

# A National Program on Injury Prevention in Swedish Agriculture

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## ABSTRACT

The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in cooperation with Statistics Sweden carried out a comprehensive survey of injuries in Swedish agriculture that occurred in 2004. The result shows that: About 5000 injuries occurred on agricultural farms that resulted in bodily injuries and constituted obstacle at work. According to official statistics there were only about 400 registered injuries. This means that only 8% of the occurred injuries found in this study emerge in the official statistics of occupational injuries. In order to change this negative situation for Swedish agriculture a number of initiatives were taken during 2005 – 2008: a) media attention in newspapers, farmers magazines, web, television and radio, b) establishing of a joint Nordic declaration against fatal injuries in agriculture and c) establishing of a national action plan against injuries in agriculture, initiated by the Ministry of agriculture

**Objectives:** The aim of the national program on injury prevention in Swedish agriculture is to reduce the number of injuries in Swedish agriculture by 50% during the period 2009-2013. The planning phase is financed by the Swedish Ministry of Agriculture and the action phase is financed by the European Commission (Rural development program).

**Methods:** During 2008/09 there has been a planning phase led by researchers from the university and representatives from the Federation of Swedish farmers. The main concept is face to face interaction between educated supervisors (mainly farmers themselves) in order to increase knowledge as well as changing attitudes and behaviours in relation to risks and injury prevention. The supervisors will work with different concepts: a) A three step focus group concept including development of action plans for each farm and farm family, b) Individual visits by supervisors on farms for interaction and action plan development and follow ups, c) Farm walks with groups of farmers on one farm together with a supervisor. All concepts will give the farmer / farm family support for identifying his/her own risks and ways of preventing injuries. The goal is to give the farm family confidence and motivation to handle their problems by themselves as an integrated part of farming. Special focus is given to children and seniors (> 65 yrs) at the farm.

**Results:** Over 150 persons are in the process of being educated as supervisors. They are given basic facts on injuries, injury prevention and risk handling in agriculture, but the focus is training of a pedagogic method called “future workshop” both during the course and as a working tool for them during their meeting with farmers. The real actions as supervisors will start after the summer 2009 and will be evaluated during the whole process until the end of 2013. The goal is to reduce the injuries by 50 % and the vision is to reduce the fatal injuries by 100%.

**Keywords:** *Injuries, injury prevention, action program, agriculture, supervision*