

Reducing musculoskeletal disorders in European agriculture

Presentation of responses

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Social partners concluded in 2005:

MSD is the most frequently occurring health complaint in the European agriculture sector;

this affects the workers, employers, social security systems and the image of the sector.

Social partners should work on:

- improving knowledge about the risks on MSD
- concrete prevention policies at sector level and in enterprises.



Initiatives to be taken

- Call upon authorities to come with a **definition** of MSD valid for all members;
- Social partners create national observatories of agricultural workers' health and safety;
- Statistics, register good practices



Encourage organization of risk prevention

- An authority is made responsible for prevention of MSD;
- Employers and workers must be involved in the work of this authority;
- Heighten employers' and workers' awareness;
- Risk evaluation at each farm;
- Implementation of good practices.



The questionnaire

- An in-depth knowledge of the numerous initiatives to reduce MSD, was impossible to expect;
- The questionnaire was kept relatively short;
- The responses give an overview of the initiatives that has been taken by the Member organizations



Response to the GEOPA questionnaire

- Responses from a total of 19 Member organizations had been received:
- Bulgaria, France, Germany, Cyprus, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Netherlands, U.K., Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Portugal, Austria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland.



It gave an overview of.....

- Definitions of MSD
- Knowledge / statistics
- National observatories
- Authorities responsible for OSH
- Awareness of workers and employers
- Some good practices.



Good practice foot trimming

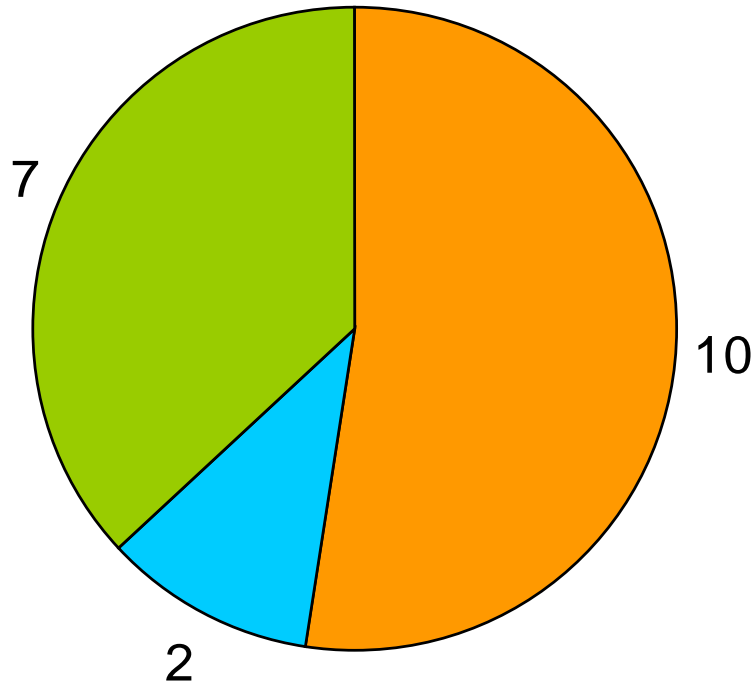
Reducing physical strain of low-back and shoulders

By reducing bend over position

Austria



Definitions of MSD



- The definition of the social partners is used in my country
- The definition is partly used in my country
- We use a different definition



Suggestions for a definition

- France: MSD is a general name which covers all musculo skeletal disorders in relation to professional activities
- WHO published a list of MSDs which could be used as a basis for a European wide definition.
- OSHA Europe published a list of causes of MSDs.



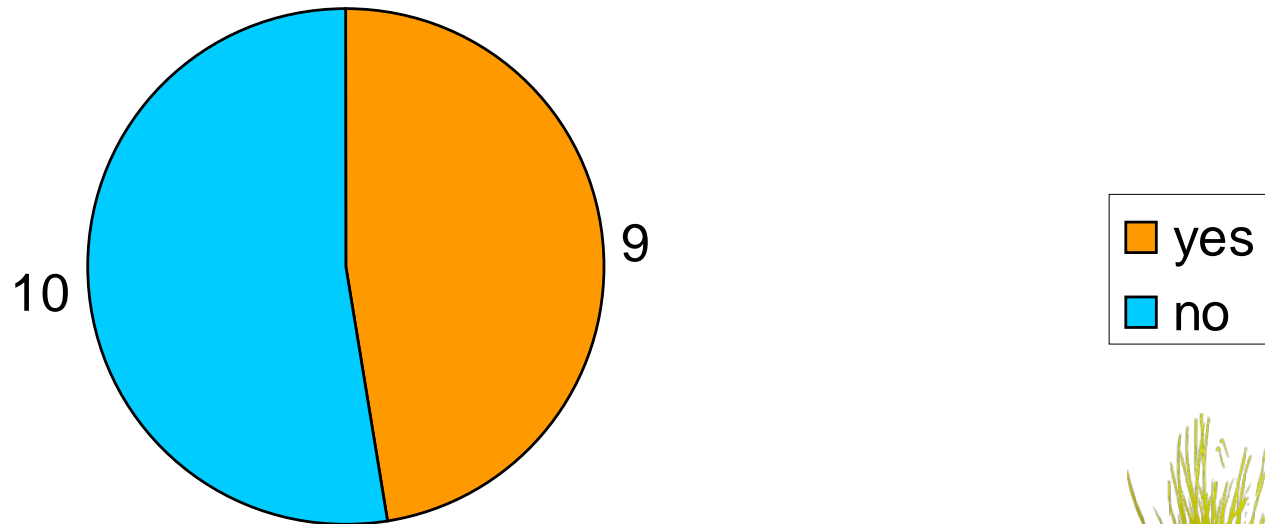
Suggestions for a definition

- MSD are a number of troubles affecting the main articulations, **muscles, nerves and connective tissues** of the human body which might be caused by **highly** repeated gestures, loading and unloading heavy weights, body vibrations and bad postures.



Knowledge

Statistics are produced related to MSD















No uniform statistics

- Mutualite Sociale Agricole: > 90% of the recognized occupational diseases in agriculture has to do with MSD
- Stigas: 42% of sick leave absenteeism has to do with MSD
- HSE: MSD in agriculture is almost three times the rate for all industries



Suggestions for improving knowledge

- Inventory of MSD health complaints improves knowledge about risks:
- Just ask for existing MSD complaints

sector	klachten in de afgelopen 12 maanden aan de				langdurige klachten (> 1 mnd) aan de				verhinderd, verzuimd of artsbezoek wegens			
	 rug	 ne/sc	 ar/ha	 be/v	 rug	 ne/sc	 ar/ha	 be/v	 rug	 ne/sc	 ar/ha	 be/v
akkerbouw / vollegrond	37	22	11	22	13	9	7	11	13	10	3	6
mechanisch loonwerk	26	13	17	10	9	11	6	4	13	9	0	4
veehouderij	41	31	16	20	20	14	8	11	16	9	3	7

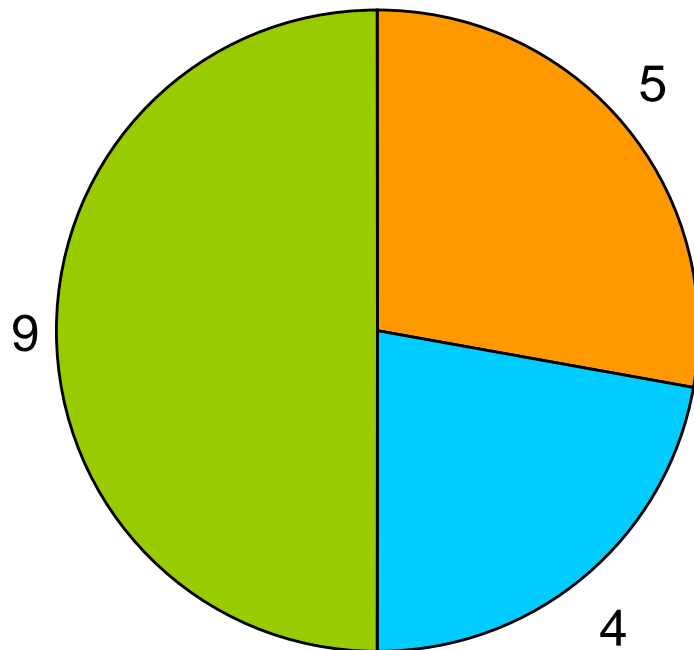


Good practice pushing and pulling

- Reducing physical strain of shoulders en low-back
- By preventing pushing and pulling
- Low cost solution



Observatories



- Created a national observatory of agricultural workers
- Not yet created a national observatory
- There is a form of a well running national observatory



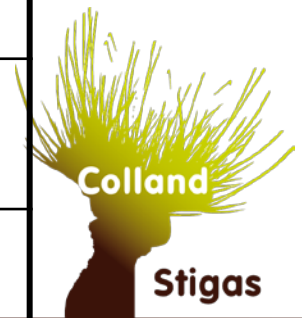
National observatories

- Social partners create a national observatory of agricultural workers' health and safety;
- Or to designate an existing authority to perform this role.
- Employers and workers must be involved on a parity basis



Authorities made responsible...

	Private / social partners	Public/ Social insurance
U.K.		HSE, Health and Safety Executive
Sweden	Prevent	
Poland		Agricultural Social Insurance and Min. Health
Belgium	PreventAgri, specially for agricultue	
France		Mutualite Social Agricole
NL	Stigas	



Training and awareness

- In most countries unions- and employer organizations offer trainings about prevention of MSD, however not specially for agricultural workers and employers.
- The Swedish social partners within the agricultural sector: (SLA and Communal) work together in health and safety issues, mainly through a nonprofit organization named Prevent (owned by social partners)
- In Cyprus the Labour Inspectorate visited enterprises live on TV.
- The Polish observatory and unions organize training for agricultural workers.

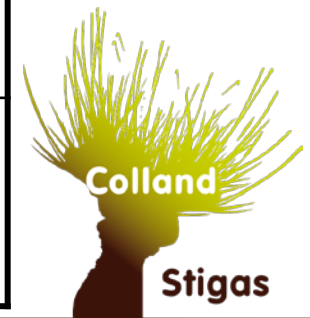


Awareness leads toinventors



Best practices everywhere.....

Germany	Measures to reduce hand arm vibration when using a chainsaw and measures to reduce whole body vibrations. Such as maintenance of equipment and seats, speed reduction, reducing time period of working.
Cyprus	Weight of sacs are limited to 25 kg
Portugal	Reducing physical load in vineyard. Electric secateurs, job rotation, training of workers, better accessibility from horizontal terraces to the main road,
Ireland	Reduce weights, better planning and organizing and using of handling aids



Conclusions

- MSD is still the most frequently occurring health complaint in the European agriculture sector;
- There is a start of many national observatories, and it is important that social partners are involved;
- Awareness leads to good practices and self made practical solutions;
- Exchange of best practices is good for all.



Thank you for your attention

