poor wellbeing.

Stress was common among male dairy farmers but did not always lead to poor wellbeing. Resilience, coping mechanisms, and farming-specific factors like community ties and working in nature helped mitigate stress's impact. A small group of farmers experienced ongoing high stress frequency, placing them at high risk for mental health issues. Targeted support measures for them is critical. Structural farming stressors, like limited control over prices and certification standards, reduce autonomy and increase job demands, especially in the face of climate uncertainty. Findings highlight the need for policy strategies addressing both individual and systemic challenges to build a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector.

Abstract 4.2

HOW DO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES IN AGRICULTURE HELP TO PRESERVE FARMERS' MENTAL HEALTH IN FRANCE?

Dr Véronique Barbat, CCMSA, France

Physical health and mental health are linked. Psychosocial disorders (PSD) and musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) share common determinants in work situations. "Preventing MSDs and/or PSDs in businesses by tackling the problem through primary prevention and a systemic approach" and "Preventing occupational ill-being in the agricultural workforce" are two of the "must do" priorities of MSA's 2021-25 Occupational Health and Safety Plan (PSST) . MSA (Mutualité Sociale Agricole) is the French social protection scheme for the agricultural sector.

MSDs and PSDs can be seen as the pathological effects of the dysfunctional work organisation and the resulting intensification of work. They reflect the psychological and physical suffering associated with work.

Each of the 35 MSA funds in France has an Occupational health and safety service (SST). The French Labour Code stipulates that the main task of the occupational health and safety services is to prevent any damage to workers' health as a result of their work. In order to support this network on prevention issues and define a common positioning, an intervention guide, intended to evolve with practices and knowledge, was co-constructed by MSD/PSD referents from MSA's SST services and MSA's SST Department. The principle of co-construction means that the specific needs of the farming world and the expertise and experience of teams in the field can be taken into account.

The aim of this multidisciplinary, work-focused approach is to transform work situations and take primary prevention action. Through these actions, occupational health services in agriculture contribute to preserving the mental health of farmers.

Abstract 4.3

FARMERS WORK ABILITY SCALE – A NEW TOOL FOR PREVENTION IN AGRICULTURE

Mrs Päivi Wallin and **Mrs Pirjo Saari**, Mela, Finland

Background

Farmers face a significantly high risk for occupational accidents and illnesses due to the demanding physical and mental nature of their work. Compared to other occupational groups, farmers have a higher risk of experiencing more accidents and entering into disability pension as well.

The Farmers' Social Insurance Institution Mela has developed a customized on-line service for farmers to assess and monitor their own work ability and psychosocial stress levels. The main objectives of the Farmer's Workability Scale are

- Raising awareness among farmers about the factors influencing their work ability
- Highlighting the risks of accidents at work
- Guiding farmers to appropriate services based on their needs

Results and Practical Applications

The Farmer's Workability Scale measures farmers' perceived ability to work and overall occupational safety and wellbeing.

Based on the responses, they receive personal feedback and recommendations for suitable work ability services. Mela offers various services for farmers:, for instance comprehensive personal consultation by a workability advisor and courses on maintaining and improving workability.

Additionally, farmers can compare their results with those of other farmers of the same age, gender and production sector. The possibility of comparison makes the service particularly engaging for farmers. The comparative data is comprehensive and updated in real time.

Conclusions

- A sufficiently large dataset is needed to ensure an adequate number of responses in each background variable category (age, gender, production sector)
  - At the launch of the service, the reference data was received from the Agricultural Development Outlook Survey (Kantar TNS Agri 2020), which consisted of approximately 4,000 responses
- Another important consideration is to build a service where the data is constantly updated
- From a prevention perspective, it is crucial that the service provides guidance on appropriate work ability services based on the results

Abstract 4.4

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF PREVENTION IN AGRICULTURE: THE ROLE OF EXTENSION AGENTS IN PROMOTING OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND WELL-BEING AMONG FARMING COMMUNITIES IN PAKISTAN

Prof. Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, University of Agriculture Peshawar, Pakistan and **Mrs Gulshan Zafar**, Pakistan

Agriculture plays a pivotal role in Pakistan's economy, yet the health, safety, and well-being of its farming communities remain underserved. This discussion-based research paper explored the social and economic aspects of preventive measures in agriculture, focusing on the role of extension agents in promoting safety, health, and well-being among farmers and their families. Pakistani farmers, often constrained by low education levels, limited financial resources, and outdated practices, face heightened risks from pesticide exposure, traditional farming methods, and harsh climatic conditions. Extension agents are instrumental in bridging this gap by educating farmers, facilitating access to preventive tools, and advocating for policy support.

The presentation highlighted the challenges faced by farmers, the importance of integrating preventive measures into national extension programs, and the strategies for enhancing social sustainability in agriculture. Drawing from global case studies, such as India's Integrated Pest Management programs and Bangladesh's Farmer Field Schools, as well as local success stories in Pakistan, it underscored the potential for improved agricultural practices to mitigate risks and foster resilience. The findings advocate for empowering extension agents to drive systemic change, emphasizing their role in building trust, capacity, and sustainable practices within farming communities.

The study concluded with actionable recommendations to integrate preventive measures into agricultural policy, enhance farmer education, and promote cooperative models to achieve a socially sustainable agricultural sector in Pakistan.

Abstract 4.5

NATIONAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SOUTH KOREA

Dr Kyungsu Kim, Rural Development Administration, Korea

Background: The majority of Korean farmers are small-scale self-employed farmers and have long been excluded from the national industrial safety and health management system centered on employed workers. To address this issue, the Korean government has made various national efforts for agricultural safety and health.

Results: The Korean government has made efforts in various areas such as laws, systems, research, and projects to prevent occupational injuries and diseases among farmers. In particular, Korean government has tried to establish a systematic and stable national management system and carry out more effective prevention projects.

Legally, the "Act on Safety Insurance for Farmers and Fishermen and Prevention of Occupational Injuries and Diseases" for small-scale farmers and fishermen was enacted in 2015, and based on this Act, the national agency responsible for these duties was clearly defined.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible for the operation and expansion of "Farmer Safety Insurance," and the Rural Development Administration(RDA) is in charge of research and projects to prevent agricultural injuries and diseases.

As a preventive research, RDA produces major national statistics on agricultural work injuries and diseases and conducts research on the direction of preventive policies and strategies. Also, RDA develops safety equipment and work convenience equipment, guidelines, techniques, and educational materials for agricultural safety and health. In addition, as national preventive projects linked to the local governments, RDA has carried out projects such as community-based safety management projects, distribution of safety equipment and work convenience equipment, education for farmers, and domestic and international cooperation. RDA has newly started farm risk assessment projects using safety and health managers and fostering agricultural safety leaders.

Conclusion and Implications: RDA has worked to establish a systematic and effective national management system to improve agricultural safety and health. Moving forward, the government aims to strengthen preventive laws and deploy specialized safety and health personnel nationwide to expand farm-level tailored prevention programs.

Panel V

„SafeHabitus: Supporting the prevention of injuries and ill health in farming in the EU”

Abstract 5

SAFEHABITUS PANEL DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Moderator: Dr David Meredith (Teagasc)

Panellists: **Dr Diana Van Doorn** (Teagasc), **Prof. Sally Shortall** (Newcastle University), **Ms Sarah Oztürk** (SVLFG), **Mr Mario Béjar Fuentes** (CEJA), **Mr Carlos Ruiz Ramírez** (Oxfam Intermon)

Evidence-Based Prevention for Social Sustainability in Agriculture

The SafeHabitus panel discussion at the 41st ISSA International Colloquium examined evidence-based approaches for advancing social sustainability in European agriculture, bringing together expertise spanning farmer health, gender dynamics, institutional prevention systems, young farmer advocacy, and migrant worker protection. The discussion highlighted fundamental challenges in agricultural safety that transcend traditional hazard-focused interventions. This points toward the need for cultural transformation and holistic, multi-stakeholder approaches.

The Social and Cultural Foundations of Agricultural Risk

A central theme emerging from the discussion was that agricultural accidents persist not primarily due to inadequate technical knowledge or equipment, but because of deeply embedded cultural patterns that normalise self-exploitation and, as part of this, risk taking within farming communities. Research presented demonstrated that farm families socialise children from early ages to accept risk as inevitable, with accidents mentioned casually, often with humour, as ordinary aspects of farming life. This normalisation occurs through intergenerational knowledge transfer, where parents pass dangerous practices to children alongside farming skills, and through spatial dynamics that construct the farmyard as a space where conventional safety rules don't apply.

Gender dynamics complicate this cultural landscape in unexpected ways. Contrary to assumptions that women bring greater risk aversion to farming, evidence shows that women taking on farm roles often consciously take risks to prove they are "authentic farmers,". This highlights how acceptance of risks becomes part of a 'competence' for both male and female farmers. It also reveals how farming identity construction around physical toughness and risk tolerance creates barriers to safety improvement that information campaigns alone cannot overcome.

Health as the Foundation for Safety

The discussion emphasised critical intersections between physical health, mental wellbeing, and occupational safety. Evidence from Irish farmers showed that cardiovascular disease mortality rates are five times higher than

other occupational groups, with 62% of farmers overweight or obese despite most perceiving themselves at healthy weights. Stress levels measured at 13.5% of farmers declined to 8% after sustained health intervention, demonstrating that stress reduction directly impacts safety through improved decision-making, reaction times, and risk assessment.

Mental health emerged as a particularly pressing concern for young farmers, who face unique stressors including succession anxiety, climate uncertainty, social isolation, and the economic pressure of assuming significant debt. The recently published EU Strategy for Generational Renewal (October 2025) set an ambitious target to double young farmers from 12% to 24% by 2040, yet this goal appears unattainable without addressing working conditions and, as part of this, the occupational health and safety challenges that deter young people from entering agriculture. The strategy correctly identifies interconnected barriers including access to land, credit, skills, plus legal, financial, and emotional issues, but lacks concrete financial commitments despite promises to double CAP support for young farmers.

Systematic Vulnerability of Migrant Workers

While much agricultural safety discourse centres on farmers, the discussion drew attention to the approximately 2.4 million seasonal and migrant workers. Contributions highlighted that these workers face unique vulnerabilities rooted in legal precarity (temporary visas tied to specific employers), information asymmetries (safety training only in languages they may not understand), economic exploitation (wage deductions for inflated housing and equipment costs), and housing conditions that reinforce employer control. The discussion emphasised that addressing migrant worker safety requires not just better interventions but fundamental transformation of agricultural labour models and power relations.

The Gap Between Institutional Frameworks and Farmer Behaviour

Germany's comprehensive occupational safety system—combining state legislation with autonomous law via statutory accident insurance provided a case study in institutional disconnect. Despite historic lows in fatal accidents (99 in 2024, down from 125 in 2023), significant gaps persist between available safety services and farmer engagement. Small farms particularly lack dedicated safety responsibility, and farmers frequently lack time, awareness, or perceived economic relevance to engage proactively with institutional offerings. The institutional framing leads to safety being viewed as an external task delegated to insurance providers rather than integral to farm management.

A key insight emerged around what was termed the "OSH should be sexy" principle: safety and health measures must become attractive and seamless rather than laborious tasks associated with extra work. This requires fundamental rethinking and personal motivation from farmers, not just better systems or more information. Financial incentives, while showing positive effects particularly for small and medium-sized farms, remain underutilised due to upfront costs, administrative requirements, and persistent cultural barriers that technical solutions alone cannot overcome.

Effective Interventions: Peer Influence and Cultural Change

Successful interventions shared common characteristics emphasising peer influence, cultural relevance, and holistic integration. The "Farmers Have Hearts" cardiovascular health program demonstrated effectiveness by bringing services directly to agricultural venues where farmers already gather, using peer farmer champions rather than health professionals for initial engagement, providing immediate practical feedback framed around farm business investment, and maintaining low-intensity sustained support delivered in ways farmers wanted.

Young farmer mental health support initiatives combined peer-led discussion groups with policy advocacy addressing systemic stressors, practical skill development, and awareness campaigns. The integration of individual support with structural change reflected recognition that mental health cannot be addressed solely through individual resilience when systemic economic and policy factors generate ongoing challanges.

For migrant workers, effective interventions required multi-point approaches simultaneously addressing housing, wages, legal status, information access, and organizing rights. The new EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive provides legal leverage for supply chain accountability, but effectiveness depends on sustained civil society pressure, public exposure of violations, and genuine worker voice rather than representation by others.

The Challenge of Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

The discussion revealed both the necessity and difficulty of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Germany's self-administration model, where farmers and sector representatives jointly govern through parity-based structures, fosters ownership and legitimacy but struggles with coordination across fragmented actor landscapes. Many stakeholders formally acknowledge safety importance yet delegate responsibility rather than proactively engaging, viewing it as someone else's mandate rather than shared concern.

Research-policy partnerships face different timeframes (research requires years; policymakers need immediate answers), different languages (academic writing versus policy briefs), and different incentives (publication versus implementation). Successful partnerships require long-term relationships, embedded researchers in policy organizations, and academic reward structures that value policy engagement.

Toward Socially Sustainable Agriculture

The discussion concluded that social sustainability, ensuring dignified work, healthy communities, and equitable relationships, is foundational to agricultural sustainability overall. Environmental and economic sustainability cannot be achieved while workers and farmers suffer high injury rates, mental health crises, and exploitative conditions. Prevention is not merely about avoiding accidents but about creating agricultural systems where people can thrive. This requires transforming culture, building genuine partnerships, addressing power imbalances, and integrating physical and mental wellbeing across all agricultural populations.

Panel VI

Protecting Vulnerable Groups on Farms

Abstract 6.2

PROTECTING EU FARM WORKERS FROM INJURY AND STRESS – WHO IS RESPONSIBLE AND HOW IS IT DONE?

Prof. Sally Shortall, Newcastle University, Great Britain, and **Dr David Meredith**, Teagasc, Ireland

The EU has in recent years, paid increasing attention to farmer well-being. The Directorate General for Agriculture (DG AGRI) has introduced 'social conditionality', which includes a requirement for farm workers to have safe working conditions and access to personal protective equipment (PPE). We have also seen the main farm worker union, EFFAT, put out a joint statement with the representative body of farm employers, GEOPA, calling for measures to protect farm workers from the hazards of climate change. Other DGs, including DG SANTE (health) and DG Employment also have responsibilities for farmer well-being.

While this progress is laudable there are limitations. First is that the term farm worker is very loose. It includes precarious workers, who may have no contracts, temporary workers, and regular farm employees. The majority of farm workers, at 86% are self-employed or family members. This group are also very heterogeneous, ranging from large farms to small holdings where the self-employed farmer may also have off-farm work. The measures that the EU has put in place only relate to employees, and thus miss most people who are farming, who are just as exposed to the same dangerous occupation. In this article, we consider three key questions. First, we consider some of the issues about self-employment, how the self-employed interact with the social security system and how they are regulated. Second, we examine the difficulties at a policy level of regulating safety for the self-employed. Third, we turn to the limited collective bargaining power of the self-employed that does not hold for farmers. We argue that farmers have always organised as a group and have exerted considerable bargaining power at an EU level. Part of the difficulty is that through this collective bargaining they lobby to reduce regulation, and in the process, the ability to monitor health and safety of the self-employed.

Thank You

Speakers and organisers of the 41st International Colloquium of the International Section of the ISSA on Prevention in Agriculture *Prevention's Role in Advancing Social Sustainability in Agriculture*, Cracow, Poland, 25th-27th June 2025.

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