

Ireland

Innovation & cooperation

CAP support in Ireland improves farm safety and wellbeing of agricultural workers.

Summary

The Farmers4Safety Project helped improve farm safety and farmers' wellbeing through a peer-to-peer mentor approach using 'Buddy' system and awareness raising campaign in three Irish regions that were prone to high levels of farm accidents and fatalities.



Location

Moate

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P1- Knowledge transfer & innovation

Measure

M16 - Cooperation

Funding

RDP budget 195 779 (EUR)

Project duration

2021 – 2022

Project promoter

Farmers4Safety Project

Email

niamh@irishrurallink.ie

Website

www.farmers4safety.ie

Project Results

The project's innovative peer-to-peer 'Buddy' approach led to effective networking and open lines of communication within the farming community.

'On the ground' actions by the Farm Mentors resulted in increased levels of innovative thinking within the farming community in an effort to help address farm accidents and fatalities.

Surveys clarified the diverse needs and challenges facing farmers and their families towards farm safety, health and wellbeing.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The project's conception, and its delivery of a creative range of networking strategies to disseminate findings (as well as to communicate the aims, objectives, and activities of the project), have been instrumental in tackling and improving traditional social norms and behaviours around farm safety, health, and wellbeing.

Context

The Farmers4Safety Project emerged out of the need to address the high number of agriculture-related fatalities reported (by Health and Safety Authority HSA) in the Co. Cork, Wexford and Tipperary areas in Ireland. In the ten years before this project, 55 fatalities were recorded and the Irish agricultural sector consistently had the highest proportion of fatal incidents of any sector in Ireland, ranging from between 35%-45% of all workplace fatalities in any given year. This is despite the sector accounting for only 6% of the Irish working population. The age profile of those killed on farms is of particular concern, with victims aged under 18 accounting for 10% of all farm fatalities.

The Farmers4Safety Project believes that such fatalities are avoidable if innovative safety actions and measures to mitigate risk are implemented. Emotional wellbeing is another area that requires attention in the farming community, with poor mental health reported to be a major contributing factor to accidents and fatalities that occur on farms. Such issues can compromise farm safety due to the resultant lack of sleep, poor concentration, high levels of stress, and absentmindedness or complacency amongst farmers that may occur. Farmers, like most people, can be more anxious of safety threats to their family members and employees than to themselves.

Objectives

The Farmers4Safety Project aimed to improve the wellbeing of agricultural workers. This would include changing social norms around farm safety, health, and wellbeing using a peer-to-peer mentor approach across three Irish counties that were prone to high levels of farm accidents and fatalities (Cork, Wexford and Tipperary).

Activities

The Farmer4Safety Project was an EIP-AGRI Operational Group made up of Irish Rural Link, in partnership with two other Irish EIP-AGRI Projects (BRIDE Project and the Duncannon Blue Flag Farming and Communities Scheme), New Futures Farming Group and Ireland's Health and Safety Authority.

Additional Information

[Twitter Facebook Instagram](#)

Irish Farmer's Journal Article: <https://www.farmersjournal.ie/new-project-aims-to-change-attitudes-to-farm-safety-696736>

AgriLand Article: <https://www.agriland.ie/farming-news/get-stuck-in-with-new-farm-safety-sticker-competition/>

That's Farming Article: <https://thatsfarming.com/farming-news/farm-safety-competition/>



Funded by
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Actions included surveying farming communities, recruiting mentors and engaging with young farmers.

Main Results

The Farmers4Safety Project completed 152 pre-evaluation and attitudinal responses from farm families, 28 survey responses from service providers and 52 survey responses from partners regarding farm families' attitudes and behaviours towards farm safety, health, and wellbeing. These surveys findings confirmed diverse needs and challenges facing farmers and their families regarding farm safety, health and wellbeing, as well as gaps in service provision within the sector.

Six part-time Farm Mentors were recruited for each region who tackled issues such as the distress that agricultural contractors may face during busy working periods and risks of tractors for young people. The project mentors' innovative peer-to-peer 'Buddy' approach led to effective networking and open lines of communication within the farming community. Mentors' actions also increased innovative thinking within the farming community to reduce farm accidents and fatalities e.g. a safe pass in the agricultural sector (like the construction industry) and bespoke stickers for tractors/machinery highlighting their dangers.

Engaging with future farmers involved a Farm Safety Sticker Competition (Stick2Safety) - in partnership with AgriKids, a national farm safety educational platform for children and teachers. Entrants created window stickers showcasing how farms can be made safer places to work, live and visit. Posts on the project's dedicated Facebook page during the competition's six-week period reached 42 952 people and had 1 630 engagements, while 456 engagements were recorded on Twitter. Such widespread communication efforts resulted in 217 competition entries.

Key lessons

The use of native species of plants to produce wild The project's conception, and its delivery of a creative range of networking strategies to disseminate findings (as well as to communicate the aims, objectives, and activities of the project), have been instrumental in tackling and improving traditional social norms and behaviours around farm safety, health and wellbeing.