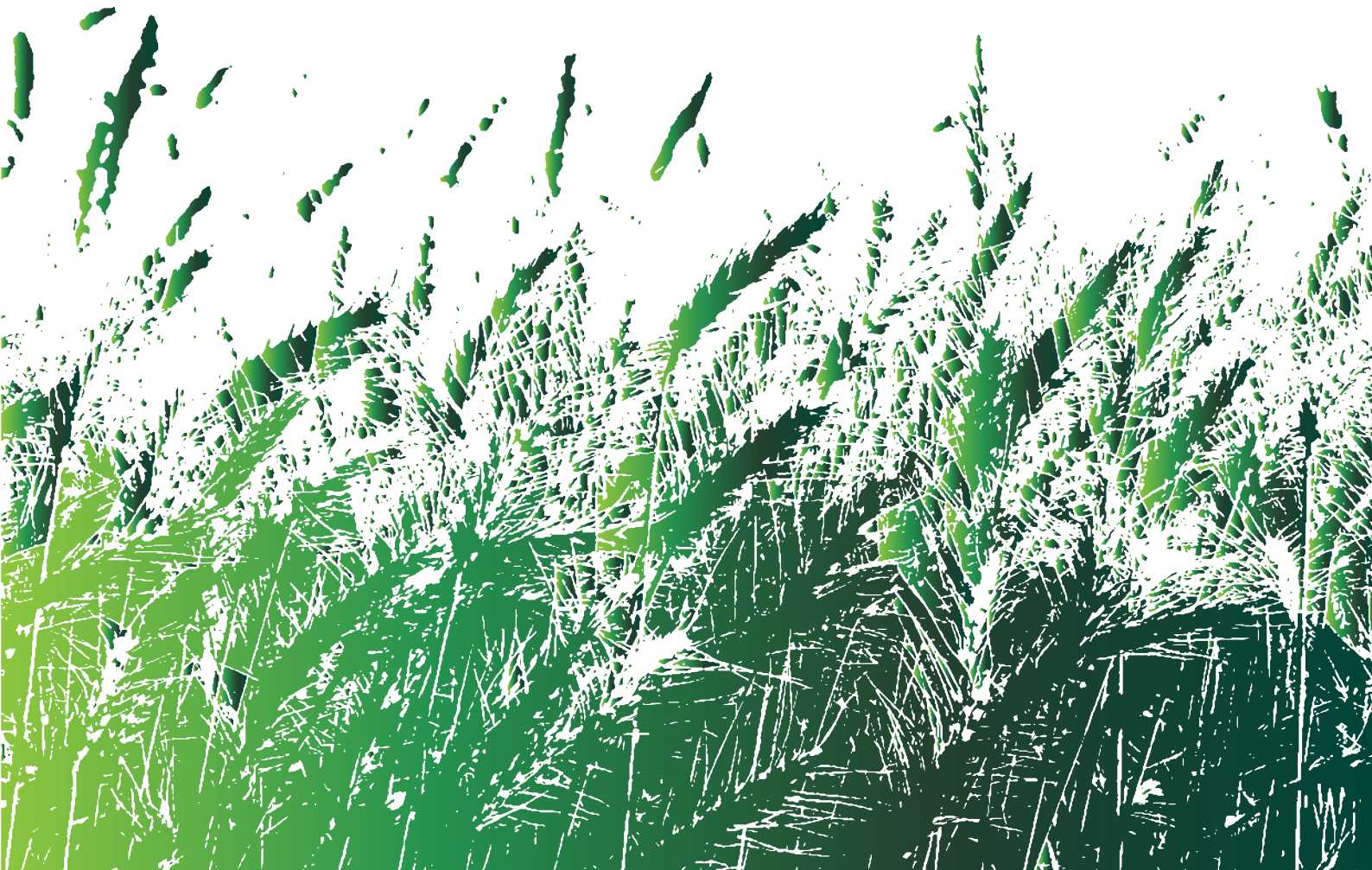




**REPORT**  
**on the National Labour Inspectorate's**  
**activity in agriculture in 2020**  
**(for the International Labour Organization)**





## 1. LEGAL PROVISIONS REGULATING THE LABOUR INSPECTORATE'S ACTIVITY IN AGRICULTURE

- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Economy of 27 June 1997 concerning work safety and health during **storage, processing of cereals and production of feedstuffs of plant origin**
- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Economy of 12 January 1998 concerning work safety and health during **operation of tractors, machines, tools and technical equipment used in agriculture**
- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Economy of 26 October 1998 concerning work safety and health during **processing of milk and dairy products**
- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Economy of 10 March 1999 concerning work safety and health during **animal slaughter and meat processing**
- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 26 September 2001 concerning work safety and health during **potato processing**
- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 24 June 2002 concerning work safety and health during **use and storage of plant protection products and mineral and bio-mineral fertilizers**
- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 10 February 2003 concerning work safety and health in **enterprises processing fruit and vegetables**
- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 12 May 2003 concerning work safety and health during **operation of ammonia cooling installations in agricultural and food processing enterprises**
- Regulation of the Minister of Health of 30 December 2004 concerning work safety and health connected with **the existence of chemical agents in the workplace**
- Regulation of the Minister of Health of 22 April 2005 on **biological agents harmful to health in the working environment and health protection of workers exposed to such agents at work**
- Regulation of the Minister of Environmental Protection of 24 August 2006 concerning work

safety and health during **performance of some work tasks in forestry**

- Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 4 August 2017 concerning work safety and health during **handling of livestock**

## 2. LABOUR INSPECTORATE'S STAFF IN AGRICULTURE

In 2020, 74 labour inspectors were competent to conduct comprehensive inspections of farming companies. 104 NLI employees were prepared to carry out preventive and promotional activities in farming (including 81 labour inspectors and 23 specialists who are not inspectors).

## 3. STATISTICAL DATA ON FARMING COMPANIES

**SUBJECT TO INSPECTION** (DATA OBTAINED BY THE NLI FROM THE SOCIAL INSURANCE INSTITUTION)

	2020
number of farming companies	7.1 thousand
number of persons working in those farming companies	58.1 thousand

## 4. DATA ON NLI'S INSPECTIONS IN FARMING COMPANIES

In 2020, NLI inspectors carried out **377** inspections in farming companies and as a consequence of the identified irregularities, they issued **2 209** decisions, **1 192** instructions in improvement notices and **54** verbal instructions. Fines in the form of **78** penalty tickets were imposed on persons guilty of committing offences against the rights of individuals performing paid work. Requests for punishment were sent to court with regard to **4** persons, and towards **73** persons disciplinary measures were applied (admonition, warning, rebuke). Moreover, in **8** cases the prosecutor's office was notified of the suspicion of a crime.

Detailed data on the inspection results – broken down by the size of employment – are included in the tables.

**STATISTICAL DATA ON THE NLI'S INSPECTIONS IN FARMING COMPANIES IN 2019  
AND THE APPLIED LEGAL MEASURES (BY THE NUMBER OF WORKERS)**

Specification	NUMBER OF							
	inspec- tions	DECISIONS					instructions in improvement notices	verbal instruc- tions
		total	including:					
		orders to stop work	orders to assign other tasks to workers	orders to stop opera- tion of ma- chines	orders to pay financial benefits			
TOTAL, including companies with:	377	2 209	16	10	94	12	1 192	54
1-9 workers	230	1 333	7	5	58	2	656	32
10-49 workers	100	582	6	1	17	10	325	18
50-249 workers	44	275	3	4	19	0	197	4
250 and more workers	3	19	0	0	0	0	14	0

**STATISTICAL DATA ON THE NLI'S INSPECTIONS IN FARMING COMPANIES IN 2020  
– IMPOSED SANCTIONS (BY THE NUMBER OF WORKERS)**

Specification	NUMBER OF			
	imposed penalty tickets	requests to penalise the offenders lodged with courts	applied disciplinary measures	notifications to the prosecutor's office of the suspicion of a crime
TOTAL, including companies with:	78	4	73	8
1-9 workers	53	2	41	6
10-49 workers	13	2	19	1
50-249 workers	12	0	12	1
250 and more workers	0	0	1	0

**5. WORK SAFETY AND HEALTH AS WELL AS THE  
LEGALITY OF EMPLOYMENT IN FARMING COMPANIES  
– THEMATIC INSPECTIONS**

**80 inspections were carried out in enterprises involved in plant production**, mainly growing of cereal and potatoes (91% of inspections), and **69 inspections – in companies involved in animal production**, chiefly rearing and breeding of: dairy cattle (27%), meat cattle (21%), poultry (20%) and swine (17%). Almost 2.7 thousand persons worked in the inspected entities, 87% of them – in the framework of an employment relationship. Most of those entities were micro-companies with up to 9 workers (plant production – 59%, animal production – 45%).

Based on the analysis of post-accident documents it was established that in the last three years

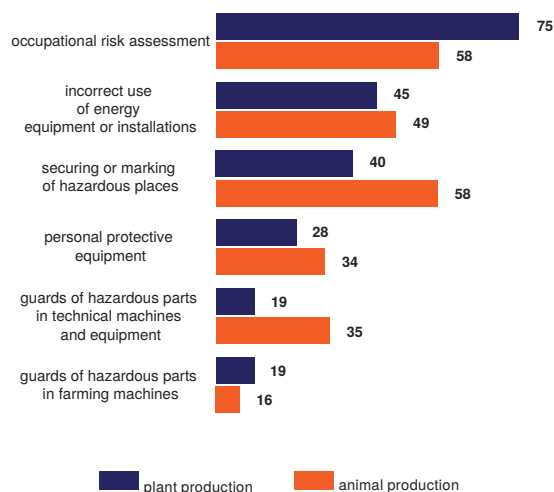
in the inspected entities **134 work-related accidents occurred, 78% of which – on farms conducting animal production.**

This is caused by the fact that more hazards exist in animal production, especially where it is related to direct contact of workers with animals being handled. Accidents due to the aggression of animals made up 20% of the total number, yet it should be remembered that the aggression most often arises from the ignorance of the animal behaviour and from incorrect behaviour of the workers. In the remaining cases, accidents were the outcome of: falls, hitting by moveable parts of machinery, crushing by means of transport or contact with a sharp object.

It was concluded that post-accident teams did not

determine the circumstances and causes of the investigated work-related accidents in a reliable manner; they often indicated only some causes, mainly those which arose from incorrect behaviour of a worker.

**SELECTED IRREGULARITIES IDENTIFIED DURING  
INSPECTIONS OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH  
IN FARMING COMPANIES IN 2020 (%)**



Inspections of the **technical condition of machines and equipment** used for farming work revealed the existence of hazards to life and health of the workers. They were connected with the lack of guards of articulated-telescopic shafts, of the drive units of machines and equipment used in production processes and in workshop equipment. **816 machines and equipment were inspected and 34% of them did not meet the safety requirements.** Other breaches were also identified, such as the lack of: safety signs, descriptions of the control elements and the user's manuals for the operated machines and equipment.

Moreover, a lot of shortcomings were revealed in the area of **utilised electrical equipment and installations**, including the ones creating the risk of an electric shock. 110 pieces of electrical equipment and installations were inspected and **44% of them did not meet the legal requirements.** In the overall number of irregularities, the most significant ones were: the lack of examinations and measurements of the effectiveness of anti-shock protection, no protection of electric boards against access of unauthorised per-

sons, **repairs of fuse-links with wires and the lack of guards to protect workers from directly touching uncovered parts of electrical equipment.**

In farm buildings (in 40% of the total number of those inspected) there were numerous irregularities, among others uncovered technological and drop openings, as well as inadequate technical condition of communication routes, which created accident risks.

Shortcomings connected with the functioning of the **OSH service** (among others, with regard to verifying working conditions) occurred in about 35% of all the inspected companies. An important element which directly influences the protection of workers from hazards in the work process is the provision of information to the worker about the working environment factors existing at the specific workstation and in its immediate surrounding, and about occupational risk related to the work performed. **Irregularities concerning occupational risk assessment were revealed in 67% of the inspected entities** and they consisted in the failure to: spot all hazards present at workstations, assess all workstations, and advise the workers of the results of occupational risk assessment.

Owners of small farms often **cannot identify hazardous factors present in their working environment**, which in consequence precludes them from taking effective actions in order to eliminate the existing hazards. Moreover, the risks are increased by haste in performing field works (which depend on weather conditions), which is conducive to neglecting hazards.

Besides the physical factors, a serious risk in farming companies is posed by **chemical and biological factors.** In more than half of the inspected enterprises, the NLI uncovered irregularities in this respect, which consisted in the employers' failure to notice the possibility that such factors exist at their workstations and the lack of examinations and measurements of factors harmful to health.

**The absence of, or incorrectly developed procedures of safe performance of work** occurred in most of the inspected work processes. In particular, this consisted in: the lack of lists of work tasks particularly hazardous to health and lists of work tasks which should be performed by at least two persons, the failure to provide instructions and indispensable

knowledge about animal behaviour and safe handling of animals, about conducting works in fields, using hazardous chemical substances, including plant protection products. Shortcomings were recorded in 40% of the analysed issues.

Ignorance about the safe performance of assigned work, accompanied by the failure to spot all the hazards, precludes effective use of preventive measures, also personal protective equipment. In this respect, irregularities occurred in 28% of the companies involved in plant production and 34% of those involved in animal production. They most frequently concerned an incorrect selection of personal protective equipment and the partial or complete lack of PPE with regard to 133 workers, which constituted 20% of the persons covered by inspection.

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During activities aimed at limiting hazards in farming companies, labour inspectors conducted **73 inspections** focused on issues in the area of the legality of employment and other paid work of Polish citizens (49% of the overall number of inspections in farming companies).

The legality of employment of 504 persons was verified. **Illegal employment or illegal other paid work was uncovered in the case of 22 persons** (4% of those verified), who performed work in 9 entities.

The identified breaches concerned the lack of, or delayed registration with social insurance (17 persons) and the failure of the unemployed persons to inform a county labour office about taking up employment, other paid work or non-agricultural activity (5 persons). Moreover, during 7 inspections (12% of those verified), the NLI revealed irregularities in the payment of contributions to the Labour Fund. Additionally, in the course of 10 inspections the NLI examined issues of the legality of employment and performance of work by foreigners. 21 foreigners (solely Ukrainian nationals) were covered by verification, but illegal performance of work by them was not confirmed.

## Conclusions

Having analysed the results of the conducted inspections, we can draw the following conclusions:

- it is necessary to continue inspections of employers involved in animal and plant production, also to undertake follow-up inspections in some of the companies inspected in 2020;
- it is reasonable to develop preventive activities targeted at employers involved in animal and plant production with respect to identification of hazards existing in the working environment and the methods of protection from those hazards (with special attention paid to the specific character of exposure to harmful biological factors).

## 6. NLI'S PREVENTIVE AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY IN THE PRIVATE FARMING SECTOR

Approximately 1.5 million private farms function in Poland, and the majority of them belong to the group with 1-5 hectares of farmland. This means that a huge number of persons in Poland perform their work tasks solely on the basis of knowledge passed on through generations, but often **without the knowledge of hazards, and first of all, without supervision of working conditions** by superiors or by qualified OSH services. Additionally, private farming is one of the sectors of economy with the highest accident rates.

Many factors contribute to high numbers of accidents on farms. A complex work environment requires actions on several workstations, performance of various activities and possession of many different skills, **whereas the same person faces the related accident hazards**. Moreover, farming work depends on changeable weather conditions, which is reflected by frequent accumulation of works and unfavourable effect of such conditions on the human body. This is accompanied by haste, which unchangeably for years has been one of the most often indicated causes of work-related accidents in various economic sectors, including farming.

In view of the large scale of hazards faced by owners of family farms on a daily basis, a significant role is played by preventive activities targeted at private farmers and other persons working and staying on farms. **The National Labour Inspectorate has for years implemented multifaceted preventive initiatives** in order to reduce the risk of accidents and diseases in private farming. In 2020, the participants

of such actions were **farmers and members of their families, including children and youth**. The Inspectorate carries out preventive and promotional activities aimed at disseminating knowledge among children and teenagers about safe behaviour while staying on farms. An important objective of the initiatives conducted for the youngest residents of villages is **to develop their proper attitudes and habits** and to make them aware of hazards related to helping their parents with dangerous farming works, and to draw their attention to numerous risks which they may face while staying and playing in villages.

In the reporting year the main forms of the preventive programme targeted at inhabitants of rural areas were **visitations to farms and places of field works**, as well as educational initiatives.

During visits to farmers, inspectors drew their attention to accident risks in farm buildings and in farmyards, to the condition of the surface in farmyards and the securing of sewage wells. Specialists of the National Labour Inspectorate also visited places of field works.

Personal meetings enabled the NLI staff to indicate such hazards to farmers which are often unnoticed or belittled. The discussion on irregularities allowed to verify the working environment in terms of **safety, ergonomics, and the method of performing individual tasks**.

In the reporting year, due to pandemic-related restrictions, the number of visitations was smaller than in previous years. Despite the limitations, specialists of the National Labour Inspectorate, while observing the sanitary regime, carried out **over 1.7 thousand visitations** (in 2019 – over 3.3 thousand visitations), during which they assessed work safety of **about 2.2 thousand persons** (in 2019 – about 4 thousand persons).

The Inspectorate's staff noticed on many visited farms (**approx. 32%**) that the production part was not separated from the residential one, and thus **no safe places for children to rest and play were separated**.

There were thresholds in entrances to **over 34% of the assessed farming and animal buildings**, which is the most frequent cause of trips and falls, that

are the most numerous group of accidents in farming.

It should be mentioned that almost **25%** of the circular saws and electrical tools used in workshop tasks were faulty. These often were self-designed tools, in poor technical condition, **with no protection whatsoever from an injury due to contact with moveable working components**, creating the risk of an electric shock. Labour inspectors inspected the technical condition of agricultural machines and equipment, including about **1.5 thousand tractors, 500 combine harvesters** and **about 2.5 thousand other agricultural machines and equipment**, for example presses, manure spreaders, mowers, sprayers and seeders.

In some cases, the NLI uncovered **the lack of fire extinguishers and first-aid kits** in tractors, and the use of **vehicles with excessively worn out tyres and without proper lights**. Unfortunately, as per our findings, the fact that farmers possess newer vehicles does not automatically entail correct working methods and safety.

The most frequent irregularities uncovered during visitations to field works concerned combine harvesters; **as many as 30% of the machines did not have guards on the drive elements of the harvesting unit**, or the guards were damaged or incomplete. Other shortcomings included damaged railings and ladders on the route to the operator's platform, as well as **the failure to use props** to protect a person working under a hydraulically raised header from being crushed during its repair or elimination of a breakdown. Serious hazards which were still noticed comprised the lack of guards on the drive mechanisms and **the transport of persons on ladders and platforms**.

As every year, during visitations close attention was paid to the safety of children and youth. Unfortunately, there were still cases where **children were engaged in activities which they should not perform** due to the risk to their health or life. The NLI staff noticed **32 cases of children staying in the danger zone** or helping with farming work, and **8 of them concerned the performance of work forbidden to children**.

In the framework of statutory tasks related to prevention in private farming, in 2020 the Inspectorate's staff implemented **educational and training initiatives** whose main objective was to disseminate knowledge of: accident hazards on farms, the rules for the



**Photo.** Visitations to field works of specialists of the National Labour Inspectorate in 2020 gave the opportunity to verify the technical condition of farming machinery in use

protection of life and health, as well as the methods of preventing work-related accidents and occupational diseases among farmers. In the reporting year, **over 3.2 thousand private farmers** attended **128 training events** organised by District Labour Inspectorates.

The pandemic had a negative effect on the scale of such activities. When the sanitary restrictions came into force and precluded the organisation of traditional training meetings for many people at the same time, some events took place in the online mode, however persons from rural communities are less willing to attend online events.

There were also difficulties in organising didactic events for children and teenagers. Due to the pandemic and temporary limitations of the functioning of educational units, the scale of educational initiatives in schools and kindergartens was smaller than in other reporting periods. In 2020, the NLI conducted **287 lectures and talks, which were attended by approx. 4 thousand children and almost 8.9**

**thousand pupils.** The events were also organised, with the support of teachers and carers, in periods free from lessons. Some educational activities of the National Labour Inspectorate, especially those for older children, proceeded in two stages – first, a theoretical part, later – practical tasks.

In implementing activities aimed at reducing the number of accidents in villages, the labour inspectorate was **supported by partners from the State Fire Brigades and the Police**, which has already become a tradition. Those services complemented the talks and lectures of inspectors with explanations of issues such as fire hazards, the fundamental rules of giving pre-medical first aid and the safety rules for resting and playing by the water.

The NLI employees also initiated and organised promotional and popularising activities thanks to which the participants could broaden their knowledge of the safety rules and good practices related to running





**Photo.** During training and information meetings, farmers could obtain free of charge expert advice on technical work safety

agricultural farms. To this end, acting on its own or with partners, the NLI conducted **36 competitions of OSH knowledge**, in which **870 private farmers** took part.

The meetings organised for the youngest residents of villages also ended with competitions to check the participants' knowledge about safety. The children received small gifts for correct answers. The meeting participants were also offered information publications (brochures, comic books, games), as well as lanyards and reflective elements with the National Labour Inspectorate's logotype, which increase the user's visibility at dusk. In the reporting year, the NLI organised **107 competitions for over 11 thousand pupils and about 7 thousand youngest children**.

One should mention an **all-Poland art competition titled "We are safe in the country"**, launched by the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund and co-organised by the National Labour Inspectorate, addressed to children from primary schools in villages. Its tenth edition was

held under the slogan "You don't take risks when you know and respect animals". More than **57.5 thousand works of children from about 4.1 thousand schools** were appraised. Those numbers show the importance of that preventive action, which enables to develop positive behaviour of the youngest related to work and life on agricultural farms.

It should be emphasised that **the cooperation with institutional and social partners facilitates reaching the audience from the rural milieu in a wider and more effective way**. Like in previous years, while implementing tasks which improve the work safety of Polish farmers, the National Labour Inspectorate could count on the support of: **the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund, the Agriculture Restructuring and Modernisation Agency, the National Agriculture Support Centre, agricultural advisory centres, agricultural chambers, educational inspectorates, schools and universities, heads of**



Photo: In 2020, educational events in schools were held in accordance with the sanitary rules

**villages and local self-government authorities.** Additionally, **the cooperation with the mass media** made it possible to broadly inform the general public about the Inspectorate's activities aimed at increasing the safety level during work and life in rural areas.

All meetings with farmers, children and teenagers offer a perfect opportunity to disseminate the National Labour Inspectorate's **thematic publications** targeted both at adults and children, as well as youth. In 2020, the NLI handed out **almost 27 500 copies** of leaflets, brochures, cards of safe work, comic books, books for children and other communication materials.

Summing up, one should mention that the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic forced the NLI to temporarily resign from the traditional forms of contact and thus it significantly limited the implementation of the planned preventive and promotional activities for recipients from rural areas. Nevertheless, the aspiration to raise the level of work safety in private farming requires **further,**

**intensive popularisation of knowledge about hazards and the methods to prevent them,** with the use of innovative forms of reaching the target groups. Addressees of the preventive activities **await reliable knowledge and expert support from specialists of the National Labour Inspectorate.** Such support takes the form of both visitations to private farms and consultancy, meetings, training, competitions and education for the younger generation – all of which have been implemented by the labour inspectorate for many years. The subject-related resources, such as **guides, cards of safe work, instruction and educational videos, checklists and other materials for self-education,** seem to substantially increase the attractiveness of the conducted activities and complement them. Especially as these materials are available in electronic form, to be downloaded at one's own home, free of charge, from the websites: [www.pip.gov.pl](http://www.pip.gov.pl) and [www.bhpwrolnictwie.pl](http://www.bhpwrolnictwie.pl). It seems reasonable **to develop remote forms of preventive influence** in the years to come and to encourage private farmers to use that type of initiatives.

## 7. STATISTICAL DATA ON WORK ACCIDENTS IN FARMING, INCLUDING THEIR CAUSES

Victims of work accidents in farming according to the data of Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (KRUS), Statistics Poland (GUS) and National Labour Inspectorate (NLI)		2020	Accident causes
<b>KRUS<sup>1</sup></b>	Data on accidents in farming work, reported to KRUS by private farmers (or their families) entitled to receive benefits from social insurance for farmers.	<b>Total number of victims, including fatal ones</b>  <b>10 974, 35</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>poor condition of a farmyard, communication routes, manoeuvring areas, etc. on farms;</li> <li>poor condition of farm buildings;</li> <li>poor condition of machines, equipment and tools;</li> <li>poor technical condition of ladders, platforms, scaffolding and other ancillary structures used on farms;</li> <li>poor condition of communication routes (roads, pavements, etc.) and buildings located outside farms;</li> <li>incorrect operation of machines, equipment and tools;</li> <li>failure to use protective devices;</li> <li>incorrect movement of limbs in the danger zone;</li> <li>incorrect handling of farm animals;</li> <li>failure to use or an incorrect way to ascend and descend ladders, platforms and scaffolding during work at heights.</li> </ul>
<b>GUS<sup>2</sup></b>	Data on work accidents reported to GUS by farming companies	<b>Total number of victims, including fatal ones</b>  <b>862, 12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorrect behaviour of a worker;</li> <li>improper condition of a material agent;</li> <li>improper wilful behaviour of a worker;</li> <li>lack, or improper use, of a material agent;</li> <li>incorrect work organisation;</li> <li>incorrect organisation of a workstation.</li> </ul>
<b>PIP<sup>3</sup></b>	Data on work accidents reported to the NLI and examined in terms of correctness of the applied preventive measures	<b>Total number of victims, including fatal ones</b>  <b>61, 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lack of protective devices;</li> <li>lack of collective protective measures;</li> <li>lack of instructions on how to conduct a technological process;</li> <li>lack of instructions on how to operate machines and equipment;</li> <li>lack of supervision of workers;</li> <li>incorrect coordination of team work tasks;</li> <li>connivance of the supervising personnel for breaches of rules and regulations of safe work;</li> <li>no training in the form of workstation instructions;</li> <li>allowing a worker to perform work despite medical counter-indications or without medical examinations;</li> <li>incorrect operation of machines and equipment;</li> <li>neglecting hazards (risky behaviour);</li> <li>ignorance of the hazard and paying insufficient attention to the performed activities;</li> <li>walking, driving or staying in prohibited areas;</li> <li>failure to use personal protective equipment by a worker;</li> <li>improper wilful behaviour of a worker.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Data of the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary data of the Statistics Poland (GUS) refer to PKD section 01: Farming, forestry, hunting and fishing; the data of GUS comprise accidents reported in the specific year.

<sup>3</sup> The NLI's data refer to PKD section 01: Farming, forestry, hunting and fishing and they comprise accidents that occurred in the given year and were examined by the NLI inspectors (status as at: 29.03.2021).





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