

Towards a common European accident database for agricultural vehicles

THE CHALLENGE

Each year, a certain number of accidents happens in the EU involving agricultural machinery. The causes for such accidents differ: for instance, the machine might be outdated or badly maintained, the operator might have misused the machine or was insufficiently trained to handle it etc. It is therefore important to find effective ways and solutions that will help to reduce the number of such accidents further in the years ahead. This should be an integrated, joint effort by all relevant stakeholders.

However, the current accident reporting system for agricultural machinery in the EU remains nationally scattered in terms of the terminology and reporting templates used in each Member State. The absence of reliable, representative, and comparable data effectively prevents the development of evidence-based solutions and strategies at the EU level to reduce accidents.

The European agricultural machinery industry is committed to producing safe and comfortable machines that meet all relevant European requirements. For modern agricultural machines it has been established that less than 1% of the accidents are due to faults in technical design. Manufacturers are constantly striving to improve the safety, design and comfort of their machines. However, manufacturers have no complete and reliable statistical information at hand regarding the exact nature and dynamics of accidents involving agricultural machinery.



IMPACT

The current system is grossly insufficient for an in-depth understanding of the exact causes and contributing factors of accidents in the EU. Many measures that have been proposed to improve safety by changing the machinery are in fact based on a very limited data pool of incidents and not on sound causal and representative evidence.

As a result, some of the proposed measures may not improve the safety situation at all but merely add costs to the customer – while the leading causes and contributing factors of accidents remain unaddressed.

CEMA POSITION & CALL FOR ACTION

CEMA proposes to develop a single uniform template that will need to be filled in for each and every accident involving agricultural machinery in Europe based on a common European CEN standard.

The recorded data should preferably be gathered by the European Commission.

The data collected will for the first time provide reliable statistical evidence. This, in turn, will help in the development of proposals for the reduction of such accidents and will allow to adapt EU legislation regarding the occupational and road safety of agricultural vehicles accordingly.

“Only if we understand the exact nature and dynamics of accidents across the EU will we be able to improve safety levels in the use of agricultural machinery. This has to be a joint European effort. CEMA is committed to play its part.”