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TECHNICAL NOTE 1

Germany

Overview of Farms, Farming and
Safety and Health



The agricultural holdings in Germany farm roughly half of the total area of the country. The area used for agriculture is estimated to be 16.6 million hectares and is managed by around 262,800 farms. Though the pace of structural changes in the agricultural sector has slowed, the total number of farms decreased by approximately 36,400 between 2010 and 2020, representing an annual rate of loss of around 1.3%. Farm size has increased over the same period indicating that process of farm intensification are continuing. The average amount of land per farm was around 63 ha of utilised agricultural area in 2020 compared to 60ha in 2016 and 56ha in 2010.

Of the utilised agricultural area, 70.3% was arable land, 28.5% permanent grassland and 1.2 % permanent crops. Cereal cultivation is the most common type of arable farming in Germany, with winter wheat accounting for 23.7% of the total arable area. Silage maize (19.7%) and winter oilseed rape (8.2%) were also significant arable crops in 2020.

In 2020, almost nine out of 10 farms (around 234,000 farms) specialised in a particular branch of agricultural production. The remaining 11% of farms (around 28,800) carried out a range of farming activities without a specific branch of production. Just under two thirds of all farms (around 168,800) kept livestock. Of these, around 44,500 were specialised dairy farms, representing the largest group.

Compared to other economic sectors, particularly manufacturing, agriculture still consists of a large number of micro and small enterprises. A slight majority (56%) of sole proprietorships are run as a sideline, i.e. combined with other forms of off-farm or on-farm income, with the remaining 44% run as a main occupation. However, the proportion of full-time farms continues to decline. In 2020, full-time farms cultivated around 71.6 ha of utilised agricultural land, almost three times as large an area as part-time farms (24.3 ha).

(Facts and figures on agriculture, forestry and the food industry with fisheries, viticulture and horticulture, BMEL, 2022).

Germany

Location

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■ The Farm Workforce

The increase in the average size of agricultural farms, as a result of continued structural change and further technical progress, enabled more efficient work processes underpinning the ongoing decline in the labour input in the sector. There are also processes of ongoing specialisation, particularly the outsourcing of agricultural machinery and its operation to specialised service companies.

In 2020, around 937,900 people in Germany worked full-time or part-time in the agricultural sector. The workforce is continuing to decline, falling at an annual rate of 1.4% since 2010. Agricultural activities are predominantly carried out by farm holder (entrepreneurs) and their family members. In 2020, there were around 434,400 holders and family members (46% of all workers,) around 228,900 permanent employees and around 274,700 seasonal workers.

Family workers accounted for 33.7% of all full-time employees, while permanent employees comprised 55.4%. The remaining percentage is comprised of part-time and seasonal workers. While the number of family workers continues to decline because of the declining number of sole proprietorships/farms, the number of permanent agricultural employees and part-time non-family workers is increasing. Despite these developments, the number of seasonal workers is declining. The impact of these developments has resulted in total operational labour output falling from 545,500 labour units in 2010 to 484,800 labour units in 2020, a decline of 1.2% annually.

(Facts and figures on agriculture, forestry and the food industry with fisheries, viticulture and horticulture, BMEL, 2022).

■ Farm safety and health

Germany operates a compulsory insurance scheme for farmers and farm workers. The Landwirtschaftliche Berufsgenossenschaft, LBG), which is a branch of the Social Insurance for Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture (SVLFG), provides a range of protections and services to all entrepreneurs in agriculture, forestry and horticulture. Family members who work regularly and all employees including seasonal workers are insured through it. Its activities and many years of experience provide a good data basis and a foundation for the working approaches of the German Community of Practice (CoP).

Associated with the ongoing structural changes in agriculture outlined above, i.e. reduction in the number of farms, farmers and workers, and specialisation of production processes, the number of non-fatal injuries has declined by 4% over the last five years. Despite this, no recognisable trend in fatal injuries has been observed. The hazards and workloads in the green sector, including accident and illnesses, are described in detail in the relevant prevention reports (prevention reports 2013-2022, *SVLFG in Figures 2022*). Reports are also available on the socio-cultural aspects of security in agriculture (Specialist publication series on social security in agriculture, "Soziale Sicherheit in der Landwirtschaft" (SdL) 2002-2023). SdL is a periodical specialised journal. It primarily deals with agricultural social security issues in Germany. Other articles are devoted to social policy, social law and administrative procedures. The current issue focuses on the topic of health (Soziale Sicherheit in der Landwirtschaft 1/2024).

The headlines of the articles in the current issue translated into English and naming the author:

- Lyme disease - occupational aspects in the green sector, Dr. Alexandra Riethmüller
- Stress during the farm handover, Johanna Greiner
- Mental health of women in agriculture - Results from the rural women's study, Dr. Zazie v. Davier,
- Problems of statutory accident insurance in recognising post-traumatic stress disorders as health damage, consequences of accidents or so-called occupational diseases, Karl Friedrich Köhler



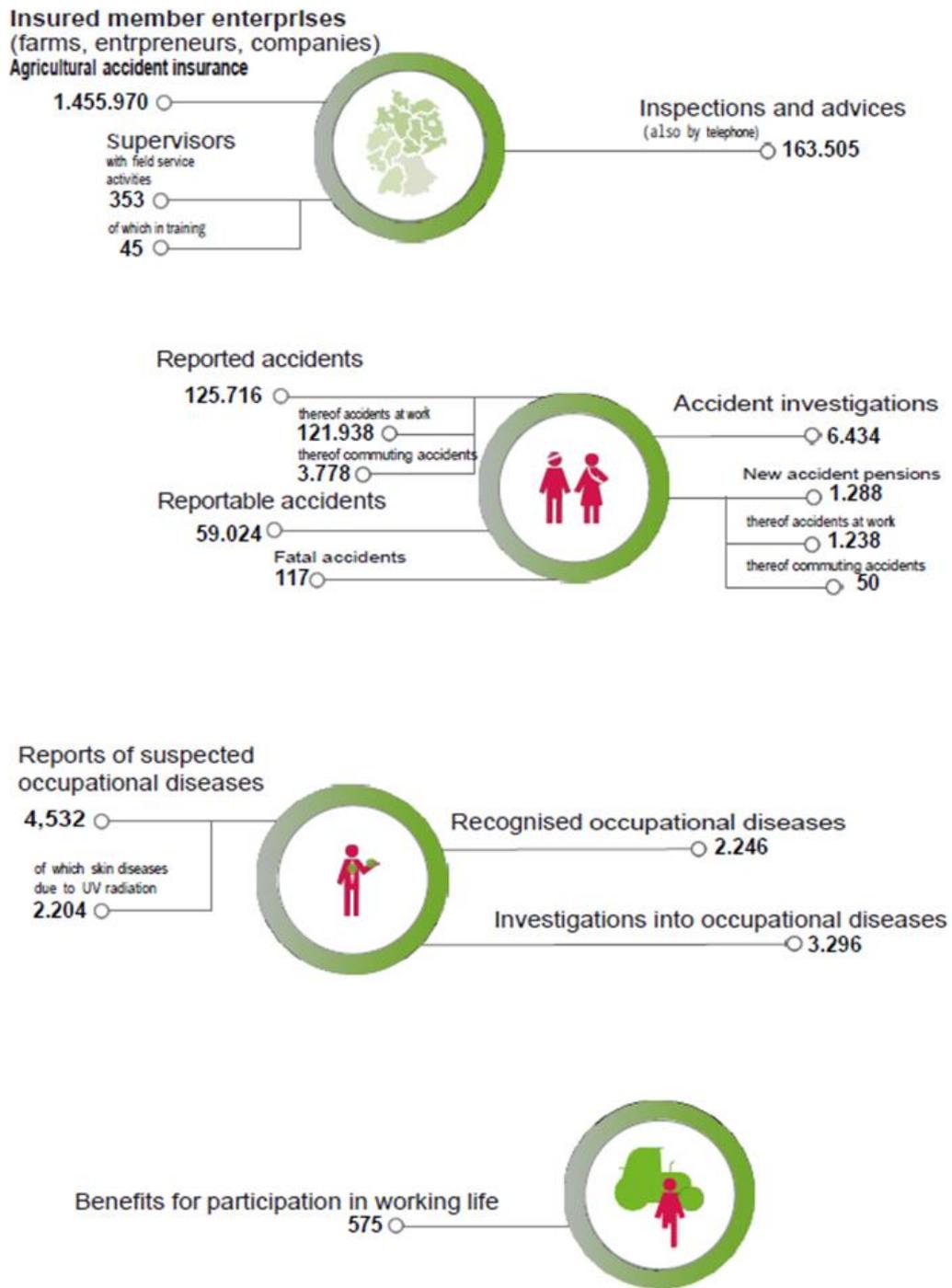


Image 1. Occupational safety and health statistics (OSH-statistics) of the green sector in Germany in figures (prevention report 2022).

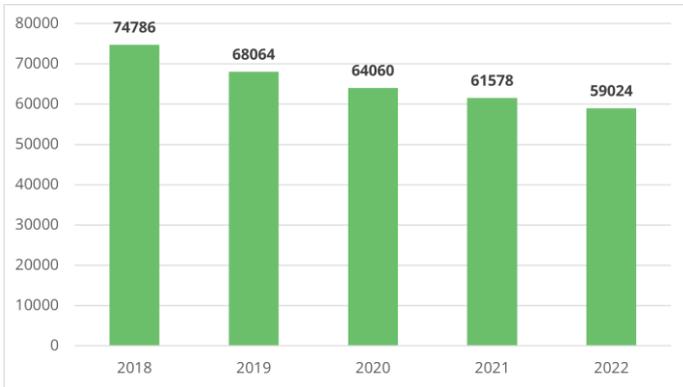


Figure 1. The five-year development of non-fatal accidents at work and commuting accidents

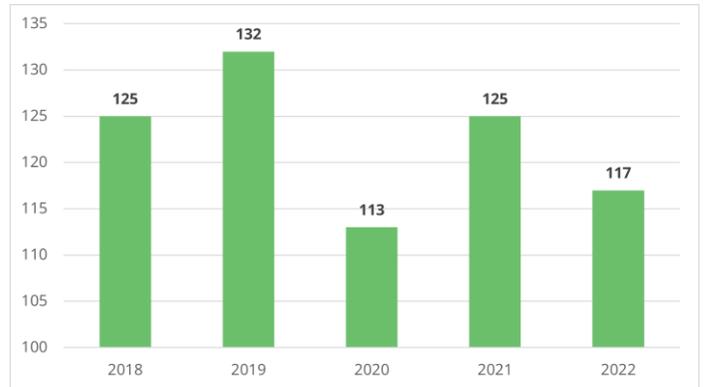


Figure 2. The five-year development of fatal accidents at work and commuting accidents



Figure 3. Distribution of reportable accidents by position in the company in 2022 (Not allocated: 128)

Table 1. Accidents by work area 2022

| Fields of work | Reportable accidents | | Fatal accidents | |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| | Quantity | Change from previous year | Quantity | Change from previous year |
| Animal husbandry | 13645 | ↓ -696 | 17 | ↓ -3 |
| Horticulture and landscape maintenance work | 12602 | ↓ -355 | 8 | ↑ +6 |
| General works | 8751 | ↓ -830 | 15 | ↓ -9 |
| Maintenance work on machines and devices | 8532 | ↓ -666 | 4 | ↓ -11 |
| Field and cultural work incl. garden, vineyard, special culture | 5466 | ↑ +153 | 28 | ↑ +1 |
| Forestry and forestry work | 4302 | ↑ +254 | 33 | ↑ +7 |
| Other activities | 3454 | ↓ -401 | 2 | ↓ -1 |
| Construction work | 985 | ↓ -122 | 5 | ↓ -2 |
| Household and garden work | 942 | ↑ +128 | 2 | ↑ +1 |
| Hunting | 345 | ↓ -19 | 3 | ↑ +3 |



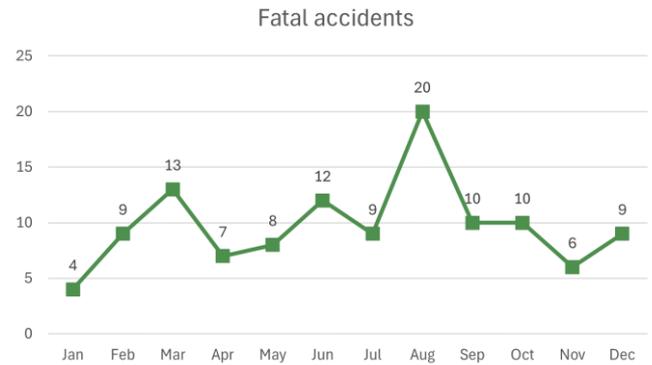
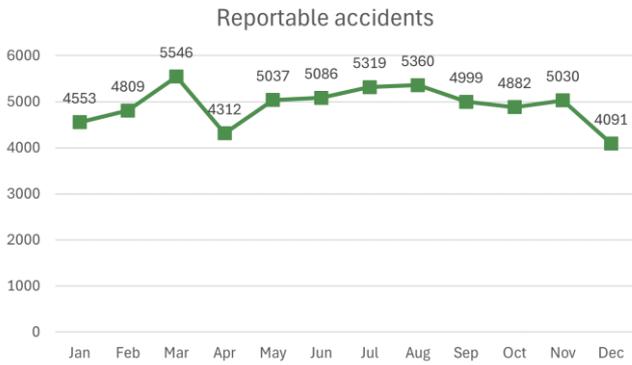


Figure 4. Distribution of reportable accidents by time of accident in 2022 (work and commuting accidents that result in incapacity to work for more than three days or death must be reported)

Figure 5. Distribution of fatal accidents by time of accident in 2022

Table 2. Accident distribution by age

| Age of the injured person | Reportable accidents | | Fatal accidents | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| | Quantity | Change from previous year | Quantity | Change from previous year |
| Up to 18 years | 2238 | ↓ -53 | 1 | ↓ -3 |
| 19 to 25 years | 8108 | ↓ -423 | 6 | ↓ -2 |
| 26 to 30 years | 5112 | ↓ -489 | 2 | = . |
| 31 to 35 years | 5493 | ↓ -42 | 1 | ↓ -6 |
| 36 to 40 years | 4665 | ↓ -308 | 4 | ↓ -2 |
| 41 to 45 years | 4543 | ↓ -78 | 4 | ↓ -3 |
| 46 to 50 years | 4949 | ↓ -548 | 6 | ↓ -2 |
| 51 to 55 years | 7144 | ↓ -592 | 13 | ↑ +3 |
| 56 to 60 years | 7717 | ↓ -89 | 11 | ↓ -5 |
| 61 to 65 years | 4926 | ↑ +127 | 10 | = . |
| 66 to 70 years | 1936 | ↓ -9 | 22 | ↑ +9 |
| Over 70 years | 2185 | ↓ -49 | 37 | ↑ +3 |

References

[BMEL \(2022\)](#), Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture: Facts and figures on agriculture, forestry and the food industry with fisheries, viticulture and horticulture.

[SVLFG \(2012-2022\): prevention reports](#)

[SVLFG prevention report 2022](#)

[SVLFG in figures \(2022\)](#)

(SdL): [Specialist publication series on social security in agriculture, 2002-2023](#)

SVLFG (2024) Soziale Sicherheit in der Landwirtschaft (SdL): RIETHMÜLLER, Dr. A.: Borreliose – berufsbezogene Aspekte in der Grünen Branche. SdL 1/2024: 5-8; GREINER, J.: Stress bei der Hofübergabe. SdL 1/2024: 9-18; V.

Davier, Dr. Z.: Mentale Gesundheit von Frauen in der Landwirtschaft – Ergebnisse aus der Landfrauenstudie. SdL 1/2024: 19-28; KÖHLER, K.F.: Probleme der gesetzlichen Unfallversicherung bei der Anerkennung von posttraumatischen Belastungsstörungen als Gesundheitsschäden, Unfallfolgen oder sog. Wie-Berufskrankheiten. SdL 1/2024: 29-49



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