

SKIN DISEASES IN AGRICULTURE, PREVENTION OF AGRICULTURAL WORK RELATED HAZARDS

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The skin is the largest and one of the most important human body organs as it participates in regulation of numerous physiological processes, and being a part of non innate immunity it is the first line of defence of the organism.

Farmers belong to a professional group, where the skin is exposed to numerous harmful factors. During work farmers have contact with numerous substances harmful to the skin, additionally due to the specifics of work in agriculture, farmers' skin is all the time exposed to harmful weather conditions such as: solar radiation or high temperatures. This can result in various skin damages, such as: mechanical injuries or infections, which in turn might cause chronic diseases or skin cancer.

Farmers' workplace is a type of environment where a number of potentially skin pathogenic factors are accumulated. Every fifth farmer has experienced or is experiencing more or less intensive skin ailments caused by working on the farm. The scope of such ailments is very wide.

Skin diseases are also important from the point of view of occupational medicine, as they are amongst most frequently diagnosed occupational diseases in any branch of the economy. Contact dermatitis (irritant dermatitis) is the most frequently diagnosed skin disease. According to statistical data from various countries the risk of skin diseases in agriculture is greater than anywhere else.

However, majority of skin changes and ailments can be effectively eliminated thanks to appropriate skin care and protection, as well as thanks to abiding by occupational health and safety principles. Also in this case the "prevention first" principle proves to be of greatest importance. Making an effort to abide by these principles brings positive results in the shape of significant time saving as saving of financial resources, which would be otherwise spent on treatment in the future.