

1725 **YOUNG WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS RISKS**

Susan Gunn. *I.L.O (ret'd), Geneva, Switzerland*

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Aim of special session The world's largest workforce with many children and high injury/illness rates deserves more attention. New approaches, well-tested and ripe for replication, are presented.

¹JA Demeranville, ²BC Lee, ³N Correale, ⁴Vicki Walker

¹Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

²National Children's Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety

³Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

⁴PRIME International

1725a **USING NON-TRADITIONAL CHANNELS AND MATERIALS TO REACH YOUNG AGRICULTURAL WORKERS**

JA Demeranville. *Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations*

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Introduction Agriculture is one of the most hazardous occupations in the world based on work-related accidents, disease and death. It is also the sector where the vast majority of child labour is found and the principal source of employment for rural youth in developing countries. Children and youth engaged in agricultural activities are at risk of exposure to a wide range of hazards and are particularly vulnerable due to a number of behavioural and biological reasons. Much of young people's work in agriculture takes place in remote areas and the majority of child labour is unpaid family labour. Therefore, they often fall through the cracks of traditional occupational safety and health systems and inspection. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations is working to reduce hazardous child labour in agriculture and promote safe work for youth in agriculture and related activities. By working through channels such as national agricultural extension systems, farmer field schools and rural radio, FAO aims to raise awareness on OSH issues for young workers. Particular attention is given to protecting children from pesticides. Tools such as visual facilitator's guides for use with farmers, fishers and livestock raisers and E-learning courses aimed at ministries of agriculture, agricultural researchers and producers' organisations have been developed to help mobilise agricultural stakeholders in protecting young workers engaged in agricultural activities, including in family-based work and in the informal economy.

1725b **EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SAFEGUARDING YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE**

BC Lee. *National Children's Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety*

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Introduction Agriculture is among the world's most common and most dangerous occupations and the only one that typically allows children into the occupational setting. In 1997 the U.S. launched its National Initiative for Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention. Surveillance in 1998 revealed that

2/3 of the annual 37 000 injuries and deaths occurred to non-working children (bystanders).

Methods Given the challenge of regulating agriculture, voluntary standards were created via a consensus process involving a multi-stakeholder group. In 1999, the 'North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks' (NAGCAT) were released to assist farm parents in assigning age-appropriate work for children. In 2004, guidelines for 'Creating Safe Play Areas on Farms' were released to guide parents in maintaining a protected recreational area for very young children when off-farm child care is not available. Recently, these guidelines were modified and upgraded as mobile-friendly resources.

Results With federal funding, the NAGCAT guidelines were field-tested. Results demonstrated that using NAGCAT reduced injuries by 50%. Research also highlighted the strength of dissemination strategies, and their application in different populations. Meanwhile, the Safe Play Area guidelines were being shared with young farm parents. Agricultural media coverage was positive and farm organisations and insurance vendors began referencing these preferred strategies for safeguarding children. In the past 30 years the rate of agricultural injuries for working and non-working youth has dropped by more than 60%. Better parenting practices and social norms have improved safety conditions for children living and working on farms.

Discussion These publicly available, voluntary guidelines are an option in lieu of regulations. They can be promoted through different spheres of influence, e.g. farm organisations, health agencies, educators, and the media. They have been translated and modified for use beyond North America and have the potential to safeguard children in developing countries where mechanised equipment is increasingly used in agriculture.

1725c **PROTECTING YOUTH FROM PESTICIDES: SUCCESSES OF THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION IN GENERATING DATA AND INCLUDING YOUTH IN RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES**

N Correale. *Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations*

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Pesticides are among the most serious risks to the health of agricultural workers and surrounding rural communities. Occupational exposure to pesticides occurs while applying, mixing, washing contaminated clothes and empty containers etc. and through different exposure routes. The Rotterdam Convention is a multilateral agreement aiming at protecting human health and environment from the risks of hazardous pesticides and other chemicals that are still on trade and, for this reason, widely used in agriculture. To support developing countries and economies in transition, there is a specific article for detecting problems with certain pesticide formulations in the field. Under this framework, good experience has been gained in collecting data on occupational exposure to pesticides in the field, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups (women, children, young workers, seasonal workers) and in different regional contexts such as in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and in Africa. To provide guidance to Parties, a tool for monitoring and reporting pesticide poisoning incidents (Severely Hazardous Pesticide Formulation – SHPF toolkit) has been developed with information on methodologies for data collection, examples of incident reporting