

CURRENT ISSUES AFFECTING SAFETY OF LABOR OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

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Introduction. The successful implementation of the entire work cycle in the agro-industrial complex largely depends on the set of measures to ensure healthy and safe working conditions. The number one priority here is ensuring safety in the workplace, compliance with labor legislation and strict following the required technology of work processes. For the prevention of injuries in the workplace, the most critical factor appears to be a heightened sense of responsibility among employees to follow and comply with established labor safety and fire safety rules.

Main part. In the Republic of Belarus, the issues of creating healthy and safe work environment are of paramount importance. State social policies pay a lot of attention to ensuring the worker's rights and guarantees related to safety of labor, to creating decent working conditions that bring satisfaction to the citizens and benefits to society.

Safe working conditions must be present in any workplace. When and where is it not the case, sometimes this is due to negligence and carelessness, and sometimes because someone wanted to «save money». But if we are talking people's life and health, these «savings» are simply unacceptable.

For the record, agricultural workers are frequently exposed to many various risks and working conditions that are often unfavorable for the normal functioning of a human. Examples of these include high levels of airborne dust in work areas while performing mechanized work in the field; overtime and odd work hours; various allergic reactions that are becoming common presently; poisoning as the result of contact with pesticides and other poisonous chemicals.

In the agricultural industry, workers perform a vast number of activities, including construction, land reclamation, forestry, loading and unloading of materials, transportation of goods, agricultural and poultry farming, warehouse and greenhouse jobs and activities; all the above with the use of variety of machinery, mechanisms and tools.

In addition to the above listed activities, the machine operators themselves often participate in the repairs and maintenance of agricultural machinery. A feature that puts apart the agricultural production is the seasonal nature of work. In a short period of time (one to three weeks), agricultural workers are expected to perform a wide variety of duties, differing in the organization of labor, technology used, taking place in different environmental conditions.

In agriculture, it is not uncommon for a lot of different jobs to accumulate at the same time, requiring execution in a short timeframe, in extreme heat, rain, slush, which may be very tiresome for a person and may interfere with his/her work regime.

Agricultural industry is comprised of not only crop and livestock production, but also of activities related to repairs and maintenance of agricultural machinery. Therefore, it may be difficult for a labor safety specialist to keep track of the state of various working conditions, not to mention when a specialist in one specific field has to also bears responsibilities of a labor safety engineer. Based on documented work related injury statistics, uncommon are the cases when only a formal training of safe methods of labor takes place. It was found that, other things held equal, following first two weeks after "formal-only" training, the level of injuries was significantly higher as compared to the farms where training was carried out hands-on and informally.

When analyzing the state of labor safety measures in the Belarusian agricultural industry, we have to say that violations of the written rules and norms of labor safety and discipline of production processes are often carried out both by employers (responsible for enforcing the rules) and workers (performing the duties). As a result, a real danger of injury and occupational morbidity of workers is created.

According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Services of the Republic of Belarus, in 2019, the agricultural industry takes the 3rd place among the most traumatic types of economic activity in terms of work-related injuries [1–4].

To illustrate this statement, the table below shows data on the frequency of work-related injuries to other types of economic activity at enterprises of the Republic of Belarus.

The numbers of work-related injuries among agricultural workers, as provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, cause serious concerns. In 2018, 428 people were affected, the ratio of their number is 20.2 %, in 2019, respectively, 443 people and 21.7 %. Of these, there were

26 fatalities in 2018, the ratio of 18.1%, in 2019, respectively, 37 fatalities, with ratio of 26.2 % of their total number.

**The level of work-related injuries per 100 thousand insured
by type of economic activity**

Indicator	Occupational injury frequency rate			
	total		resulted in death	
Years	2018	2019	2018	2019
Republic of Belarus	53,7	51,8	3,7	3,6
Forestry and logging	181,6	203,3	36,3	28,2
Construction	201,6	197,3	19,3	16,4
Crop and livestock production, hunting and services in these areas	157,2	170,0	9,6	14,2
Water supply, waste collection, treatment and disposal, contamination control activities	76,9	93,5	8,9	9,0
Industry	88,5	89,2	4,1	4,1
Transportation, warehousing, postal and courier activities	73,3	70,2	7,7	6,7
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	57,4	47,5	3,5	3,1
Supply of electricity, gas, steam, hot water and conditioned air	53,1	40,7	7,6	2,2
Health care and social services	19,4	22,0	–	0,7
Education	12,2	16,2	0,5	0,5

As of 2019, the breakdown of the most risky (injury and death) were professions: a tractor driver – 92 injuries, of which 8 people died; a live-stock breeder - 86 injuries, including 10 death; a milking machine operator – 67 injuries and no death, a field worker – 21 injuries, including 3 death.

The analysis of the work-related injuries shows that the main causes of accidents in the agricultural industry are:

- violation of labor safety rules, the requirements of regulatory legal acts, technical regulatory acts, local safety of labor regulations;
- personal negligence;
- failure of management and specialists to enforce labor safety rules and processes;
- victims performing work without proper training and testing of knowledge on labor safety;
- violation of safety protocols when operating vehicles, machines, mechanisms, equipment, tools;

– operation of faulty machinery, mechanisms, equipment, tools, rigs, vehicles;

- failure to provide workers with proper personal protective equipment;
- violation of the technological processes.

The breakdown of the causes of industrial injuries indicates that in 2019, compared to 2018, they did not change significantly. The main causes are still violations of the labor safety rules by the victims, not following the requirements of regulatory legal and technical acts, local regulations on labor safety, non-compliance of management and specialists.

Conclusion. Ensuring safe methods of performing work duties is a daily important work. It is possible to bring labor safety to a new quality level only if company leaders, management, other officials, employees have a deep inner conviction that this is an important element of the work culture, which will surely bring dividends.

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Аннотация. Исследованы условия труда работников сельскохозяйственного производства, выявлены причины травматизма, указаны направления по уменьшению производственного травматизма и улучшению условий труда на предприятиях АПК Акцент делается на внедрение новых форм и методов работы по предупреждению производственного травматизма и заболеваний.

Ключевые слова: агропромышленный комплекс, условия труда, безопасность труда, производственный травматизм, трудовая и производственная дисциплина, улучшение условий труда.