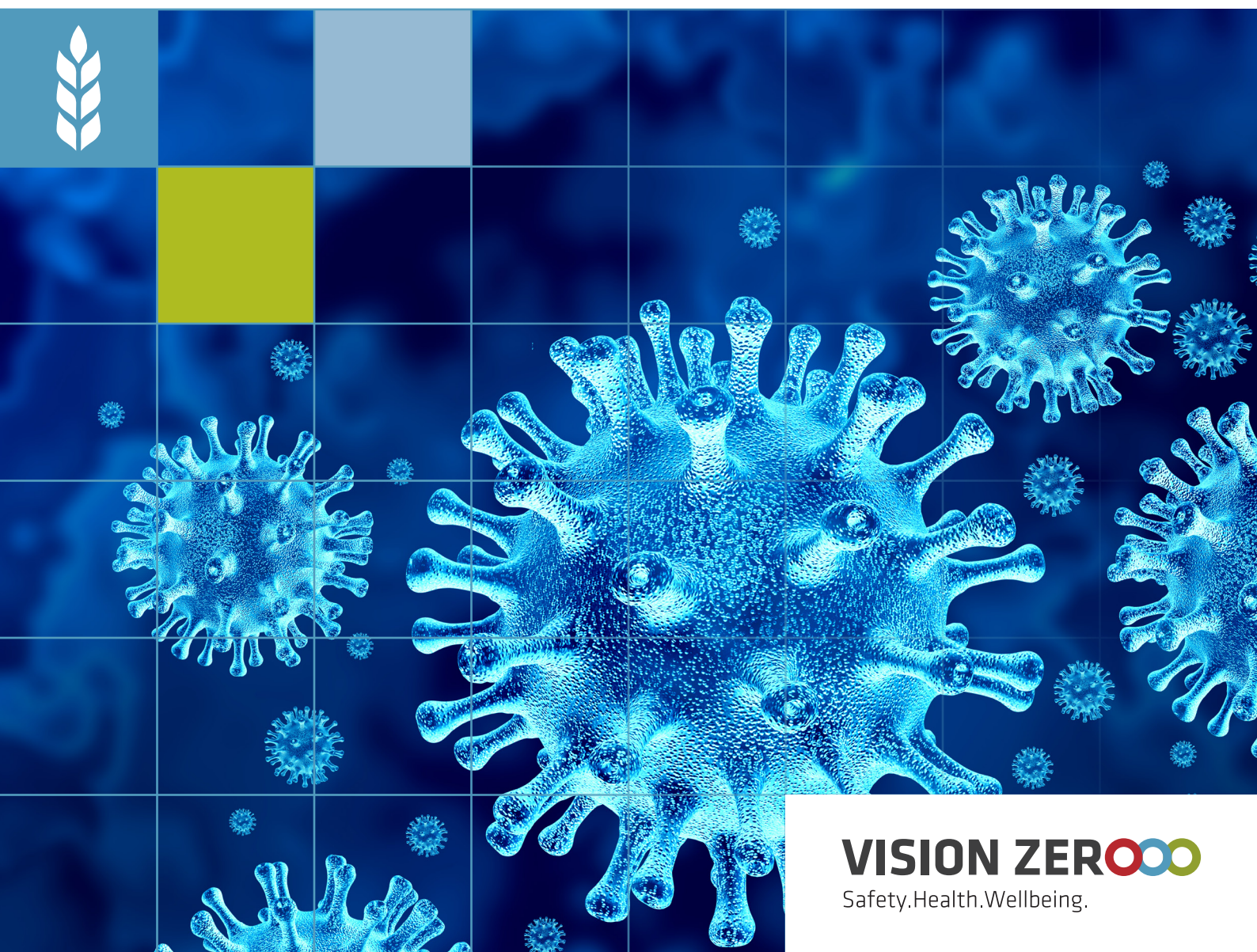




INTERNATIONAL SECTION OF THE ISSA ON PREVENTION IN AGRICULTURE

ANNUAL REVIEW 2020

# Prevention in AGRICULTURE during COVID-19 pandemic



**VISION ZERO**   
Safety. Health. Wellbeing.



# INTERNATIONAL SECTION OF THE ISSA ON PREVENTION IN AGRICULTURE

International Section of the Issa on Prevention in Agriculture is a specialized, technical body in the area of prevention of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), set up by decision of the ISSA Bureau. It is one of the fourteen sections of the Special Commission on Prevention. It was founded in 1968 and currently operates under Standing Orders adopted on 30th April 2013 in Erding, Germany. The section comprises ordinary and corresponding members. Majority of members have their representatives in the Advisory Board.

Its objectives are to promote prevention, in particular the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases in agriculture, livestock farming, horticulture and forestry through international cooperation. The Section is non-profit oriented.

The role of the Section on Prevention in Agriculture is to undertake a wide range of preventive actions aiming at occupational safety improvement, to prevent accidents at work and to protect health of farmers and persons employed in agriculture and forestry and their families.

The Section is composed of two executive bodies: the Bureau and the General Assembly, which is composed of a Chairperson, two Vice Chairpersons and a Secretary General. The Bureau is assisted by the International Advisory Board composed of experts from various countries. It deliberates about the Section's future activities and defines the tasks and objectives of the international accident prevention in agriculture on a long-term basis.



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# COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus

Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, some will become seriously ill and require medical attention. Older people and those with underlying medical conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. Anyone can get infected with COVID-19 and become seriously ill or die at any age.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the disease and how the virus spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by staying at least 1 metre apart from others, wearing a properly fitted mask, and washing your hands or using an alcohol-based rub frequently. Get vaccinated when it's your turn and follow local guidance.

The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. These particles range from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols. It is important to practice respiratory etiquette, for example by coughing into a flexed elbow, and if you feel unwell to stay home and self-isolate until you recover. \*

## ISSA Agriculture Section

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a great impact on the economy, the environment and any human activity, such as livestock, agriculture, tourism, transport, education, health, fishing, etc.

The pandemic caused by the COVID-19 disease has an important effect on agriculture and the food chain, mainly affecting food demand and consequently food security, with a great impact on the most vulnerable population.

In 2020, ISSA Agriculture Section's member institutions took the necessary measures to combat the prevailing pandemic with the aim of ensuring the stability of work and life in the agricultural sector.

\*Source: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1)



# WHAT RESTRICTIONS AND ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



ISTITUTO NAZIONALE PER L'ASSICURAZIONE  
CONTRO GLI INFORTUNI SUL LAVORO

## Measures adopted by the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work in Italy (INAIL) to mitigate the impact of Covid 19

### Insurances

- User services: telematic management.
- As a precaution and in order to limit the presence of users at the counters, requests for information and/or services were handled exclusively through the electronic access channel „INAIL risponde”.
- Enhancement of information services.
- INAIL has activated new contact details to contact the offices, with the aim of providing information and support users at a distance.
- Suspension of the non-peremptory or peremptory terms contemplated in the ISI announcements (incentives for companies) both for the administrative and technical verification phases and for implementation and reporting of administrative procedures. All phases of the ISI 2019 announcements have been extended.
- Suspension of the terms of limitation and prescription periods of Inail services. Accident protection for coronavirus infection.
- Suspension of the course of expiration and ordinance periods relating to claims for benefits granted by INAIL, as well as the expiry periods for the review of maturing annuities.
- Suspension of insurance premiums.

### Prevention

- The prevention and training events were canceled.
- On the INAIL website protocols and guidelines have been published:
  - a publication on protection from SARS-CoV-2 for agricultural workers This publication provides operational information to workers in the agro-zootechnical sector, so that they can apply measures for the protection of their health and prevention to avoid possible infections in the workplace. [https://www.inail.it/cs/internet/docs/alg-pubbl-la-protezione-da-sars-cov2-lavoratori-agricoli\\_6443157184739.pdf](https://www.inail.it/cs/internet/docs/alg-pubbl-la-protezione-da-sars-cov2-lavoratori-agricoli_6443157184739.pdf).

### Internal work organization at INAIL

- Specific protocols for workers have been implemented. The main indications are given below:
  - reduction of the exchange of paper documents;
  - workplaces equipped with hand disinfectants;
  - checking the temperature before entering the workplace;
  - workers equipped with face masks;
  - smart working as the ordinary way of working when the type of job allowed it;
  - information campaigns on Covid prevention published on the intranet;
  - meetings, seminars and training courses carried out remotely;
  - a gradual return to the workplace planned in line with the government decrees.



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# WHAT RESTRICTIONS AND ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



KASA ROLNICZEGO  
UBEZPIECZENIA SPOLECZNEGO

## Areas of activities of Agricultural Social Insurance Fund in Poland (KRUS) affected by the pandemic

### **Insurance – Exemption from KRUS Contribution Payments**

All persons covered by pension insurance were exempted from paying KRUS contributions for the 3-month period (Q2 2020).

### **Benefits – Increased sickness benefit**

Sick pay was increased in the case of respiratory diseases classified as U07.1 COVID-19. It amounts to PLN 15 for each day during the first 14 days of illness.

### **Care Allowance for Farmers**

- for a period not exceeding 14 days;
- to parents of children up to 8 years of age;
- to parents of children of up to 18 years of age with significant or moderate disability or children with a disability certificate or a certificate of need for special education.

### **Rehabilitation – Suspended activities of KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres**

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres suspended their activities. They returned to normal work with special sanitary rules against COVID-19 on 18 June 2020. On 24 October the referral for rehabilitation was again temporarily suspended, the referral resumed on 18 March 2021.

### **Prevention – Safety of rural inhabitants during pandemic**

- prevention events, trainings for farmers and farms inspections – cancelled in 2020;
- instructions for farmers how to work safely during the pandemic – on the KRUS website;
  - 10th National Children's Art Competition – postponement of the results' announcement; Competition Gala event cancelled;
  - 18th Safe Farm Competition – postponed for 2021;
  - special e-training programme for children about safety in the countryside on the KRUS website;
  - special message for parents – increased attention to children spending more time on farms due to closed schools.

### **Internal work organisation at KRUS – Different work organisation during the epidemic**

- contact with farmers limited to the use of telephones, e-mails, as well as the KRUS e-portal;
- special „deposit boxes” for paper documents to minimize direct contact between clients and the KRUS employees at KRUS organisational units;
- PPE (gloves) and dispensers with liquid hand disinfectants provided at KRUS organisational units;
- information on infection prevention regularly published on the intranet;
- employees were ordered to limit contact as much as possible and, if possible, to postpone planned training sessions and conferences to a later date or to conduct them online;
- home office where possible;

### **Communication – Increased activity in the media**

- temporary help line for farmers;
- a series of recommendations regarding the maintenance of safety in the event of a coronavirus infection published on the KRUS website, KRUS e-portal and Facebook;
- publications in national media (newspapers, internet media) with advice related to pandemic.



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# WHAT RESTRICTIONS AND ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



The impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on the activities of the Farmers' Social Insurance Institution Mela in Finland (Mela)

## **Benefits and general information**

Payment procedure and handling of insurance and benefit applications were running as normal.

- Mela introduced a website concerning frequently asked questions about social security, safety and well-being during pandemic.
- Clients were also advised to follow the instructions of the Finnish government and health authorities.

## **Financial measures to support Mela's clients**

Reduced interest rate on delayed payments (8% -> 4%).

- A payment schedule for unpaid insurance premiums was issued for up to 2 years on request
- Due date for insurance premiums was postponed by 3 months on request.

## **Farmers' holiday and stand-in scheme**

- Information on Mela's website about safety measures and administrative procedures during pandemic (e.g. cancellation of stand-in period in case rehabilitation or medical operation had been cancelled).
- 40 regional units were mapping temporary work force in case a large number of farmers/stand-in workers would be simultaneously infected by Covid-19.
- Farmers were reminded to update the risk management plans and written instructions for stand-in workers. Farmers were also asked to give a power of attorney to another person in case they are not able to take care of the application procedures due to accident or illness.
- Farmers were reminded to take care of the safety on the farm to make sure that stand-in workers have safe working conditions.
- Sick leave certificates issued on a video or telephone appointment were acknowledged as proof of disability to work.

## **Occupational well-being services and safety promotion**

- Farmers' well-being project was aimed at consulting farmers mainly over telephone. In specific cases project workers visited the clients on their farms – safety instructions were strictly followed.
- Vouchers for short-term therapy were issued normally – therapy sessions were carried out mostly by web-based tools.
- Mela's well-being advisor and farm safety advisor were serving clients over telephone.
- Most services and events were organized on-line: webinars, videos, podcasts and interactive workshops on health, safety and well-being.
- Mela released a new IT-application for registering and managing the recommendations of OHS.
- Mela's other web-based prevention services were promoted, e.g. PPE-examination (e-learning).

## **Mela's customer service**

- Employees were recommended to work remotely (about 90% of the staff was working from home).
- e-services and customer services by phone were promoted, physical appointments were avoided.



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# WHAT RESTRICTIONS AND ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



Sozialversicherung für Landwirtschaft, Forsten und Gartenbau in Germany (SVLFG) measures to maintain the working capacity of employees, companies and insured persons

**Switch to telephone and e-mail contact** – All employees were available to insured persons by telephone, e-mail and via the electronic portal „meine SVLFG“. Personal assessments of insured persons in need of care by the medical services in nursing homes or in their own homes were temporarily suspended. If an on-site consultation was unavoidable, the SVLFG employees received instructions on how best to protect themselves from infection and coordinate with the insured. Operational and household assistance was maintained in compliance with the strictest safety measures in order to assist insured persons in emergency situations or to take over their work.

**Expansion of online services** – The SVLFG established preventive online and telephone mental health services that could be used from home. It transferred other prevention and health services to a digital format.

**Online further training offers** – The SVLFG also ensured further training with online seminars and lectures in occupational health and safety. They developed „SVLFG digital im Dialog,“ an online format for a virtual series of events to stay in touch with the insured. They also participated in virtual events and trade fairs. While course concepts for online training were developed in other areas, practical requirements made this impossible in the case of first aid. As a transitional measure, the training periods were therefore extended from two to three years.

**Information at [www.svlfg.de](http://www.svlfg.de)** – The SVLFG worked closely with the DGUV to provide information on infection and occupational safety, including practical/work aids, checklists, an instruction manual and the infection protection Corona poster in 13 languages, operational pandemic planning, a risk assessment, and FAQs on the Corona virus for all insurance branches. Under the title „Respiratory Protection“, 15 films were also produced describing the correct use of respiratory protection masks on the SVLFG homepage and YouTube channel.

**Safe work for seasonal workers** – Seasonal workers have access to a wide range of information in several languages. The SVLFG also set up a web app for seasonal workers at [www.agriwork-germany.de](http://www.agriwork-germany.de). It contains measures for joint work and accommodation under Corona conditions, accident and health protection, first aid, emergency numbers and answers to many other questions in German, English, Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Georgian, Spanish and Ukrainian.

**Adjusting the range of services** – The SVLFG adapted range of benefits. In the Landwirtschaftliche Krankenkasse (Agricultural Health Insurance), for example, a corona-related children’s sick pay scheme has been in place since January 5, 2021. Preventive and rehabilitation facilities had the option of receiving a temporary hygiene supplement.

**Financially effective relief** – Contributions due could be deferred on application if a company was experiencing payment difficulties due to the Corona virus pandemic. The SVLFG suspended the supplementary earnings rules for people who receive early retirement pensions from the old-age insurance scheme for farmers (for early retirement pensions, income was temporarily no longer taken into account for the entire year 2020). All early retirement pensions that had already been reduced were recalculated retroactively as of January 1, 2020.

**Internal work organization of the SVLFG** – The SVLFG has also adapted its internal work organization to the Corona conditions with the aim of remaining in dialogue despite the pandemic situation. A crisis team coordinates all measures in dealing with the Corona crisis. It works on the basis of an internal pandemic plan. Each SVLFG locations has drawn up a hygiene plan and has been equipped with disinfectants. SVLFG employees obtain information on internal measures via the intranet.



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# WHAT RESTRICTIONS AND ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?



The French agricultural social protection (MSA) scheme has had to face an unprecedented crisis

**The Institution mobilized itself as from the beginning of the crisis:**

with the establishment of a daily monitoring unit and close collaboration between the Central Fund and the network in order to implement all the emergency economic support measures (deferral of contributions, payment of derogatory daily allowances, replacement allowances for non-employed workers, exceptional aid to families and students in precarious situations, etc.). These measures made it possible to cushion the impact of the crisis on insured persons from March 2020.

Numerous **online services** have also been set up:

- services for declaring work stoppages for „persons at risk”, for „childcare”,
- a service to declare isolation in the event of symptoms,
- a service for requesting recognition of an occupational disease in conjunction with Covid19.

In collaboration with the National Health Insurance Fund (CNAM) and the Regional Health Agencies (ARS), MSA also mobilized itself in the contact tracing system. It thus offered reinforced support exceeding 350 full-time equivalents over the year throughout the country.

All of the **MSA’s occupational health and safety services** were adapted to meet the challenges of the pandemic in terms of prevention:

- **specific advice** for the agricultural sector (viticulture, animal husbandry, equine industry, green spaces, forestry work, market gardening, tree farming, etc.)
- **funding of barrier measures to protect the entire profession:** exceptional agricultural device APCOVID. The CCMSA’s Occupational Health and Safety Department built and then launched in March 2020 the exceptional national device „Aide Prévention COVID” (APCOVID). APCOVID aimed at promoting preventive measures integrating protection against Covid, in the agricultural enterprises and farms through a financial support to implement barrier measures (up to €1,000).

Collective prevention and protection measures to limit workers’ exposure to the Covid risk or to improve working conditions in this context were eligible as well as the purchase of masks if this was in addition to another collective prevention and protection measure against Covid in the company/farm.

This financial aid favored advise and support to companies or farms by MSA’s prevention advisors. Initially, due to expiry on 30 November 2020, the health situation has led CCMSA to extend the APCOVID scheme until 30 November 2021.

- **close support to contain the evolution of clusters:** targeted actions (occupational health and safety services: occupational physicians, occupational health nurses, MSA prevention advisors) were carried out in companies and farms where the risk of viral circulation was high, particularly in connection with the sanitary management of clusters (arboriculture, slaughterhouses, etc.) or for precarious populations such as foreign seasonal workers.

**MSA Solidaire**, a chain of solidarity was supported, on a voluntary basis, by men and women of the MSA Group. It aimed at helping the rural populations most weakened by the current crisis. This momentum has enabled more than 300,000 actions (equipment with masks, food aid, support for the elderly, help for isolated people, etc.) all over France in response to the urgent needs of those most affected by the crisis. The employees and delegates of the MSA group were called upon to contact and listen to vulnerable people and to detect situations at risk.



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# ARE YOU INTERESTED IN PREVENTION IN AGRICULTURE?

## JOIN OUR AGRICULTURE FAMILY!



The International Section of the ISSA on Prevention in Agriculture comprises ordinary and corresponding members.

The following entities may become **ordinary members** of the Section:

- affiliate and associate members of the International Social Security Association, as defined in Articles 5 and 6 of the ISSA Constitution;
- an institution, is part of a federation of institutions, government department, agency or other entity that is an affiliate or associate member of the ISSA;
- all organizations whose objectives are consistent with those described in Article 2 (of the Section's Standing Orders) and which are not qualified to become a member of the ISSA.

The following may become **corresponding members** of the Section:

- individuals as well as other interest groups, who are experts in occupational safety and health protection in agriculture, livestock farming, horticulture and forestry.

more information: [www.issa.int/prevention-agriculture](http://www.issa.int/prevention-agriculture)

# INFORMATION

The International Section of the ISSA on Prevention in Agriculture brings together institutions and individuals who are engaged in the promotion of occupational safety and health in agriculture. It gives its members opportunities to exchange information and experience and seeks to provide practical solutions to specific issues.

[www.issa.int/prevention-agriculture](http://www.issa.int/prevention-agriculture)

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