Minutes of the Workshop Meeting

Time: Friday, September 20, 2019  
Place: University of Milan, Italy

Welcome speeches were presented by Claudio Colosio, Angela Pesatori and Giovanna Spatari from the University of Milan. The speakers started the workshop meeting and stressed the importance of safety in agricultural production. Jarkko Leppälä from Luke was chosen to write the meeting minutes.

Professor Claudio Colosio and Professor Risto Rautiainen from the University of Nebraska and Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) were the session chairmen. The first presentation introduced by Professor Colosio was Promoting safety in the agriculture sector by Dr. Shengli Niu from ILO. Dr. Niu started by presenting general statistics of occupational safety risk impacts. Approximately 4% of world GDP is lost because of occupational safety and health risks. Over 300,000 people die in occupational work accidents every year. There are limited statistics in agriculture compared to other industries. We need better data in agriculture OSH. Tools to improve OSH in agriculture provided by ILO are key OSH measures, ratification of ILO convention Normlex C184, safety and health in agriculture, technical and ethical guidelines, list of occupational diseases, electronic library. Pat Griffin from Ireland asked whether the reported health numbers are estimates or facts. Dr Niu replied that numbers in Europe, America and Australia are actual numbers. Asian and African numbers are estimates. Professor Colosio mentioned that Sacurima COST Action is promoting the statistical data measurement work in OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health in Agriculture). Dr Niu is supporting this warmly.

The next speaker was Professor Mauro D’Anna who dealt with health and safety issues of migrants in agriculture. In different areas there are different kinds of agriculture. Organizing the workforce in agriculture should be improved. Farm number has decreased dramatically also in Italy and farm average size has been growing. National agricultural worker registry should be updated. There are approximately 1 million employees in Italian farms but the number of seasonal workers is still unknown. There is approximately 32 work accident per 1000 workers. This is too much. There has been one year even 100 fatal injuries for tractor accidents. In Italy there are 1.3 million old tractors. National plan is needed to promote good practices and safety checks. Tools for risk evaluation is needed for seasonal workers, machinery trade control, pesticide use instructions, risk prevention in forestry work. The goal is to decrease work accidents in agriculture 20%. Dr. Julie Sorensen from USA commented that sharing the development costs with the farmers tend to save state costs so it could be a good investment for a country. Professor D’Anna said that this has been discussed also in Italy.
The next speaker was introduced by Professor Risto Rautiainen. Ms Carolyn Sheridan from USA is educating agricultural OSH in USA in Ag Health and Safety Alliance company. They are also doing global collaboration and health and safety education, surveys, PPE use training and safety management training in other countries too. They also use lot of pictures and use visual training methods. They have tools for mitigating the language barriers with the foreign workers in agriculture etc.. Dr. John McNamara from Ireland told that some farmers deny that they need behavioral change. How to tackle this challenge. Ms Sheridan replied that sometimes talking to their family members help and spread the knowledge.

The next speaker was Leonardo Vita from INAIL and his topic was Priorities for promoting the safety of agricultural machinery. Tractor is the main topic in INAIL. INAIL is collecting information about agricultural machinery accidents and made a data sheet about machinery safety check points. Practical safety management tools have been done against horticulture tractor and compact roll over protection (CROPS). These include element analyses and locking system development and usability testing. Risto Rautiainen from USA/Finland asked how expensive costs are for the farmer. Leonardo told that the costs will be much more cheaper in 5 years.

Dr. Federica Masci from University of Milan started the next session “Adopting ‘Safety Culture’ ideology in agriculture”. This session included five presentations of Sacurima COST Action. Dr. Masci introduced first speaker Dr. Martina Jakob from Germany. Dr. Jakob is leading the working group 1 in the Sacurima COST Action, which goal is to identify and evaluate agricultural health and safety programmes and approaches on the national level. Martina referred to differences in legal requirements in different countries, ILO, EU guideline 89/391 and EU directives as framework for OSHA programs. General requirements are to do risk assessment, documentation of risks and giving orientation and information to workers. Safety program means basically guidelines to create safer work environments. Safety programmes include surveys, publications, evaluations of OSHA interventions and conclusions. Dr. Jakob summarized that we need to improve control and define variables to evaluate safety programmes in Europe.

Professor Stephan Van Den Broucke from Belgium is the leader of the working group two in the Sacurima Action. His topic is to identify knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and priorities among farmers regarding safety, health and risk management. Many work accidents and injuries in agriculture statistics are reflecting of many dangers and risks in farming activities. How to make prevention more effective? One option is to use Evidence based prevention. It is a scientific based method to ensure health resources. The method include identification of risks, determinants of unsafe behavior and using motivational theory to define risk behavior and safety culture in work. Improvement in agriculture safety culture is one of the main goals in Sacurima network.

Professor Laura Girdziute from Lithuania presented her working group, which is to identify effective models for training and integrating vulnerable populations (including refugees and young workers) into the agricultural workforce. Vulnerable populations in agriculture was defined in Sacurima workshop. These groups are 1) immigrants; 2) migrants; 3) refugees; 4) young persons; 5) older persons; 6) women; 7) persons with disabilities; 8) minority; 9) seasonal workers. We can start study this subject by asking, is the agriculture risk at work controlled or uncontrolled among these groups. Challenges in Europe agriculture is for example farmer aging, young workers and new technology. Farmers are multi-skill people but how much they can adopt information without support? The future of farming is also depend on
that, if the younger generations are willing to work in agriculture. There have been some studies, which have shown increased machinery risk among young workers. However, there has been controversial results too.

Next, professor Jose Rato Nunes from Portugal presented the next speaker, Professor Eda Merisalu from Estonia. She leads the Sacurima working group four to develop means and indicators for monitoring progress and evaluating impact of interventions on injuries and illnesses in agriculture. Sacurima WG4 is divided to find measures to accidents and OSH diseases in agriculture. WG4 has worked for doing questionairies among the Sacurima network about OSH numbers in Europe. Sacurima network have recently published an article about statistical weaknesses in agriculture accident incidence rates and the main obstacles to be tackled in statistic data.

The last speaker from Sacurima network was Ms Anne Marie Heiberg from Norway. She is leading Sacurima working group five to disseminate results to stakeholders and the agricultural community. The goal is follow our communication plan and work in the social media to spread our results and message among our target groups. These are the farmers, policy makers and agriculture experts. We are also doing short safety culture videos for these target groups and publishing peer review articles.

The workshop continued in panel discussion which included all the speakers, who represented their Sacurima working groups and the Action Chair Professor Risto Rautiainen. Chairman in the panel was Professor Nunes from Portugal. Eleni Petridou from Greece asked from Professor Merisalu, why the recent article concerned only 8 countries. The comparison results can be misleading in these countries. Professor Merisalu replied that this is always true but we had to work with the data which we got so far and we can continue this work in WG4 to make next study with larger data and add more countries to this study. Risto Rautiainen commented that there are many studies or data in this area which are biased somehow and it should be considered. Dr. Henk Van der Molen said that intervention effect depend on context and how we deal with different situations. Professor Girdziute commented that different programs in each country could show how to motivate young people. It is important to show for education what factors affect to behavior. We have now possibility to involve many countries to develop safety culture in agriculture. Jarkko Leppälä from Finland asked did WG1 found any evaluation criteria for the safety programs. Dr. Jakob answered that evaluation has been challenging and it needs to do more work to develop program evaluation. Julie Sorensen from USA stressed the importance of program evaluation, because it really give us information how interventions are affecting in practise. It also give us points to talk with policy makers. Ms Sheridan commented that would be good to consider in program planning, which interventions has been successful. Using local resources can contribute to the intervention. The chairmen of the session, Federica Masci and Jose rato Nunes, thanked the workshop audience for very fruitful discussion.

The next session chairmen were Professor Gerd Van der Laan from Netherlands and Dr. Katarina Pavicevic from Montenegro. Professor Van der Laan introduced the next speaker Dr. Mathias Fritz from Eurostat. Dr. Fritz told about EUROSTAT and State of art of reporting in EU and overview of the available information sources. Data needs also health and safety policy in EU and integration of directives in the OSH area. There are different legislations, guidelines and reports. Added to this, countries can use estimates. Increasing risks are psychosocial risks and diseases caused by accidents. There are many information sources which we can use in finding facts: Eurostat, IHME, EHIS, EODS, EU labor survey.
Claudio Colosio from Italy was the next speaker and his topic was Agriculture in the new ILO list of Occupational Diseases. He told about the risk factors connected to the old and new diseases among farmers. There are accidents, sun, noise, bladder, lung and colon diseases. New risks are for example new viruses, where we need new management tools and facts or even probable reasons for the main risk causes like chemical or causal agents.

Dr. Lode Godderis as a next speaker introduced the topic Improving occupational diseases reporting through occupational health vigilance. Data reporting is the base for any risk assessment. Reported data could be connected to alert and vigilance systems. Mysignal.be website is an example of the risk alert system. Dr. Godderis has also worked in a COST Action in this area. In reporting the data can be divided to state data, person control data and worker compensation data. Current risks has been pyrethroid pesticides.

Dr. Stefania Curti presented a proposed approach for estimating the efficacy of intervention. The approach is a search strategy using PubMed search engines and search filters. It can be used also in OSH intervention search strategy. The method is to find are existing reliable and valid research results in particular area.

Professor Henk Van der Molen from Netherlands presented the trends of Occupational Diseases in Agriculture: Italy as a case study. The study aimed to find the trends implementing to farmers and farm workers activities. The main key trends were mentioned knowledge, skills, attitudes, cultures, costs, facilitation, employer abilities and incomes. In discussion it were mentioned risk identification tools, data collection, intervention stimulation, people preferences, prevention models and scenarios.

In the end of the workshop meeting there was also panel discussion. We discussed about occupational disease exposures potential impacts to agriculture work. It brings the data reliability problems. We discussed about the fatal accident underreporting. We are missing some data, but there can also be some business reasons and time distant reasons between the event and the death. However, many statistics are still reliable. Mr Pat Griffin stated that there are serious lack of reporting in fatal accidents in Eurostat and we need to improve statistics for decision making. John McNamara from Ireland asked about low cardiovascular disease numbers in Italy. Claudio Colosio replied that there is a very strong system in OSH in old compounds affecting the diseases. However, new compounds are challenging. Dr. Jarkko Leppälä asked for Dr. Godderis how to establish the professional network after the COST Action. Dr. Godderis replied that networking is really helping the research work. In the case of Mothernet Action the website and updated newsletter were the key issues, but also the committed people in the network. There has to be a key person, who can continue organizing the network. They also organize a meeting per year. They can also organize some seminars too and actively looking for funding. They also have a small participation fee for the network members.

Professor Risto Rautiainen thanked the panelists and the meeting participants for the fruitful meeting. The meeting had excellent mix of various expertizes and this makes us stronger in the future. Sacurima COST network will also find ways to continue the network in the future. Professor Claudio Colosio thanked also the participants and wish everybody a safe trip to home. The meeting was closed. The meeting minutes was written by Jarkko Leppälä.