

BETTER PROTECTION FOR WORKERS



SOLUTIONS FOR AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, HORTICULTURE AND AQUACULTURE IN EUROPE



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Note: For reasons of simplified readability, the gender distinction is omitted.

A publication of the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions
(EFFAT)

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FOREWORD

Every year thousands of people still die in European agriculture, hundreds of thousands are injured and many workers fall ill. Our industries are still the most dangerous of all industries worldwide and in Europe.

With the support of the European Commission, the agricultural trade unions in Europe were able to spend two years dealing intensively with the problems of occupational health and safety in the agricultural sector, questioning employees, hearing experts and developing demands for solutions.



Our thanks therefore go to the European Commission, whose support has made this work possible.

Our thanks also go to the many experts and consultants who supported our work helpfully and gave important hints for solutions.

Our thanks also go to the experts of the Forum social-innovation (FSI), who accompanied our work and repeatedly provided help and orientation.

In particular, however, I would like to thank the agricultural unions and employers, whose participation has contributed to good solutions and ensured that follow-up work is taken forward both at the level of the Member States of the European Union and at European level.

I am confident that our work will improve the safety and health of people working in our industries.

Peter K. **HOLM**

EFFAT Agricultural President

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IMPROVING OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE AND FORESTRY

Project VS/2017/0018

RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

1. GENERAL

EFFAT and its member unions reaffirm the importance of occupational health and safety for employees in European agriculture.

According to official statistics, approximately 1,000 people still die in European agriculture every year.

EFFAT assumes a high number of unreported cases because many accidents are not recorded or not recognised as occupational accidents. For example, occupational musculoskeletal disorders or personal injuries, which often occur very late after the use of pesticides, are hardly taken into account in official statistics.

The project dealt with four of the many occupational health and safety topics that are currently most important to EFFAT and where urgent action is needed:

- Situation of musculoskeletal disorders
- plant protection products
- machine and equipment safety and
- Sole work in agriculture and forestry.

In 4 conferences, the following topics were discussed along the lines of the main areas of action

- Research and Development
- Improving and influencing standards and legislation
- Prevention, information and qualification of employees

with the various players.



with the kind support of the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Integration

EFFAT REQUIRED:

- Enforce the **participation of workers in** research and development of technologies at all levels.
- Improve employee participation in **legislation and standardisation**.
- Ensure the **transparency and permeability of systems that** interact in occupational health and safety.
- **In order to improve prevention**, EFFAT calls for an effective and effective prevention system in European agriculture. As a minimum standard, this includes comprehensive information, continuous training and instruction of all employees. Employers and authorities must ensure that risk assessments are carried out at all workplaces in agriculture and that the resulting operational measures are implemented.
- **Controls:** EFFAT notes that the overall control systems need to be improved. This applies, for example, to the European level with regard to the import of plant protection products or to operational controls on the use of substances, machinery and equipment.
- **Networking:** EFFAT has always supported the campaigns of the European Occupational Health and Safety Agency OSHA. At the same time, EFFAT calls on Member States to support OSHA campaigns with national trade unions through their national structures. In this context, it is important to organise close networking between science, social security, politics, social partners and non-governmental organisations.
- **The inclusion of occupational health and safety protection in the cross-compliance regulations of** the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is imperative, as the example of the use of pesticides shows.

MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES (MSD)

In agriculture, the majority of employees complain about musculoskeletal disorders. For those affected, this means a lot of pain and unnecessary suffering. Musculoskeletal diseases often interact with other diseases such as stress. These diseases represent a considerable cost factor for social security systems and companies: The consequences are often absenteeism and reduced productivity of the affected employees as well as early retirement for health reasons. The resulting business and economic costs are correspondingly high.

In some countries, national observatories have started their work, which base their work on the 2005 Agreement of the European Social Partners on Agriculture. Trade unions are pressing for the establishment of other national observatories.

Research and Development

Research into the causes of diseases and their causal effects on physical and mental health is very costly and must be intensified. In order to come out of the general discussions, the occupation-specific illnesses and their causes of danger must be determined and represented. A presentation of the state of health of agricultural workers with regard to MSDs at national level is urgently needed.

The Observatories must collect individual studies and discuss the results jointly among the social partners and experts.

Another research focus is on technical aids to avoid MSD, e.g. development of anti-vibration seats, hydraulic aids, bending aids, etc.



Improving and influencing standards and legislation

EFFAT continues to urge that regulations be introduced to help prevent MSDs, e.g. by banning heavy bags (>25 Kilo).

MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES (MSD)

Prevention, information and qualification of employees

Especially in the field of musculoskeletal disorders, information and prevention are of paramount importance. Employers and employees must jointly strengthen their initiatives with a view to:

- the development of questions, e.g.: which MSDs frequently occur in agriculture and forestry in which sectors - and which measures can be taken to prevent MSDs?
- the derivation of appropriate measures for the prevention of MSDs with regard to the operational, industry, national and European levels
- the exchange of good practices: social partners, accident insurance institutions, occupational health practitioners, etc. should network, exchange good practices and disseminate them. Good examples can come from prevention practice or rehabilitation, for example
- organising networking, in particular between national observatories, the European Commission, researchers and social partners.

When assessing the risks to agricultural jobs, particular attention must be paid to the potential impact of activities on the musculoskeletal system and appropriate measures must be implemented. Education and training measures must be part of prevention.

Campaigns at European level (OSHA) and at national and company level have had an impact and need to be continued.



The use of plant protection products remains an urgent problem at farm, national and European level, requiring a high level of commitment from all stakeholders. Although food residues are controlled, the use of pesticides continues to increase. The assessment of the environmental impact and the risks for employees and consumers are relegated to the background in favour of a growth ideology of the chemical industry and the agricultural lobby. The interests of trade unions must therefore be sufficiently taken into account in the national action plans.



Research and Development

The development, authorisation and monitoring of the effects of plant protection products on humans and the environment are of great economic interest to the chemical industry, which has a strong lobby at national and European level. Transparency must be established about research, development and use of pesticides. Market access is of particular importance here. The active substances should not only be tested in the approval phase, but also in long-term studies. It is also necessary to investigate how the substances affect employees and the environment.

PESTICIDES

Improving and influencing standards and legislation

There is a multitude of standards and regulations. These standards are often not understood by users. In addition to creating transparency, simple information is required for users.

The data on the sale and use of pesticides in agriculture should be standardised in all Member States so that comparable data are available.

The National Action Plans (NAPs) must give the social partners more participation rights. The interests of the users must be given greater consideration.

European and national controls on imports must be strengthened and measures taken to prevent illegal imports and their distribution. Overall, controls on the use of pesticides should also be improved at farm level.

In order to better assert the interests of the workers, the trade unions must network with other important actors, e.g. NGOs.

Prevention, information and qualification of employees

The mandatory certificate of competence must be carried out in a qualified manner; harmonisation at European level at a high level must be an objective of politicians and social partners.



The employees are to be informed continuously and comprehensively about the use and the associated dangers when handling pesticides and to be instructed appropriately. Entrepreneurs must make the necessary personal protective

equipment available to their employees free of charge.

The handling of pesticides in particular shows how important it is to include occupational health and safety in the cross-compliance regulations of the GAP.

Agricultural machinery and equipment continue to be an important source of danger to people and the environment. The sources of danger have different causes:

- inadequate construction
- inappropriate handling of machines and equipment.

Often there is no cause for an accident, but machine, work organisation and lack of qualification work together.

Research and Development

Especially in the field of development and production of machines and devices there is a great need for action. At present, the following measures must be taken which can promote the occupational health and safety of employees and help to prevent accidents:

- Increased investigations into machine loads must be carried out. In particular, a European overview of machine types and their defects is necessary.
- The expansion of the field of vision of machines still requires a lot of development, and cost-effective solutions must be sought. In the future, it will also be necessary to rely increasingly on sensors and camera systems.
- For small tractors with front loaders without cabins, protective structures or cabins must be developed.
- For brakes, a comprehensive update must be carried out; partial aspects are still not sufficiently regulated.
- The cabins must be improved, e.g. as protection when applying pesticides, to protect against falling parts, to reduce dust pollution, to reduce noise, to improve protection against UV radiation, etc.
- Portable devices with rechargeable batteries can relieve workers. At the same time, however, new strains on the musculoskeletal system can arise, which needs to be investigated and observed.



MACHINE AND EQUIPMENT SAFETY

Improving and influencing standards and legislation

Improved technology can prevent many accidents at work, some of them fatal. In many committees at European level, EFFAT advocates a technology that helps to prevent accidents at work. EFFAT notes that, in particular, agricultural workers are not sufficiently represented in the bodies at national and European level in which decisions are taken on technical innovations and their use. Trade unions must be more strongly represented there so that the interests of employees are incorporated into the technical innovations.



For example, new regulations must be introduced for the use of quads in agriculture or three-point belts with a warning function must be introduced.

There is still insufficient information in Europe on the nature and extent of the risks posed by certain machinery and equipment and their uses. It is the task of the European institutions to provide the competent institutions of the Member States and the social partners with appropriate information in order to meet the requirements of European occupational health and safety and its legal sources. The aim of this information is to ensure that it is sufficiently comparable to draw possible conclusions from it. Employers should be obliged to reduce the risks associated with working with machinery. The guidelines should provide a framework for classifying machines.

Prevention, information and qualification of employees

Training and instruction and in particular the training of employees is a central instrument in the prevention of accidents involving machinery and equipment.

Employees should have a right of co-determination in the procurement of machinery and equipment. Safe machines must be better advertised.

WORKING ALONE IN AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

Although working in dangerous situations without a second person is not allowed, we have to note that in dangerous workplaces it is often the case that people work alone and dangerous situations and accidents occur. In case of accidents or sudden health problems of employees, a rescue chain cannot be initiated in time. This causes precious time to pass with corresponding negative consequences for the persons concerned.

Research and Development

EFFAT has long been calling for research to be carried out into the technical possibilities of reporting accidents or sudden illnesses (circulatory complaints) of workers during dangerous work in agriculture and forestry, in addition

to the second person present, and for practicable and cost-effective solutions to be developed.

Improving and influencing standards and legislation

The prohibition of dangerous work without a second person must be more strictly controlled.

Prevention, information and qualification of employees

The hazard potential of hazardous work must be assessed in hazard assessments. In addition to a second person, technical aids such as satellite-supported communication structures must also be used.



10 PRIORITIES FOR BETTER HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK IN EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE



The following issues are priorities for trade unions in agriculture, forestry, horticulture and aquaculture:

➤ **ILO RATIFY CONVENTION 184 ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN AGRICULTURE**

The ratification of ILO Convention 184 by European countries is intended to modernise occupational health and safety in agriculture and strengthen national institutions.

➤ **RISK ASSESSMENT AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR CROSS-COMPLIANCE CONTROLS IN THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (GAP)**

Occupational health and safety should be linked to agricultural policy. EFFAT calls for the inclusion of a criterion for active occupational health protection in the controls of European agricultural subsidies and proposes risk assessment as an instrument. So a minimum effort can generate a maximum profit.

➤ **FATAL OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENTS**

Work in agriculture, forestry, horticulture and aquaculture is very dangerous. There are too many fatal accidents. These must be reduced sustainably through measurable measures.

➤ **MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES**

On the basis of an agreement between the European social partners in agriculture,¹ national observatories have been set up in various countries (Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland). Further countries are to be included in the network.

➤ **MACHINES AND EQUIPMENT (BATTERY TECHNOLOGY, TRACTORS, EXHAUST FUMES, NOISE, VIBRATIONS...)**

Many machines and equipment are often used for a long time and therefore no longer comply with the applicable safety requirements.

Together with the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers' Unions (EFBH), we are committed to emission-free technology for hand-held machines and equipment. Accumulators can be a solution, but new problems associated with battery technology (including ergonomics, weights and noise-free devices) need to be solved. Market surveillance does not function sufficiently, which is why many devices are available that are not suitable for the type in question. Manufacturer information on emissions and vibrations often does not correspond to practice.

¹ Agreement of the European Social Partners for Agriculture of 21 November 2005 on reducing the risks to workers of work-related musculoskeletal disorders in agriculture

While trade unions demand significant improvements in occupational health and safety as early as the design stage of machines and equipment and the direct use of practical experience in the renewal of machines, manufacturers are relying above all on autonomous systems and more intensive mechanisation of human-machine relations. Our experience shows that new threats arise if trade union contributions are not taken into account.

➤ **HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES (ESPECIALLY PLANT PROTECTION)**

Among other things, we work as a partner of the European Occupational Safety and Health Agency OSHA in Bilbao on hazardous substances and concentrate primarily on chemical pesticides (e.g. glyphosate). At present, the main focus is on issues relating to the approval of hazardous substances (Ordinance on the Approval of Plant Protection Products).

➤ **BIOGENIC HAZARDS (MRSA, VIRUSES, PATHOGENIC, NEOPHYTES...)**

Particular problems include multi-resistant germs (MRSA), diseases of animals and workers involved in animal production, and diseases caused by new or invasive animals and plants (mosquitoes, ticks, allergenic plants, etc.). All this provokes diseases that mainly affect workers who work outdoors, with animals and plants or have contact with them. We regularly inform our members about new developments and participate in preventive measures.

➤ **SOLAR RADIATION (FOCUS ON SKIN CANCER AND PROTECTION OF WORKERS DURING FIELD AND HARVEST WORK)**

Especially during harvest times, many workers are exposed to intensive irradiation and sometimes extreme heat situations. EFFAT calls for legislative measures, is committed to the direct protection of these workers through appropriate precautionary instruments (water, breaks, heat protection...) and calls for early protection of workers against skin cancer and recognition of this cancer as an occupational disease.

➤ **ALL EMPLOYMENT**

More and more workers are being deployed in dangerous work situations in such a way that they have no contact with other colleagues who can inform them in an emergency. Therefore, the ban on working alone in dangerous situations must be consistently implemented and access to emergency services must be guaranteed at all times. Corresponding inter-company facilities are to be installed and operational investments promoted.

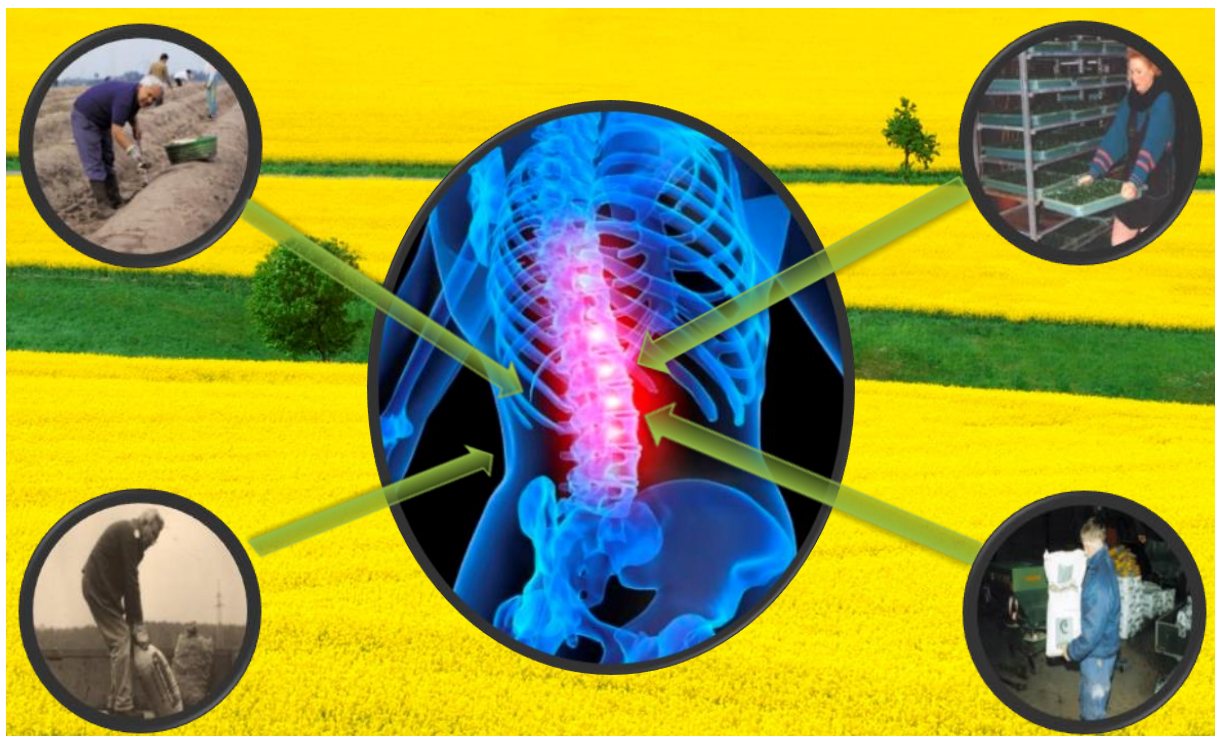
➤ **STRESS DUE TO INADEQUATE LEGAL AND COMPANY WORKING TIME REGULATIONS**

The exclusion of agriculture from the protection of national working time laws in some European countries results in accidents and occupational diseases. The member organisations of EFFAT are committed to practical working time regulations that protect employees. New diseases must be recognised by the responsible institutions and proactively prevented by appropriate preventive measures.

MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES (MSD)

Many of the approximately 10 million workers in European agriculture, forestry and horticulture suffer from back, tendon and joint health problems. For those affected, this means pain and suffering; for employers and social security systems, these illnesses represent a considerable cost factor: The consequences are absenteeism and reduced productivity of the affected employees as well as health-related early retirement. The resulting business and economic costs are correspondingly high.

Workers' representatives at the workplace are working with their trade unions to reduce these musculoskeletal disorders. This position is intended to support them in this.



MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES (MSD) HAVE MANY CAUSES

WHAT ARE MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS?

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders cover a broad spectrum of inflammatory and degenerative diseases of the musculoskeletal system. That includes:

- Inflammatory diseases of the tendons, especially in the wrist, elbow and shoulder, which occur mainly in activities involving repetitive movements over long periods of time and in static activities;
- Myalgia, i.e. pain and dysfunction of the muscles, mainly of the shoulder-neck area, which occur during activities with long phases of static loading;
- Pinched nerves (compression syndrome), especially of the wrist and forearm;
- Degenerative diseases of the spine, usually in the area of the neck or lumbar spine, in professions that require manual lifting of loads or heavy physical labour. However, such complaints can also occur in the hip or knee joints.

Studies show that different activities and professions within the "green sector" are affected to different degrees by MSDs. Although several authors emphasise that there is no direct cause-effect relationship between occupational activity and the illness, it is clear that the resulting functional restrictions mean that illnesses occur more frequently among employees in the individual occupations. Causal connections can then be deduced from this.

With the progressive structural change in agriculture and forestry, work processes are changing. Despite many technical improvements (e.g. milking parlour instead of pipe or bucket milking system) the extent of physical complaints has remained very high. Employees are increasingly complaining about the increase in stress factors. A tight schedule, increasing control and documentation activities and short recovery times put a strain on employees. Shift work predominates in the larger dairy cattle plants, combined with frequently changing working hours.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS?

The physical causes of musculoskeletal disorders are manifold:

- Manual activities, in particular repetitive operations;
- Lifting and carrying heavy loads;
- Full-body vibrations;
- Poor posture and unfavourable movements, strong hand movements;
- Direct mechanical pressure on body tissue;
- Low temperatures in the working environment.

However, there are also increasing causes arising from work organisation. These include in particular:

- Working speed, time grid,
- Payment systems;
- repetitive activities, monotonous activities;
- psychosocial work factors.

The latter can lead to additional stress.

In recent years, agricultural workers in particular have complained about increasing stress at the workplace. This can also lead to physical tension and causes musculoskeletal disorders.

WHICH EMPLOYEES ARE PARTICULARLY AT RISK?

PRECARIOUS WORKERS

They frequently perform repetitive tasks and often work under tiring or painful conditions (e.g. back and knee problems during fruit and vegetable harvesting) when the workplace is insecure.

YOUNG AND OLD

Young workers, especially those still in growth, are at the mercy of MSE. Here special protection is needed to maintain the back, tendons, joints and bones permanently.

Older workers are more likely to suffer from MSE, as some manual work cannot be carried out as fluently as it was in younger years due to age.

WOMEN

Female workers are more often affected by upper limb MSDs than men.

HOW CAN MSD BE REDUCED FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN EUROPE?

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are often unspecific and therefore difficult to attribute to specific working conditions. They are manifold in appearance. The different conditions at the workplace therefore play a prominent role. Lifting and carrying heavy loads, one-sided and repetitive activities, forced postures and vibrations are the main causes of MSE.

EFFAT is committed to the enforcement of changing work activities. Long periods of sitting shall be combined with periods of standing and walking activities, labour-intensive periods shall be combined with periods of low working hours or corresponding breaks. For the trade unions in the agricultural sector, legal and company regulations on working hours are therefore of particular importance from the point of view of employee protection.

Young workers and pregnant women should be sensitised by joint initiatives of the social partners so that they do not have to lift and carry heavy loads - even if they believe that they can carry out such tasks.

Older workers are particularly affected by MSEs because they are less physically fit and often suffer from various degenerative consequences of past overloads.

Here, EFFAT advocates age-appropriate - demographic - solutions at company and inter-company levels, as these employee groups are becoming increasingly important for companies as a result of demographic change.

THE EFFAT ACTION PLAN

This is why EFFAT, as a result of this work and in the light of previous work, has presented an action plan aimed at improving the conditions for workers in the agricultural professions in five stages.

1. setting up national observatories		
Identify countries	Identify social partners	Identifying institutions
Organise support	provide finance	Request reports
2. enforce a uniform definition		
Identify final list	Consult stakeholders	Secure support
Integrate politics	legislative initiative	presentation
3. exchange best practices		
Using Observatories	Involving stakeholders	disseminate information
Accompanying implementations	Present results	Inform partners
4. create further networks		
Involving new stakeholders	Securing access to science	
Inform new partners	Present results	Create unit
5. creating a European framework		
Integrate the results of steps 1 to 4 into a European framework and negotiate with the European institutions.		

This Action Plan aims to establish further Observatories in at least 3 countries by 2020. The organisations and partners involved must advise and decide on the implementation of the further steps.

SAFE HANDLING OF MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT

PROBLEMATICS

EFFAT refers to the many reports from member organisations about workers and smallholders from the agricultural, forestry and horticultural sectors who are ill, injured or killed as a result of contact with and work with machines and equipment.

The use of machines and equipment is a daily confirmation of the opportunities offered by technological progress. However, agricultural machinery itself often does not seem to be sufficiently aware of the far-reaching consequences of its actions. EFFAT misses innovations in agricultural technology in areas in which the conditions for handling machines and equipment are unreasonable for employees. The example of the Gurkenflieger is here a symbol for a missed and outdated agricultural technique.

This position paper of the agricultural trade unions in Europe is intended to help put the future back on its feet. Because technology and innovation have to benefit people.



DATA SITUATION

In some countries, accidents involving agricultural, forestry and horticultural machinery and equipment are well or sufficiently documented, while in others the data are inadequate or non-existent.

DEMAND

EFFAT calls on the European Commission to encourage EU Member States to adequately document accidents, injuries and fatal accidents involving machinery and equipment in agriculture, forestry and horticulture and to make this data available to social partners and European authorities.

If such an approach does not appear to be effective, a European legal basis should be created for the creation of sufficient data in the Member States.

ACCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR USERS OF MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT

Trade union representatives repeatedly report on workers and smallholders who (must) actively use machinery and equipment without sufficient knowledge. This practice leads to illnesses and accidents.

RECEIVABLES

On the basis of the relevant European and national regulations, all users of machinery and equipment should only be allowed to operate after an introduction to the handling of the machinery or equipment.

This introduction should be renewed at appropriate intervals.

The employer must ensure that prescribed certificates (driver's licenses, machine licenses, chainsaw certificates, etc.) are available for the active operation of appropriate machines and equipment. It is the employer's duty to monitor the existence and fulfilment of legal or other normative requirements.

PROTECTION OF INDIRECTLY AFFECTED WORKERS AND SMALLHOLDERS

Time and again, workers or small producers die, have accidents or fall ill as a result of contact with machinery and equipment operated or used by others.

RECEIVABLES

Users of machinery and equipment should be regularly informed, trained and sensitized to new findings regarding the hazards of these machines and equipment for others.

Compliance with regulations or technical rules for adequate open spaces and safety areas must be ensured by the employer.

Manufacturers should provide machinery and equipment with the existing and possible means of averting hazards to third parties.

PROTECTION IN CONNECTION WITH TRACTORS

Safety related to tractors concerns transport and large trailers, the application of liquids (in particular pesticides), the construction of machinery (e.g. overhead loads) and "small tractors" (e.g. tractors for vineyards and special crops).

Drivers of tractors are particularly at risk because a very large proportion of fatal accidents at work with machines affect them.

Large suspended loads often lead to accidents with consequences for the driver and third persons. Many braking systems cannot distribute the braking forces evenly, resulting in accidents. This concerns new machinery when old trailers are attached and old tractors which are not designed for new heavy loads.

Drivers of tractors that apply pesticides are often mistaken in their belief that a cab provides adequate protection against pesticides. A note in the operating manual of the machine is not sufficient to put an end to this incorrect view and to ensure sufficient protection for the user. It is also unreasonable to expect users to wear the prescribed personal protective equipment in a closed tractor cab.

While tractor design has improved, the use of old tractors continues to be a constant source of accidents.

RECEIVABLES

EFFAT is committed to providing either pressurised cabins or sufficient filters against pesticides when new tractors with cabins are registered, if these machines are intended for the use of pesticides.

In view of the longevity of tractors in agriculture, EFFAT calls for an overarching strategy to reduce the risks posed by end-of-life tractors and for corresponding offers and incentives for retrofitting.

Sources of danger caused by design (e.g. overhead loads) should be reduced.

Small tractors, such as those used in vineyards and special crops, often tip over, resulting in accidents and even fatalities. EFFAT calls for a discussion on the safety of these special vehicles, the constructive improvement of new vehicles and the retrofitting of end-of-life vehicles.

PROTECTION IN CONNECTION WITH HAND-HELD MACHINES AND EQUIPMENT

Hand-guided machines and equipment such as chainsaws, hedge trimmers, hedge trimmers, cut-off machines, brush cutters and many others represent, in addition to the many advantages, major sources of danger for users and third parties. Accidents and illnesses are based on design faults, incorrect guidance, improper use and ignorance of the limits of the performance and load capacity of the machines and equipment.

The most important stresses relate to ergonomics, vibrations, noise and emissions.

At a European conference held in Prague (Czech Republic) in December 2017, trade union representatives complained about incorrect emissions data from manufacturers, which in practice were exceeded by up to 790%. Also data about vibrations were exceeded in practice again and again.

The participating European Federation of Trade Unions in the Building and Wood Industries (EFBWW) and the Agriculture, Food and Tourism Sectors (EFFAT) have therefore decided to work together to improve hand-held machinery and equipment.

DEMAND

The loads caused by hand-guided machines and equipment are often unacceptable. EFFAT calls on the European Commission and the competent authorities in the Member States to identify and implement improvements in this area with the involvement of the relevant social partners.

DIGITISATION AND DATA PROTECTION

The implementation of digitisation strategies in agriculture, forestry and horticulture will lead to significant changes in the activities and job profiles of employees and small producers in these sectors.

EFFAT hopes that these developments will lead to better and more humane jobs. However, EFFAT will also combat the destruction of good jobs through machine-oriented digitisation.

An important approach for EFFAT will be data protection for workers using intelligent machinery and equipment. Ongoing checks on the way in which machines and equipment are used must not be developed at the expense of user data protection.

There are many opportunities associated with digitisation. But many questions have not even been asked today. In the coming years, EFFAT therefore intends to deal more intensively with the changes brought about by digitisation and support socially acceptable implementation.

RECEIVABLES

EFFAT calls for the digitisation of machines and equipment in agriculture, forestry and horticulture to be geared to people's needs.

EFFAT supports the call of the European Federation of Agricultural Machinery and Plant Engineering (CEMA) for the European Commission to establish a multi-stakeholder dialogue group to look beyond pure product legislation to the responsibilities of all sectors and interest groups.

EFFAT calls on the European Commission, the competent authorities in the Member States and the responsible social partners to develop principles and guidelines to ensure data protection for users of machinery and equipment.

PROMOTION OF THE FEEDBACK METHOD INVOLVING TRADE UNIONS

The "feedback method" developed by trade unions, trade union-related institutions, social partner institutions and other institutions is an important contribution to achieving future improvements for users of machines and equipment already in the design process. This allows the requirements of practitioners to be incorporated into the design of machines and equipment at an early stage, reducing costs and problems later on. In concrete terms, for agricultural engineering this means cooperating with trade unions and users in order to obtain information from them on constructive and ergonomic improvements.

DEMAND

The relevant trade unions and small farmers' organisations should be informed at an early stage by the machine and equipment manufacturers about the development of machines and equipment and should provide practitioners who can contribute their knowledge of improvements from the users' point of view to the design process.

BETTER PROTECTION OF WORKERS AGAINST PESTICIDES



PROBLEMATICS

EFFAT refers to the many reports from member organisations on injured and sick workers and smallholders from the agricultural and horticultural sectors who have come into contact with the residues of pesticides applied by others after the active use of various pesticides or after contact with the residues of pesticides applied by others.

DATA SITUATION

Despite years of discussions and presentations of accidents and illnesses by many social groups, no reliable data have been presented by the competent authorities in the European countries and the European institutions to date.

DEMAND

Occupational reports of illnesses and accidents involving chemical pesticides should be given their own code and statistically recorded with doctors, hospitals and accident insurance institutions. These records should be collected from a national body and made available to the social partners free of charge.

FAILURE OF THE CONTROL AUTHORITIES

EFFAT member organisations repeatedly report that the responsible control institutions (labour inspectorates, health services, social security prevention agencies, trade unions, science and other institutions) have no or inadequate technical and knowledge-based equipment at their disposal (labour inspectorates, health services, social security prevention agencies, trade unions, science and other institutions), which are not in a position to sufficiently recognise the problems of workers and small producers and to implement the necessary remedies.

DEMAND

EFFAT is committed to ensuring that the competent national inspection bodies have sufficient human and technical resources.

They should maintain a contractual or legal relationship with the relevant trade unions and smallholder organisations in order to be able to provide more effective awareness-raising and information to affected workers and smallholders.

RECOGNITION OF OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES THROUGH HANDLING OR LONG-TERM CONTACT WITH PESTICIDES

Employees who become ill as a result of handling or long-term contact with pesticides are not adequately protected in their rights. They are often faced with unreasonable bureaucratic demands and sometimes have to provide unrealistic evidence.

DEMAND

The burden of proof must be reversed and not imposed on the employee.

Occupational diseases and accidents should be recognised as occupational diseases.

The data on the proof must be transferred from the employee to the institutions of the accident insurance institutions. Appropriate instruments can be provided by the relevant trade unions (phytosanitary diaries and similar).

ACCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR PESTICIDE USERS

Trade union representatives repeatedly report on workers and smallholders who (must) actively use pesticides without sufficient knowledge. This practice leads to illnesses and accidents.

DEMAND

On the basis of the relevant European and national legislation, all users of pesticides should be allowed to act only after presentation of a certificate.

This certificate should be renewed at appropriate intervals and familiarise those concerned with the new developments in plant protection.

PROTECTION OF INDIRECTLY AFFECTED WORKERS AND SMALLHOLDERS

The protection of workers sent to the area of active substances after pesticide application (especially in greenhouses) needs to be improved. Rules on time limits for reentry are often not sufficiently observed. This leads to accidents and illnesses among workers who are themselves inactive pesticide users.

DEMAND

Information and knowledge of the effects of pesticides are also useful for workers and small producers to protect themselves and others from the negative consequences of contact with pesticides. Improvements in vocational training and information and awareness-raising campaigns are suitable for this purpose. These must also include the consequences for indirectly affected workers and small farmers.

Workers and small producers should be adequately protected against drift and entry from pesticide applications by others.

PROTECTION OF USERS IN TRACTORS

Users of pesticides in tractors often mistakenly believe that a cab provides sufficient protection against pesticides. A note in the operating manual of the machine is not sufficient to put an end to this incorrect view and to ensure sufficient protection for the user. It is also unreasonable to expect users to wear the prescribed personal protective equipment in a closed tractor cab.

DEMAND

EFFAT is committed to providing sufficient filters against pesticides when new tractors with cabins are registered, if these machines are intended for the use of pesticides.

Old machines should be retrofitted if possible. This retrofitting should be encouraged.

AUTHORISATION OF PESTICIDES

The discussions on the approval of glyphosate have repeatedly highlighted the dependence of approval authorities on information from pesticide manufacturers. In particular, the lack of transparency and insufficient scientific neutrality were criticised.

DEMAND

EFFAT is committed to independent and neutral regulatory authorities.

The authorisation process should be transparent and the necessary information for a new pesticide should be made available to interested parties.

The relevant trade unions should be given information rights on pesticides to be authorised and on the need for new authorisation.

Workers in control and approval authorities have long been demanding validated and accessible as well as deposited detection methods for all pesticides and their degradation products. EFFAT supports these workers in their demands.

EFFAT calls for a review of the limit values and a critical evaluation of the zoning concept in the EU.

For pesticides already authorised, the necessary information should be created and made available promptly and comprehensively

PROHIBITION OF GLYPHOSATE

The plant treatment agent glyphosate is still suspected of being carcinogenic. The use of this pesticide must therefore be discontinued.

DEMAND

The plant treatment product glyphosate should be banned immediately and residual stocks should be withdrawn from the market. A ban on the placing on the market and the cessation of the use of glyphosate should be achieved. Appropriate alternative methods should be developed and promoted in order to be able to carry out land treatment in a safe way in the future.

PROHIBITION OF PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS PESTICIDES

Particularly dangerous pesticides (based on WHO and PAN Europe lists) continue to pose a major risk to users, the environment, consumers and products.

DEMAND

Particularly dangerous pesticides should lose authorisation and their use should be prohibited. Products treated with such pesticides should be excluded from import into Europe. Conversion programmes in developing countries and other user countries should be encouraged.

PROMOTION OF PESTICIDE-FREE PRODUCTION PROCESSES

Not using pesticides is the best way to protect users, the environment, consumers and products.

DEMAND

EFFAT is committed to promoting organic farming with clear objectives.

Organic farming production methods should be integrated into vocational training systems and vocational training for organic farming promoted.

Organic products should be particularly promoted in export advertising.

PROMOTION OF PESTICIDE-REDUCED PRODUCTION PROCESSES

Pesticide-reduced production processes are a small but sensible step to reduce the impact of pesticides on users, the environment, consumers and products.

DEMAND

EFFAT is committed to promoting good practice programmes. However, these should only be supported if clear pesticide reductions are linked and demonstrated with these programmes.

PROMOTION OF PESTICIDE-FREE REGIONS AND PRODUCTS

Pesticide-free regions and pesticide-free product line programmes are important contributions to protecting users, the environment, consumers and products from the dangers of pesticides.

DEMAND

EFFAT is committed to the creation of pesticide-free regions.

EFFAT calls for support for producer groups and product consortia that are pesticide-free.



INVOLVEMENT OF RELEVANT TRADE UNIONS AND SMALLHOLDER ORGANISATIONS IN NATIONAL PESTICIDE REDUCTION PROGRAMMES

National pesticide reduction programmes are useful tools to better protect people, the environment and products from the consequences of inappropriate pesticide use. It is therefore

necessary for an efficient implementation of these programmes to involve the responsible national trade unions and smallholder organisations in the organisation and implementation of these reduction programmes.

DEMAND

The responsible trade unions and smallholder farmers' organisations should be supported by the bodies responsible for the national reduction programmes in order to be able to participate actively in reduction programmes.

The responsible trade unions are committed to clear targets, timetables for reduction targets, monitoring implementation and regular evaluations of reduction targets.

PROMOTING THE PREVENTIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE RELEVANT TRADE UNIONS

Trade unions and smallholder organisations run their own information and awareness-raising campaigns for workers and smallholders to protect them, protect the environment and improve product safety.

DEMAND

The relevant national institutions should provide assistance and support to the relevant trade unions and smallholder organisations in conducting information and awareness-raising campaigns.

POSITION OF AGRICULTURAL TRADE UNIONS IN EUROPE ON THE WORKING ALONE IN DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

With the support of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Integration, representatives of agricultural trade unions in Europe were able to meet in Marseille (France) in October 2018 to discuss the situa-



tion of workers and small-scale producers working alone and without visual contact with other people or rescue chains in dangerous work situations.

PROBLEMATICS

EFFAT refers to the reports from the member organisations on workers and smallholders from the agricultural, forestry and horticultural sectors who are ill, injured or killed as a result of working alone in dangerous work situations.

It seems that these situations are increasing and gaining importance in the green industries. Migrant workers in particular seem to be used more frequently by employers than sole workers in dangerous work situations. Especially many reports come from forestry, but also from agriculture and horticulture.

Due to their social role, small producers very often work alone in dangerous work situations.

Working alone in hazardous work situations particularly affects people who work in companies beyond their working life (comparable to retirement age).

DEFINITION

Working alone in hazardous work situations is understood as activities which

- carried out by a single worker or small producer,
- are objectively dangerous and

- be carried out in such a way that the person concerned has no call or visual contact with other persons or a rescue chain which can be informed or activated in the event of danger.

DATA SITUATION

There is insufficient data available for agriculture, forestry and horticulture on the extent of solo work in hazardous work situations.

DEMAND

EFFAT calls on the European Commission to encourage Member States to document accidents and illnesses resulting from working alone in hazardous work situations in agriculture, forestry and horticulture.

If such an approach does not appear to be effective, a European legal basis should be created for the creation of sufficient data in the Member States.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE BAN ON WORKING ALONE IN HAZARDOUS WORK SITUATIONS

EFFAT is committed to comprehensive control of the ban on working alone in hazardous work situations.

DEMAND

EFFAT calls on the European Commission to encourage Member States to improve the enforcement of the ban on working alone in hazardous work situations in agriculture, forestry and horticulture.

Such enforcement should be accompanied by reduction targets for accidents and illnesses and should be carried out by the competent authorities in the Member States.

The competent bodies should regularly inform the European Commission about the effectiveness of the measures against working alone in hazardous work situations in agriculture, forestry and horticulture.

EFFAT calls on employers in agriculture, forestry and horticulture to enforce the ban on working alone in hazardous work situations and to ensure that their members are adequately informed and made aware of the situation.

ACCESS TO RESCUE CHAINS

If the ban on working alone cannot be sufficiently implemented, sufficient access to rescue chains should be provided, at least for the persons concerned.

The relevant instruments, concepts and equipment were presented to trade union representatives at their meeting in Marseille in October 2018.

Taking into account the need for investment by businesses, it should be pointed out that such investment would not be necessary if the ban on working alone in hazardous work situations were sufficiently enforced.

DEMAND

EFFAT is committed to the creation of rescue chains in sectors such as forestry, which often organise single-handed work in dangerous work situations.

These rescue chains should be linked to the emergency systems of the region and should guarantee immediate access by rescue workers or other trained persons to workers and small producers who are ill or injured.

EFFAT calls on the European Commission to facilitate an exchange of existing technical approaches, instruments, concepts and equipment at European level and among stakeholders. Such exchanges should be open to representatives of the Member States as well as to the relevant social partner organisations.

INVOLVEMENT OF RELEVANT TRADE UNIONS AND SMALLHOLDER ORGANISATIONS IN NATIONAL PROGRAMMES TO ELIMINATE SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN HAZARDOUS WORK SITUATIONS

National programmes to eliminate solo work in hazardous work situations could be helpful institutions to better protect individuals from the consequences of solo work in hazardous work situations. It is therefore necessary for efficient implementation to involve the relevant national trade unions and smallholder organisations in the organisation and implementation of these programmes.

DEMAND

The responsible trade unions and smallholder farmers' organisations should be supported by the bodies responsible for the national reduction programmes in order to be able to participate actively in reduction programmes:

PROMOTING THE PREVENTIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE RELEVANT TRADE UNIONS

The relevant trade unions and smallholder organisations conduct their own information and awareness-raising campaigns for affected workers and small producers in order to better protect them against the consequences of working alone in dangerous work situations.

DEMAND

The relevant national institutions should provide assistance and support to the relevant trade unions and smallholder organisations in conducting information and awareness-raising campaigns.

As a European umbrella organisation, **EFFAT** represents the interests of more than 127 national trade unions from 38 European countries and more than 2.5 million members in the agricultural, food and tourism sectors.

EFFAT is a member of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and a regional organisation in the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Café and Tobacco Workers' Unions (IUF).

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