



# Occupational Health & Safety (OHS)

## F. Occupational Health & Safety (OHS)

Agriculture, apart from being the second largest source of employment worldwide—employing around 948 million people, almost one-third of the world's labour force (ILOStat, 2017)—, is also one of the most hazardous occupations worldwide (ILO, 2013). In some countries the fatal accident rate in agricultural activities is twice as high as the average for all other industries. According to the International Labour Organization (2011), approximately 50% of the total of annual fatal workplace accidents globally correspond to agricultural workers.

Agricultural work is by nature physically demanding because it usually involves long periods of standing, bending, stooping, carrying and other repetitive movements in awkward body positions (FAO, ILO & IUF, 2007). It also involves a wide range of different management practices and types of machinery, animals, plants, and products, working both in indoor and outdoor environments under widely varying geographic and climatic conditions. The risk of accidents is increased by fatigue, poorly designed tools and equipment, lack of training and poor worker health in general (FAO, ILO & IUF, 2007; ILO, 2011 and 2014).

Yet agricultural workers have very few resources available in terms of access to health care, wages and income, insurance, and other benefits (FAO, ILO & IUF, 2007). Many are contract or piece rate workers and are often excluded from employment injury benefits and insurance schemes and poorly covered by labour legislation. Self-employed farmers are usually not covered by social security benefits and are not enrolled in any kind of insurance scheme because of the high additional costs (ILO, 2011 and 2013). These conditions affect not only workers' health and general wellbeing, but also have a negative impact on productivity. Poor living and working conditions in rural areas are part of a vicious cycle, leading to low productivity and low-income generation, which in turn stifle rural economic development (ILO, 2013).

As achieving safe work conditions is key to improving productivity and the wellbeing of agricultural workers, SAN offers an approach towards managing occupational health and safety (OHS) in agricultural and livestock operations that:

- actively addresses occupational health and safety risks to prevent and minimize accidents and health problems;
- encourages agricultural operations to monitor and update all OHS related actions and results to foster improved work environments;
- focuses agricultural producers and workers' training on how to conduct their tasks in a safe manner;
- encourages the use of practices, mechanisms, tools, and equipment to protect producers and workers' health and minimize the risks to their health and safety;
- promotes the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), especially when hazardous substances are used; and
- promotes safe equipment and infrastructure.

Agriculture is also the most important sector for female employment in many regions, especially in Africa and Asia, and a major proportion of agricultural workers are women (ILO, 2011). Therefore SAN's approach also includes specific guidance and best practices recommendations to protect women's health, with emphasis on women that are pregnant, nursing or have recently given birth.

## F.1. Sustainability goal: Occupational health and safety management

Outcomes	ID	Performance Indicators /Best practices
Occupational health and safety risks for workers, bystanders and visitors are addressed to prevent and minimize accidents and associated health problems.	F101	Operations implement an Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) management plan that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– is in accordance with the reality of their operations, and their workforce;</li> <li>– is developed by competent professional or organization</li> <li>– is based on health and safety risks analysis;</li> <li>– identifies and characterizes biological, physical and chemical hazards by job types or physically demanding tasks;</li> <li>– describes and rates risks (frequency of potential occurrence, potential danger or impact);</li> <li>– describes emergency scenarios and protocols to address risks (communication, training, equipment, procedures, first aid);</li> <li>– indicates the communication, training, equipment or procedures, medical exams and first aid needed to prevent or reduce those risks rated as high to worker health or other people;</li> <li>– monitors the planned results; and</li> <li>– complies with applicable legislation.</li> </ul>
	F102	Operations designate a qualified OHS officer, who is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the OHS management plan.
All OHS related actions and results are monitored, updated, and improved.	F103	Operations have an OHS Committee (or any other participatory mechanism) that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– is freely chosen by workers;</li> <li>– monitors and regularly revise the OHS plan actions;</li> <li>– recommends improvements and updates into the OHS plan, according to the changes of the operations' facilities, properties, productive systems, and workforce; and</li> <li>– ensures compliance with applicable legislation.</li> </ul>
	F104	The OHS committee (or any other participatory mechanism) documents its decisions and associated activities.
	F105	Operations consider the OHS committee's (or any other participatory mechanism) findings, decisions and recommendations when addressing OHS challenges or updating the OHS plan.

Outcomes	ID	Performance Indicators /Best practices
Producers and workers perform their tasks safely, minimizing the risks to environmental and human health, and preventing work-related accidents.	F106	Operations train all workers that handle or come into contact with hazardous substances <sup>12</sup> and workers that carry out risky tasks on safer management techniques and how to perform their duties safely.
	F107	Operations ensure that all training activities are conducted by competent professionals.
	F108	Operations include the following topics during training activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- explanation of the names, formulations, toxicity, health risks, and other relevant MSDS information related to hazardous substances in use;</li> <li>- techniques for the correct handling of equipment and hazardous substances;</li> <li>- preventative measures for reducing possible damage to health and the environment caused by equipment or hazardous substances;</li> <li>- correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE)<sup>13</sup>; and</li> <li>- emergency procedures and first aid to address accidents, spillover of hazardous substances or other potentially poisoning situations.</li> </ul>
	F109	Operations respect the workers' right to remove themselves from situations that pose imminent risk to their life or health, without the immediate authorization of their supervisors and without receiving any reprisals or other negative consequences.
	F110	Workers perform their tasks safely and confirm that they have received training about risks reduction and accidents prevention.

<sup>12</sup> See the definition of Hazardous substance in Section IV: SAN Technical Concepts

<sup>13</sup> See the definition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on Section IV: SAN Technical Concepts

## F.2. Sustainability goal: Protection of workers' health

Outcomes	ID	Performance Indicators /Best practices
All workers and producers that handle hazardous substances or perform other risky tasks use the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to minimize the risks to their health and integrity.	F201	Operations provide suitable PPE <sup>14</sup> free of cost to workers that handle hazardous substances <sup>15</sup> and that perform other risky tasks; require those workers to use the PPE (without exceptions) and provide them with training on how to use the PPE to mitigate health risks.
	F202	For agrochemical applications: operations set the PPE requirements according to the product MSDS, product label or technical information, or competent professional recommendations, whichever is more stringent. For other risky tasks: operations set the PPE requirements according to the risk analysis of the OHS Plan.
	F203	Operations apply substances listed in the SAN List of Risk Mitigation Pesticides as having inhalation risks, only if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- restricted entry intervals are enforced; and</li> <li>- respirators with an organic vapor (OV) cartridge or canister with any N, R, P, or 100 series pre-filter are used; and</li> <li>- all application sites are flagged and clearly signaled to indicate inhalation risks to bystanders.</li> </ul>
The risks of poisoning, intoxication and chronic illnesses to workers and bystanders are minimized.	F204	Operations prevent the access of people to pesticide application areas by implementing Restricted Entry Intervals (REI) as stipulated in the product's MSDS, label or security tag, whichever is more stringent. When two or more products with different REIs are used at the same time, operations apply the longest interval.
	F205	Operations ensure that workers that handle hazardous substances or perform other risky tasks receive free medical exams as specified in the OHS plan and according to applicable legislation (including cholinesterase levels tests in workers that handle organophosphates or carbamates). Exams are conducted prior to the first-time workers apply these substances or conducting such tasks on the farm to establish their baseline, and periodically thereafter if they remain assigned to these tasks. Operations facilitate workers' access to and explain the results their medical exams <sup>16</sup> .
	F206	Operations reassign tasks of those workers with temporary health conditions or short-term disabilities that impair their ability to carry out their job. Reassignment covers the length of the disability period, and remuneration is not affected by such reassignment. Operations reassign pesticide handlers with results outside of the accepted cholinesterase levels to other tasks that do not involve use of organophosphates or carbamates.

<sup>14</sup> See the definition of Personal Protective Equipment on Section IV: SAN Technical Concepts

<sup>15</sup> See the definition of Hazardous substance in Section IV: SAN Technical Concepts

<sup>16</sup> According to SAN Recommendations, operations should stop the use of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (D109.)

Outcomes	ID	Performance Indicators /Best practices
The risks of poisoning, intoxication and chronic illnesses to workers and bystanders are minimized.	F207	Operations do not assign women who are pregnant, nursing or have given birth in the last six weeks (or other period as defined by applicable legislation or medical criteria, whichever is higher), to activities that pose risk to the women's, fetal or infant health.
	F208	Operations ensure that first aid equipment is available at the workplace for offices, processing areas, and other central facilities. First aid kits are available in the field and their contents is based on the most common or likely emergencies in the field.
	F209	Operations designate and train workers to take charge of emergency procedures and first aid to address accidents, spillover of hazardous substances, poisoning situations, or any other emergency scenarios. At least one of these workers is available during operating hours and in areas close to the highest number of active workers.
	F210	If workers' health has been permanently affected, or they are permanently injured due to the work on site, operations compensate for damage, injury, and chronic illnesses.

### F.3. Sustainability goal: Safe equipment and infrastructure

Outcomes	ID	Performance Indicators /Best practices
Facilities are designed to be safe and are well equipped to minimize risks to the workers' health and safety.	F301	Operations design workshops, storage areas, and processing facilities for the safe storage of materials; and restrict access only to trained and authorized personnel.
	F302	Operations keep storage areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– equipped and identified in accordance with the type of stored substances and materials;</li> <li>– clean and organized;</li> <li>– with sufficient artificial or natural light to enable work activities and to find the emergency exits;</li> <li>– with sufficient natural ventilation to avoid the accumulation of odors and vapors;</li> <li>– equipped with firefighting tools to safely remediate any spillage of hazardous substances or materials; and</li> <li>– equipped with emergency showers and eye-washing facilities where hazardous substances are stored or mixed.</li> </ul>
	F303	Operations provide handlers of hazardous substances and agrochemicals with facilities to bathe and change their clothes after finishing the daily application schedule and before leaving the workplace at the end of the workday.
	F304	Operations have clean and functional toilets and washing facilities available at the workplace in all areas close to the highest number of active workers, including offices, processing areas, and other central facilities.
	F305	Operations provide and maintain natural or built shelter for meals and rest during the work period to protect workers from intense sun, rain, and lightning in the field and other exposed areas.