

## Report on the Webinar “Safeguarding the health and safety of children in agriculture”

Tuesday, November 14. 2pm \_4pm (CET +1)

### **I. Goal(s) of the webinar:**

Leverage the recent special issue in [Frontiers in Public Health](#) to:

1. Provide an overview of health and safety issues impacting children in agriculture and the broader connections to social and economic sustainability in agriculture;
2. Provide a general overview of current approaches to preserve the health and safety of children in agriculture as well as current gaps;
3. Discuss opportunities for future interventions and future research;
4. Support the development of a network of scholars and practitioners for future research and the development of interventions.

The first two objectives were addressed, while opportunities, networking and prospects were not.

### **II. Program**

IAWA welcome and introduction by Nathalie Hostiou (French National Research Institute for Food, Agriculture and Environment)

General overview children health and safety in agriculture by Barbara Lee (National Children’s Center for Agricultural Health and Safety – USA)

International experiences and perspectives in children agricultural health and safety. Roundtable moderated by Florence Becot (National Children’s Center for Agricultural Health and Safety – USA)

o Argentina: Marcos Grigioni (Independent researcher)

o Australia: Richard Franklin (James Cook University)

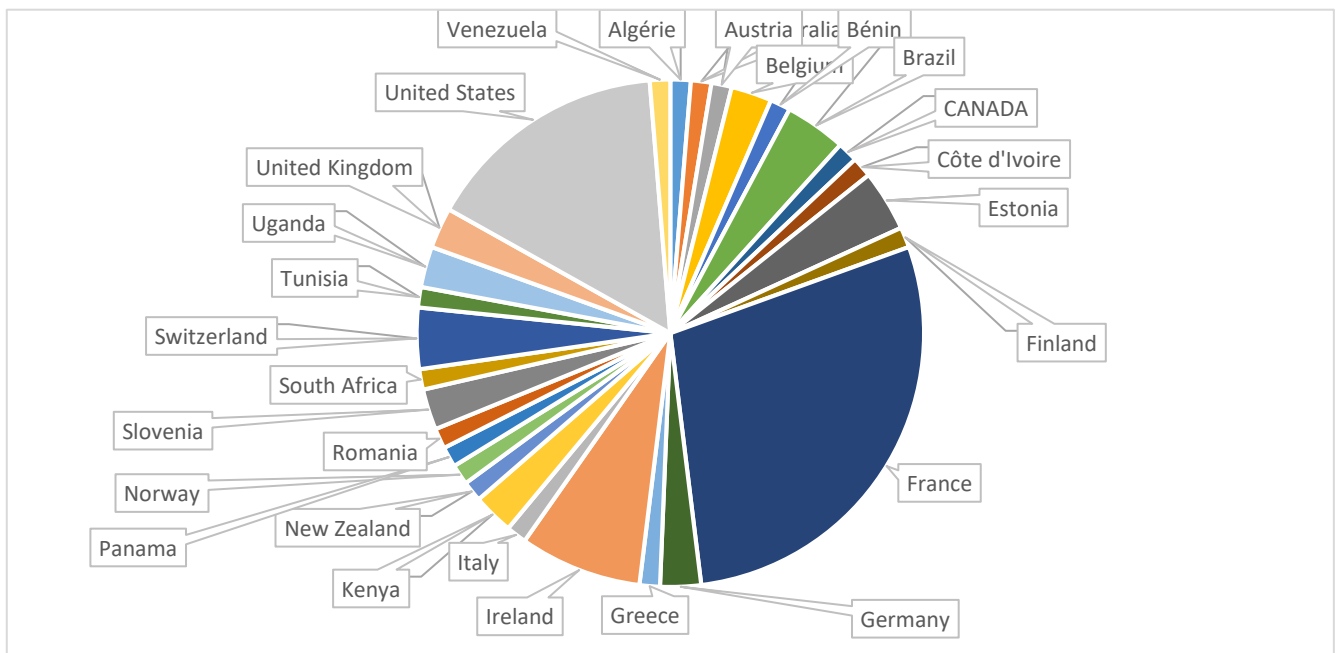
o BurkinaFaso : Eugenie Maiga (University Norbert Zongo)

o Sweden : Pete rLundqvist (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences)

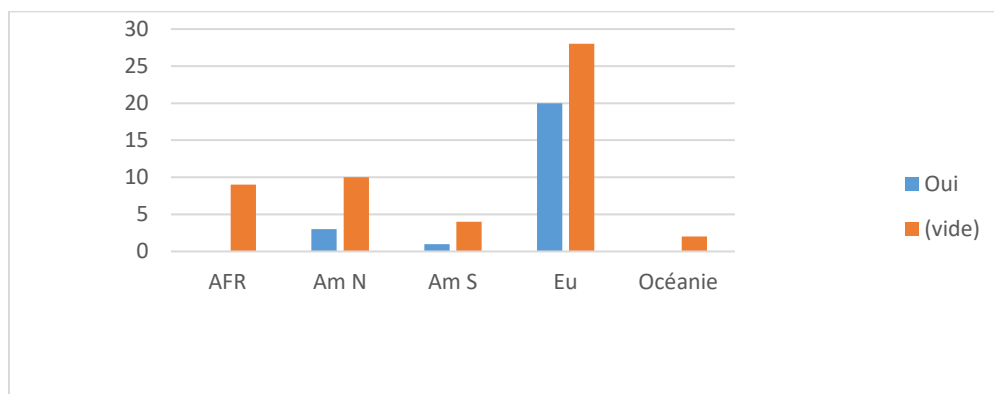
o UnitedStates: Barbara Lee(National Children’s Center for Agricultural Health and Safety – USA)

Webinar wrap-up by Marion Beecher (Teagasc, Irland)

### III. Registrants and participants:



78 registrants from a wide range of countries, with a preponderance of French and American. We had few people coming from Asia and Oceania (timetable a strong constraint).



The diversity of registrants reflects their interest in the subject, and validates the relevance of a round table comparing different situations on different continents. The audience is equally diverse, and in addition to the 50 registrants from the academic sphere, there are also registrants from the consulting and insurance sectors, 2 NGOs, 2 journalists, 1 from the Inter-American Development Bank, and 4 registrants from the government sphere (France and Belgium).

Attendance was low (24 actual participants<sup>1</sup>), mostly from Europe and North America, and mainly from the academic sphere. However, we note the participation of an Irish NGO, a member of the French government, two members of the insurance industry (Finland, Germany) and two members of the consulting and development sector.

<sup>1</sup> The 40 participants counted on zoom can be broken down as follows: 24 participants, 7 translators, 9 speakers or organizers.

#### **IV. Webinar summary**

Firstly, Barb Lee outlined the importance of the topic. Some of the takeaway messages from her presentation were:

- Importance of language – need to replace ‘accident’ with ‘injury’ as fatal and not fatal injuries are not accidents. Rather, they are predictable and preventable.
- It is a hugely complex area with multiple factors influencing it, such as age, development stage of the youth, whether they are working or not working, environmental and agricultural condition as well as social and cultural conditions.
- Because of its complexity – there is not one simple fix or solution to protecting children
- Protective strategies on farm can start with removing the child from the farm to providing personal protective equipment to protect the worker while a modified socio ecological model for agriculture could be used at a policy and governmental level.

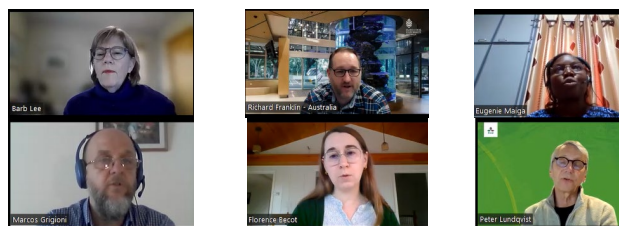
The presentations made by representatives of the Argentina, Australia, Burkina Faso, Sweden and United States provided an overview of the population size, economic and education status and the agricultural outlook. Despite the diversity of between countries in these topics there were many commonalities regarding safeguarding of children, namely:

- Lack of data
- Lack of government support or law enforcement
- Wide range of risks
- Lack of childcare and economic stability

The presenters pursued a number of topics that should be prioritised:

- Provision of yearly statistics
- Education and training
- Policy reform and enforcement with government support
- Support from the media in terms of changing the reporting of such incidents

#### **V. Synthesis of the two questions to the panelists:**



- One thing that was really clear across all the presentations, except maybe for the US, is the lack of data on the situations around children’s health and safety in agriculture. However, based on the data that we have we know that children are exposed to higher rates of injuries and fatalities.
  - What do you think the lack of data of data is doing in terms of awareness about the challenges that children face in agriculture?
  - What kind of implications does the lack of data has on addressing the challenges faced by children in agriculture?
    - Question and answers start at 1:24:24

- Another thing heard almost across all the presentations is the tension between the laws that are on the books to protect the children and/or provide resources vs. what happens in reality.
  - Can you provide examples from your countries around how these tensions were resolved, examples of times when policy makers were called out to address the tension, examples of times when attempts to address the tension failed, and what was learned from it?
    - Question and answers start at 1:33:18
  
- With 5 minutes left, turned to questions from the chatbox that were applicable to all panelists:
  - What are the obstacles to not collecting statistics on accidents involving children on farms?
  - What about specific training systems/curricula for children involved in agricultural work? Do they exist? Do all children have a chance to attend such trainings?
    - Question and answers start at 1:40:44

#### **VI. Questions asked in the chat box:**

**1. Question to Peter: What do the educators do when children are accused of having animals killers as parents?**

**2. Question to Eugenie: what do you think of value chain laws that would prevent commodities produced with support of child labour to be imported. Would it be realistic? And should we work for it?**

Responses :

- from Eugenie: About value chain laws that prevent importing goods using child labor, I think it would only work if the data is correctly reported. Corruption can make it difficult to tell whether child labor was use or not in producing the goods or services
- From Richard: @Eugenie Maiga good point, reporting is important and also checking that it is correct is also needed.
- Thanks Richard. Yeah accurate data is very difficult to get but that shouldn't stop us from trying

**3. What about specific training systems/curricula for children involved in agricultural work? Do they exist? Do all children have a chance to attend such trainings?**

Responses :

- From Richard Franklin : We have specific training in Australia however it is not consistently delivered across the country nor do all the people who need are able to access it. We have developed curriculum for school and also our agricultural school as well. More work needs to be undertaken to ensure greater aces and delivery.
- From Alma Jordan - AgriKids To Everyone: In Ireland there tractor driving courses are available to 14-16yo children as is the laws in Ireland regarding tractor driving. I have no data on accessibility or those who avail. In the UK similar courses also exist.
- We have no rules specifically about this in Australia, however under our workplace health and safety legislation if the manufacturer says they need to be over a particular age then this

would be followed by the regulator. They can not be on the road as this requires a drivers permit .

**4. What are the obstacles to not collecting statistics on accidents involving children on farms?**

**5. Question mainly for Dr Barbara Lee, I have always felt that the NAGCAT Guidelines have great utility in allocating safe work tasks to children base on their age/development. Could I enquire, please, if the guidelines have been (1) further developed and if (2) they are extensively used in USA/Canada. Thanks, John McNamara, Ireland.**

**6. Barb Lee, you mentioned that social and cultural circumstances play a role in accidents. Are there any successful counselling services or concepts for breaking through traditions/work processes on farms to create a safer environment in the USA?**

Responses

- regarding breaking through the "cultural barriers ... that is very difficult. In the US we have had public service campaigns, such as " PARENT FIRST. FARMER SECOND. The goal is to prioritize children over the farm.
- From Sarah Öztürk (SVLFG)
- From Alma Jordan - AgriKids : I always felt your 'easier to bury a tradition than a child' poster was very powerful.
- if I may add to Barb - when it comes to youngest children in the US, there are certainly cultural factors to think about but we are finding that economic factors are playing an important role in particular the dearth of childcare
- what we have heard from farm parents across the country is that as much as they like to have the children around, they often feel like they don't have much of an alternative

**7. From Quendler Elisabeth : Are there instruction available for preschoolkids for visting farms with Kindergarten teachers?**

**From Florence Becot To Everyone:** Here is a link to :

- a current project (<https://www.marshfieldresearch.org/nccrahs/FarmChildrenChildcare>) and
- research brief from recent survey ([https://marshfieldresearch.org/Media/Default/NFMC/2023\\_NationalFarmerandRancherChildcaresurvey\\_Researchbrief.pdf](https://marshfieldresearch.org/Media/Default/NFMC/2023_NationalFarmerandRancherChildcaresurvey_Researchbrief.pdf))

**VII. Conclusion**

Despite the importance of the subject, the safety of children in agriculture was not addressed by the last activities of the IAWA, however the special issue and the interest and participation rate of people across the globe in this webinar highlight the importance of this topic. While contexts and involvements might vary from stakeholder to stakeholder and country to country it is important to think about the future of workers to achieving decent work for all. Youth is not just about setting up young people in farming but also the safeguarding of the youngest and often most vulnerable people in our societies that is children some of whom will go on to be the next generation of farmers and wage earners.

Future IAWA activities will include a webinar on work in Africa and a symposium in Switzerland – please refer to the IAWA website and subscribe to the IAWA newsletter through the website.