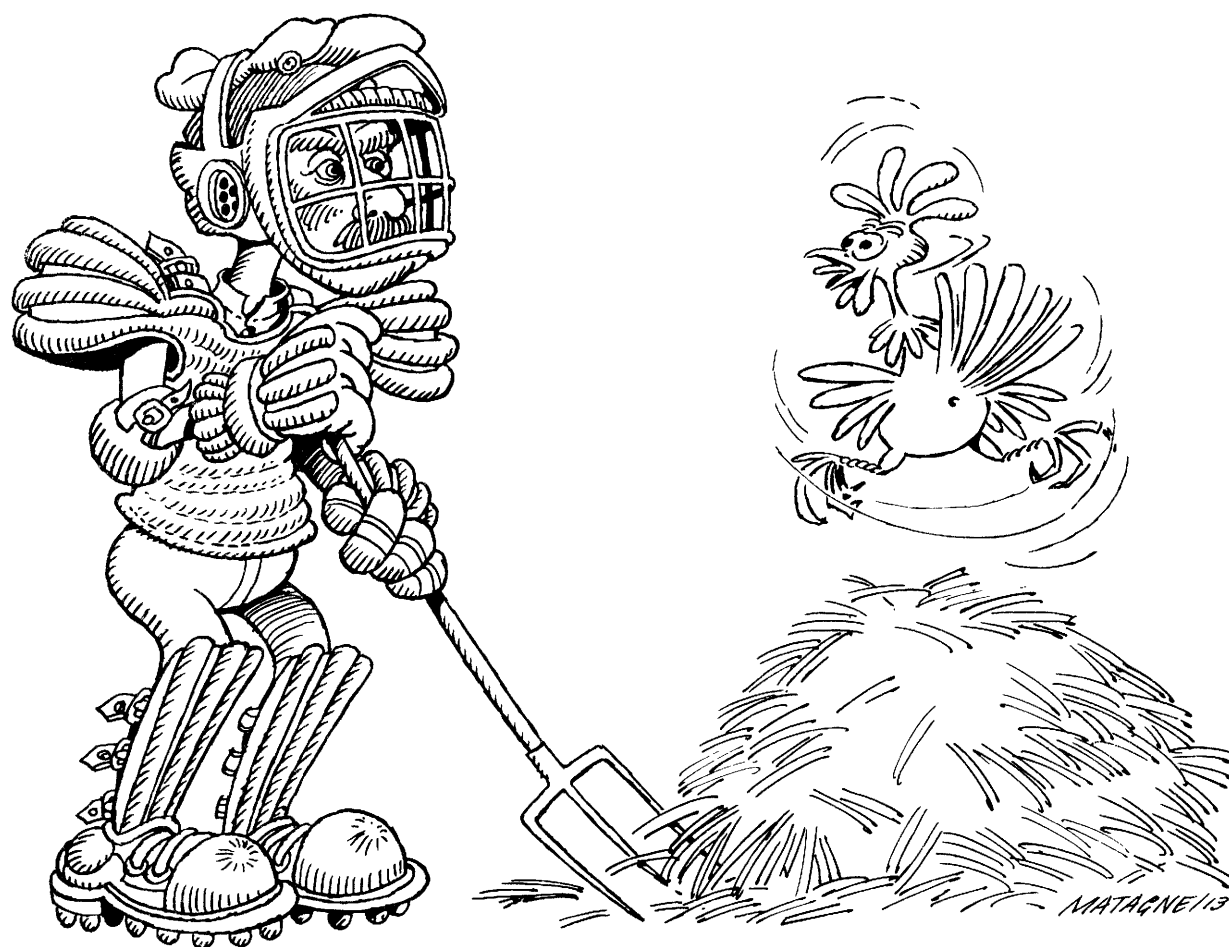


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Accidents at work are a greater danger to farmers than floods, drought, or even Eurocrats! (see page 3)

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FARMERS - THE DANGERS OF THE JOB

'Agriculture without accidents' is the theme of an information campaign being launched by the European Community from 2 to 8 May 1977. Apart from the threat of floods, drought and Eurocrats, farmers in the Community also have to cope with an excessive number of accidents at work.

A few figures

If he were alive today, even General Cincinnatus from ancient Rome would have second thoughts about resigning his position to become a labourer if he knew that there are about 200 fatal accidents each year in agriculture and horticulture. This makes it one of the most dangerous sectors of industry. Most accidents happen in animal rearing. Maintenance work causes 11.3% of accidents, working in the fields 10.8%, harvesting 10.2% and transportation 8.8%. 38% of these accidents are due to attacks or blows from animals, crushing by machinery or simple gashes and knocks. Only 8% of accidents are caused by tractors but such accidents are usually serious.

Tractors and saws

All Community countries are concerned about industrial accidents and in Germany for instance, the law requires accidents in farming and forestry to be covered under national insurance provisions. They also have inspectors to keep an eye on things. As a result of the high number of accidents involving tractors, all agricultural and forestry tractors have been obliged since 1 January 1970 to be fitted with suitable equipment to protect the driver in the event of overturning. The result has been spectacular : despite a 10% increase in the numbers of tractors between 1969 and 1975, the number of accidents has been halved.

The benefit of this measure can not only be gauged in terms of lives saved and suffering spared. Insurance costs for a tractor should also decrease due to reduced claims.

In France it is forestry accidents which are of greatest concern. They account for 16.8% of total work accidents whilst those employed in forestry work only account for 6.8% of the active work force. 21.2% of such serious accidents are caused by chain saws and other cutting devices.

In 1976 the French authorities organised 210 special information courses on forestry safety. 3,000 forestry workers attended and hopefully, they will transmit their learning to those who were unable to be present.

Children as well

Each year in the UK 25% of the fatal accidents are children under the age of 16 years. One third of these are children simply visiting a farm. The figures also coincide with those

holidays when women who are fruit picking or helping with the harvest bring along their children. Whilst the law expressly forbids children under 13 years to travel on tractors, it is mostly tractors which are the principal cause of accidents. The other main cause is drowning.

Since the 1 March 1976, there has been a new law in the UK on hygiene and safety. Safety inspectors have been given the job of advising farmers on safety matters and also of keeping a vigilant eye on the 275,000 farms in the UK. If an inspector discovers an infringement, he can demand certain modifications and even demand prosecution, fines and imprisonment.

Chemicals

Italy has a veritable data bank on agricultural accidents at its INAIL institute. In 1975 out of the 182,330 accidents recorded in farming, 37.7% took place during harvesting and in the processing of agricultural produce. 11.5 of the accidents took place in July; 24.4% were injured hands; 26.6% caused temporary incapacity and 39.5% permanent incapacity.

Chemical products however are the main concern of the Italians. They caused 2 deaths in 1975 and 2 more in 1976. Action is necessary. All methods - radio, TV, brochures, conferences, audio-visual material - are being used to impress upon Italian farmers the care they have to take when using chemicals in farming.

In the Schools

All the Community's farmers need to take a close look at the revolution that has taken place in their industry. Today they use more and more machines, increasingly sophisticated and also increasingly dangerous. They use a wide range of chemicals to protect their crops from pestilence, disease, insects, harmful growths, etc. The new danger is the cost of progress.

The situation of a farmer is greatly different from that of a factory worker. Both work with machines but a factory worker uses virtually one machine with which he can become familiar. Today's farmer uses a large number of machines and changes frequently from one to another. He is less likely to be familiar with the machines and less aware of the specific dangers present in each of them.

Nowhere is the diversity of work as great as in farming. The farmer, unfortunately, rarely has the time to fit himself out in the necessary protective clothing when he's handling dangerous chemicals such as pesticides and insecticides. Good reflexes to professional dangers are instilled when learning the job. For this reason the Community's information campaign is particularly oriented towards the young farmers and the agricultural and horticultural schools.

++ FARMERS - THE DANGERS OF THE JOB

Agriculture without accidents is the theme of an information campaign which the European Community will be launching from 2 to 8 May 1977. In Annex 1 Euroform takes a look at the sombre picture of accidents in farming and also at some of the positive effects of the information campaigns that have been running in some of the Community countries.

++ THE VALUE OF HEALTH

A survey of pharmaceutical prices is to be conducted by the European Commission to check that national regulations dealing with free movement of goods conform with the Community's rules.

National governments are of course free to adopt their own measures to keep pharmaceutical products at reasonable prices to suit consumers, public expenditure and ensure good health for the general public. Such measures however must be kept within the limits set by the Treaty of Rome dealing with the removal of quantitative restrictions between Community countries. Infractions are monitored by the European Commission who have already started legal proceedings at the European Court of Justice following a complaint of price fixing for certain pharmaceutical products in Italy.

++ INFORMATION AND THE CONSUMER PRESS

Keeping European consumers fully informed is one of the major preoccupations of the European Commission. Mr. Pierre-Bernard Cousté of the European Parliament asked the Commission however what it aims to promote by organizing meetings of journalists from the Member States.

The Commission informed Mr. Cousté that it regularly organizes multinational meetings of the Community's consumer journalists from the general press, radio and television. These meetings take place twice a year.

In such meetings the Commission representatives comment on recent Community initiatives in the consumer field. The journalists are able to exchange information on their work as reporters, their practical difficulties and their experiences. During one of these meetings the TV journalists dealing with consumer affairs showed a selection of their own programmes and were able to listen to the criticism of their colleagues. In addition they were also able to arrange exchanges of programmes between the networks.

++ NUCLEAR LOANS

The Community is to lend 500 million units of account (1 u.a. = 1.1 US dollars approx.) to help finance investments in the nuclear sector. These loans however, will not be unconditional it was stressed by Mr. Guido Brunner, Commissioner in charge of energy. The Community has to instigate a genuine dialogue with experts and opinion leaders to confirm the necessity of nuclear energy. At the same time, it has to calculate and reduce the inherent dangers as much as possible.

The Commission has already received formal requests for financial help for nuclear power plants from Germany, France, Italy and the UK.

++ CROSS FRONTIER EDUCATION

To encourage cooperation in higher education, financial aid worth 4,000 units of account (1 u.a. = 1.1 US dollars approx.) is now available for joint study programmes between Community higher education establishments. The aim is to encourage student exchanges, teacher exchanges and also studies dealing with the development of the European Community. Subsidised courses would have to be at least three months long.

The European Commission is ready to receive requests for financial aid from higher educational establishments. As in 1976 the details and regulations dealing with such aid will be sent to the national education ministers. Details can also be obtained from the Community's information offices in the Member States.

++ CROSS FRONTIER LAWYERS

In two years time the European Community's 125,000 lawyers will be permitted to defend their client's interests no matter which Community country they are in. A new directive just adopted by the Community will enable lawyers to provide services throughout the nine Member States. They have not yet been given the free right of establishment which is a much more distant objective requiring a variety of coordination measures and the mutual recognition of diplomas. For the moment the Member States will simply recognize the lawyers from the rest of the Nine and permit them to represent their clients in their country.

Lawyers who will benefit from the directive will not be required to be resident in the country in question or have to be a member of one of its professional organisations. He will have the same power to represent his client as the local lawyers, will be subject to the codes of professional conduct

of both his own country and the country where he defends his client. Member States may also require him to observe local rules of courtesy and work with a colleague practicing at the court in question who would, if necessary, be responsible to that court.

++ JCR : YES - JET : NO

The Joint Research Centre (JCR) will have a budget of 346 million units of account (1 u.a. = 1.1 US dollars approx.) for its next four year research programme, it has just been agreed by the Nine's Council of Ministers. This amounts to a 56% increase on the last four year programme. 60% of the new budget is to go towards energy research. The accent for the future is on the nuclear reactor safety and radioactive waste.

Mr. Guido Brunner's satisfaction at the JCR budget was offset somewhat by the disagreement which still exists over the siting of JET (Joint European Torus). JET is a decisive stage in nuclear fusion research programme. The advantages of the fusion process are widely recognised. It is less dangerous and cleaner than the fission process and the fuel required for the process is found in almost unlimited quantities.

Referring to the disagreement which persists on the siting of JET, Mr. Brunner noted that the Community's mechanisms do not correspond to the scientific objectives that they are dealing with.

++ HOW TO PAY A FINE

European sugar producers were fined by the European Commission not so long ago for contravening the Community's competition rules. The fines actually given (as prescribed by the European Court of Justice) were expressed in units of account (equal to 0.88867088 grams of fine gold), and the text actually gave the value in national currency. Two French companies who were fined have agreed to pay the fine, but pay it in Lire equivalent to the value of the fine in units of account.

The Commission has informed the two companies, Générale Sucrière and Beghin-Say, that the payments are not enough and that if the companies wish to pay in Lire, they should pay in Lire equivalent of the fine expressed in French francs.

The companies have contested this. The Court of Justice has however ruled that the companies should pay the fine as expressed in French francs. The reference to units of account is only for the purpose of enabling the European Commission to deliver fines. The Commission has now requested the two companies to pay their debts in French francs.

++ NATURAL GAS RESERVES

According to official data from the Member States "proven reserves" of natural gas in the Community currently amount to 3,200 billion cubic metres, which correspond to 20 years supply at current production levels.

These reserves however will not be sufficient to cope with expected consumption and will have to be supplemented by imported gas.

If nuclear energy is not expanded by 1985, 120 billion cubic metres of natural gas will have to be imported to cope with the expected electricity demand.

++ LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Cooperation between local authority representatives and the European Commission's Environment Service can only be useful since one of the Commission's aims is to improve the quality of life and particularly in Europe's towns. Representatives of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and the Council of Europe's Municipalities (CCE) recently met Commission environment officials and were able to discuss with great interest the progress achieved so far in the Community's first environmental action programme and their expectations for the second programme. Their particular interest lies naturally enough with topics such as waste disposal, water purification and rural management.

++ JUST OUT - HOT OFF THE PRESS

The European Community's agricultural policy is a 30 page brochure which explains in simple but detailed terms a system which is reputed for its complexity. Published by the Commission in its series 'European Documentation' (5/1976) the document is available from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities - P.O. Box 1003 - Luxembourg.

To guarantee effective and uniform application of Community law in all the Member States is one of the constant preoccupations of the European institutions. For all interested in this field, the Commission has just published a reprint of the section on 'Community Law' from the Tenth General Report of the Community's activity in 1976. The document is on sale at the Office for Official Publications of the European Community - P.O. Box 1003 - Luxembourg.

The 500,000 self-employed commercial agents who practice in the Community have a useful role in the market structure. Information about commercial agents and the companies they represent is available in supplement 1/77 of the Bulletin of the European Communities. The document contains the complete text of the Council directive coordinating the laws of Member States relating to (self-employed) commercial agents. The document is on sale at the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities - P.O. Box 1003 - Luxembourg.

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