

«Die aktuellen und künftigen Herausforderungen der Arbeit in der Landwirtschaft angehen: Forschung, Politik und Praxis»

3. *International Symposium of Work in Agriculture*

*** und ***

25. Arbeitswissenschaftliches Kolloquium

*** und ***

Jahresanlass des H.-P. Cecchini Instituts

7.-10. Juli 2026, Bern, Schweiz

Die Arbeit im Agrar- und Ernährungssektor ist ein zunehmend komplexes Thema. Es gibt viele sich überschneidende Herausforderungen, wie die Alterung der Arbeitskräfte, die Digitalisierung, die Migration, die Auswirkungen des Klimawandels und die Einbeziehung der Lieferketten. Die Menschen, die in der Agrar- und Ernährungswirtschaft arbeiten, spielen eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Anpassung und Umgestaltung der Arbeit angesichts dieser Herausforderungen.

Das Vorantreiben der Forschungsagenda in diesem Zusammenhang ist von entscheidender Bedeutung für eine verantwortungsvolle Politik und Praxis im Zusammenhang mit der Arbeit im Agrar- und Ernährungssektor.

Das *International Symposium on Work in Agriculture* ([ISWA](#)) ist das einzige globale Forum, das Forscher, politische Entscheidungsträger und Praktiker zusammenbringt, um Fragen der Arbeit im Agrar- und Ernährungssektor zu erörtern. Zusammen mit dem *Fachausschuss Arbeitswissenschaften im Landbau* des Fachbereichs Max-Eyth-Gesellschaft Agrartechnik im Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (AKAL) und der jährlichen Veranstaltung des *Hugo P. Cecchini Instituts* an der Berner Fachhochschule bietet diese Veranstaltung ein Forum, um die Forschung zu den Herausforderungen der Arbeit im Agrar- und Ernährungssektor aus verschiedenen fachlichen Perspektiven zu präsentieren und zu diskutieren. Ziel ist es, den Austausch und die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den verschiedenen Interessengruppen zu fördern, um die Herausforderungen zu bewältigen, denen sich der Agrar- und Ernährungssektor heute und in Zukunft stellen muss.

Das Symposium behandelt die folgenden Themen:

- I) **Attraktivität der Arbeit im Agrar- und Ernährungssektor**
- II) **Menschenwürdige Arbeit im Agrar- und Ernährungssektor**
- III) **Kenntnisse, Fähigkeiten und Bildung**
- IV) **Dynamik der Arbeit**
- V) **Gesundheit und Sicherheit**
- VI) **Systeme zur Entwicklung landwirtschaftlicher Arbeitskräfte**

Wichtige Termine und Kontakt

- 11. Januar 2026: **Einsendeschluss** für Beitragsangebote via [ConfTool](#)
Die Evaluation erfolgt durch die jeweilige Arbeitsgruppe
- 15. Februar 2026: Mitteilung über **angenommene Beiträge**
- 15. Februar 2026: Beginn des **Anmeldezeitraums** via [ConfTool](#)
- 7.-10. Juli 2026: **ISWA/AKAL Tagung in Zollikofen** bei Bern, Schweiz

Bei **Fragen** wenden Sie sich bitte an: akal2026@agroscope.ch

Working Groups (WG) of AKAL and ISWA 2026

WG1 – The impact of digitalisation on agri-food labour and production systems

Convenors: Katja Heitkämper (Agroscope, Switzerland - katja.heitkaemper@agroscope.admin.ch), Marianne Cockburn (Agroscope, Switzerland - marianne.cockburn@agroscope.admin.ch)

This working group focuses on the double-edged impact of digitalization on agricultural and food systems and looks for holistic approaches to address the changing landscape of work and production in the agri-food economy. It acknowledges that these technologies can improve productivity, resource efficiency and traceability, but also pose significant challenges especially for labour dynamics. The group aims i) to share current research results on technological advances and digitalization in agriculture, ii) to promote dialogue between scientists, practitioners, and policy makers, iii) to develop recommendations for action such as best practices and policy recommendations for improving working conditions, and iv) to identify research gaps and opportunities for future collaboration.

Format: Traditional research presentations, showcases and interactive follow-up, English and German

WG2 – Critical perspectives on agricultural robotisation

Convenors: Olivier Ejderyan (FiBL, Switzerland - olivier.ejderyan@fibl.org)

This working group will interrogate the relationships between agricultural workers/farmers and robots and the meanings of robotised agricultural work. It considers emancipatory perspectives, political ecologies of robotisation and robotisation in the broader context of digitalisation. The working group aims to contribute to critical agricultural research on digitalisation and automation by i) compiling empirical and theoretical contributions examining labour, meaning, inclusion, and political ecologies of robotisation in agri-food systems; ii) fostering dialogue across disciplines including agrarian studies, STS, political ecology, labour studies, and responsible innovation research; iii) mapping competing narratives and imaginaries of agricultural robotisation, and iv) exploring how agricultural robotics can be understood not only as technical artefacts but also as socio-political projects with implications for justice, sustainability, cultural heritage, and the transformation of agri-food systems.

Format: Traditional research presentations and plenary discussion.

WG3 – Work dynamics within and beyond the farm gate

Convenors: Priscila Duarte Malanski (INRAE, France - priscila.malanski@inrae.fr), Sylvie Mugnier (Institut Agro Dijon, France - sylvie.mugnier@agrosupdijon.fr), Ezequiel Bernardo Gonzalez (INTA, Argentina - gonzalez.ezequiel@inta.gob.ar), Marcos Horacio Easdale (CONICET, Argentina - markeasdale@gmail.com), Marcela Crovetto (CONICET, Argentina - mmcrovetto@conicet.gov.ar)

Work-related issues on farms and within their socio-technical networks are prompting a rethink of farm development pathways such as diversification. This working group aims to better understand i) how farm work is reconfigured by the expansion into non-agricultural activities and their embeddedness in socio-technical networks, including the reliance on external labour and services; ii) how these diversified farms promote attractive workplaces for workers, iii) share lessons learned across farm work contexts to identify common bottlenecks, successful strategies, and emerging patterns; iv) develop a research agenda on work dynamics, diversification, and socio-technical networks in agriculture, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue. Another purpose is to facilitate networking based on knowledge sharing to encourage future collaborations.

Format: Traditional research presentations and non-traditional formats.

WG4 – Mapping the territory of youth careers in agriculture and food

Convenors: Catherine Waite (University of Melbourne, Australia - cwaite@unimelb.edu.au), Michael Santhanam-Martin (University of Melbourne, Australia - mpmartin@unimelb.edu.au), Ruth Nettle (University of Melbourne, Australia - ranettle@unimelb.edu.au), Fiona Williams (Harper Adams University, United Kingdom - FWilliams@harper-adams.ac.uk), Conor Hogan (Teagasc, Ireland - conor.hogan@teagasc.ie), Amy Cosby (Central Queensland University, Australia - a.cosby@cqu.edu.au), Callum Eastwood (DairyNZ, New Zealand - callum.eastwood@dairynz.co.nz), Caroline Nye (University of Exeter, United Kingdom - cn293@exeter.ac.uk)

This working group explores pathways, junctures and experiences of youth careers in the agri-food sector. Youth attraction and retention is a crucial element in the discussion about supporting a sustainable agriculture workforce. It implies a need to map the territory of youth careers and experiences in the agri-food sector, considering various junctures shaping career decision-making throughout. The working groups thus aims to showcase recent scholarship and policy research with a view to soliciting academic dialogue, international collaboration and networking that focuses on 1) Empirical research of young people's engagement in agricultural work, training and careers, 2) Policy approaches shaping young people's work experiences in the sector, 3) Research building theory and policy.

Format: Traditional research presentations with facilitated discussion.

WG5 – Seeds of succession

Convenors: Adriana Borsellino (Rural Youth Europe - adriana.borsellino@ruralyoutheurope.com), Anja Fortuna (Rural Youth Europe - anja.fortuna@ruralyoutheurope.com)

This working group aims to create an interactive space for sharing and reflecting on the experiences of young family members working on farms and engaging in succession processes. It provides a space for reflection on how farm succession unfolds in practice, what enables or hinders youth involvement, and how this process can be better supported. Bringing together diverse perspectives, the working group will examine both shared patterns and contextual differences, with attention to the roles young family members play on the farm. By fostering open dialogue and exchange, the workshop seeks to generate new perspectives, build connections,

and collectively explore pathways to better support and empower the next generation of farmers in sustaining family farms and revitalising rural communities.
Format: Interactive workshops.

WG6 – Enhancing the attractiveness of work in the agri-food sector

Convenors: Meena Pandey (University of California, Davis, USA - mdpandey@ucdavis.edu)

This working group focuses on strengthening workers' rights and socio-economic security, such as fair pay, access to benefits, and retirement systems in the Global North contexts, and expanding basic protections for informal and seasonal workers in Global South. It aims to foster dialogue among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners on transforming agricultural work into a more attractive and sustainable career choice. The group will generate comparative insights and highlight innovative practices by bringing together perspectives from the countries of Global North and South and other comparable contexts. It will also identify systemic barriers and co-develop policy and practice recommendations. The group further aims to stimulate future collaboration to better understand how to attract and retain agricultural workers across regions.

Format: Traditional research presentations and interactive roundtable and world café for participatory dialogue.

WG7 – Innovative approaches to enhancing the attractiveness of agricultural work in rural Africa

Convenors: Marouane Chaami (National Higher Agronomic School – Kasdi Merbah, Algeria - m.chaami@edu.ensa.dz), Yirgalem Nigussie (Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia - yirgalem.nigussie@aau.edu.et), Edward Mutandwa (University of Zimbabwe - mutandwa.edward@gmail.com), Fatima Lambarraa-Lehnhardt (ZALF, Germany - Fatima.Lehnhardt@zalf.de)

This working group will examine the root causes of labor scarcity in rural Africa and explore strategies to improve the attractiveness of agricultural jobs, focusing on wage trends, working conditions, and job satisfaction for vulnerable groups including women and youth. It will also explore systemic approaches to agricultural workforce development, focusing on collaborative strategies that can be implemented at local and regional levels. Sessions will highlight case studies, empirical or statistical data analyses, as well as methodological and theoretical contributions that explore the topic's objectives from diverse disciplinary perspectives. Participants share their insights in workforce development and potential solutions to enhancing labour management and workforce attractiveness.

Format: Traditional research presentations, short presentations, round table discussions and poster sessions.

WG8 – How effectively can production systems attract workers and support decent work?

Convenors: Marion Beecher (SETU, Ireland - marion.beecher@setu.ie), Nathalie Hostiou (INRAE, France - nathalie.hostiou@inrae.fr)

This working group explores effects of the on-going transformations of different production systems (animals and/or crops, pasture based or housing system, etc.) in countries of the Global North and South on the attractiveness of work and support of decent work. It analyses the diversity of forms of work related to the production systems considering different challenges (work organisation, productivity, labour flexibility, capacity to transform, etc.), effects of technical choices (combination of production, livestock and crop management, processing and

marketing) on work, discussing also frameworks, concepts and methodologies. Contributions from diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives are welcome.
Format: Traditional research presentations and non-traditional formats.

WG9 – Decent work in family farming and the agri-food sector

Convenors: Caroline Jacques (University of the Extreme South of Santa Catarina, Brazil - carolinejacques@unesco.net), Dimas de Oliveira Estevam (University of the Extreme South of Santa Catarina, Brazil - doe@unesco.net)

This working group explores efforts to promote decent work in family farming and the wider agri-food sector considering global changes. It conceives family farms as closely connected farm enterprises and households that co-evolve. In family farms economic, environmental, social and cultural dimensions interconnect. Global changes, such as climate change, demographic change, migration, pandemics and technological transformations that affect the agri-food sector and family farms need to be considered, when exploring decent work and its promotion, including differences in scale and other characteristics between countries. Hence, comparative analysis of policies that target rural labour forces in the Global North and South warrant attention.

Format: Traditional research presentations with discussion, English and Spanish.

WG10 – Rethinking labour in agri-food models in Africa

Convenors: Sandrine Michel (Université de Montpellier, ART-Dev, France - sandrine.michel@umontpellier.fr), Fred Mawunyo Dzanku (University of Ghana, Ghana - fdzanku@ug.edu.gh), Sara Mercandalli (CIRAD - French Agricultural Centre for International Development - ART-Dev, France - sara.mercandalli@cirad.fr), Dzifa Torvikey (University of Ghana, Ghana - gdtorvikey@ug.edu.gh)

This working group explores sustainable agri-food models that can provide decent jobs for the cohorts of young people entering the labour market. It defines agri-food models as the specific combination of agricultural production systems and the valorisation of production by agri-food value chains. The working group aims at advancing the conceptualisation of labour in agri-food models by discussing the current approaches and available data. It will shed light on the socio-economic and institutional conditions for more and better jobs in differentiated African territories. The group will share new conceptual knowledge and empirical findings on labour in agri-food models in a diversity of South and North contexts.

Format: Traditional research presentations.

WG11 – Coping with work constraints within complex crop/livestock systems in the African farming sector

Convenors: Mohamed Taher Sraïri (Hassan II Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine Institute, Rabat, Morocco - mt.srairi@iav.ac.ma), Nathalie Hostiou (INRAE, France - nathalie.hostiou@inrae.fr), Teatske Bakker (CIRAD at University of Parakou, Bénin - teatske.bakker@cirad.fr)

This working group focuses on the actual uses of work in the African agricultural sector and its perspectives. It aims to bring researchers interested in the African agricultural sector to present updated knowledge on work uses. Presentations will be particularly focused on methods and results assessing work uses, work organization, such as the 'Work Balance' or 'Quae-Work' methods. Case studies should encompass situations from North Africa or sub-Saharan Africa. Analyses will focus on work efficiency and remuneration. Studies distinguishing the nature of the workers involved in agricultural activities (whether from family of the farmers or hired) are also encouraged.

Format: Traditional research presentations.

WG12 – Soziale Dynamiken und Nachhaltigkeit als Motor neuer Arbeitsprozesse

Convenors: Elisabeth Quendler (BOKU University, Austria - elisabeth.quendler@boku.ac.at), Katja Heitkämper (Agroscope, Switzerland – katja.heitkaemper@agroscope.admin.ch)

Diese Arbeitsgruppe beleuchtet aktuelle Herausforderungen und Transformationsprozesse in der Landwirtschaft an der Schnittstelle von Bildung, Technik, Digitalisierung und Ökologie. Arbeitsprozesse, Arbeitsbedingungen sowie betriebliche und gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen aber auch Qualifikationsanforderungen in der Landwirtschaft stehen im Mittelpunkt. Neue Ansprüche an das Management hinsichtlich Organisation und Umsetzung im Hinblick auf Gesundheit und Personensicherheit bei der Arbeit, aber auch die Inanspruchnahme von Dienstleistung und deren erfolgreiche Einbindung in betriebliche Abläufe aus soziotechnischer und rechtlicher Sicht, sollen diskutiert werden. Diese Arbeitsgruppe wird auf Deutsch durchgeführt.

Format: Wissenschaftliche Vorträge und Poster, moderierte Diskussionsrunde.

WG13 – Assessing and Interpreting Farm Workload: Pathways, Practices and Perspectives

Convenors: Rita Saleh (Agroscope, Switzerland - rita.saleh@agroscope.admin.ch), Sarina Altermatt (Agroscope, Switzerland - sarina.altermatt@agroscope.admin.ch), Emile Spar (Agroscope, Switzerland - emile.spahr@agroscope.admin.ch), Sabine Liebenehm (Agroscope, Switzerland - sabine.liebenehm@agroscope.admin.ch)

This Working Group explores diverse methods for assessing and interpreting farm workload, while also addressing questions of decent work, social sustainability and the future of farming. It aims to i) map methods for assessing farm workload and evaluate their pros/cons, ii) investigate how workload is experienced in different contexts (e.g. farm type, gender, mechanisation/digitalisation, sustainability issues), iii) to discuss pathways for assessing workload as a farm-level social sustainability indicator in different farm contexts (e.g., farm types and labour arrangements, mechanization and digitalisation, etc.). We invite contributions from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss conceptual, methodological and applied perspectives across different farming contexts.

Format: Traditional research presentations and more interactive approaches such as world café.

WG14 – Climate shocks and labour market transitions in agriculture

Convenors: Shireen AlAzzawi (Santa Clara University, USA - salazzawi@scu.edu), Vladimir Hlasny (UNESCWA, Lebanon - vhlasny@gmail.com), Yasmine Abdelfattah (University of Prince Edward Island, Cairo campus, Egypt - yasmine.abdelfattah@uofcanada.edu.eg)

This working group engages with the effects of climate shocks and the green transition on agricultural and rural labour market dynamics. It aims i) to share recent empirical evidence and case studies on how climate shocks affect employment, informality, and decent work outcomes, ii) to explore the adjustment costs of labour reallocation, considering occupational skill specificity and mismatches, and impacts on welfare and labour mobility, iii) to discuss the implications of climate- and technology-driven changes for agricultural workforce development systems, iv) to identify policy solutions that can reduce vulnerability, support decent work, and ensure inclusive transitions for all, and v) to foster collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

Format: Traditional research presentations with moderated discussion.

WG15 – Risk and resilience in agri-food labour markets - *cancelled*

Convenors: Margaret Jodlowski (The Ohio State University, USA - jodlowski.1@osu.edu), Alexandra Hill (University of California, Berkeley, USA - alihill@berkeley.edu), Katie Ricketts (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Australia - katie.ricketts@csiro.au), Sarah Whitnall (University of Western Australia, Australia - sarah.whitnall@uwa.edu.au)

This working group investigates what it means for agri-food labour markets to be resilient in the current, yet heterogeneous geopolitical, environmental, and social climate. In terms of resilience it questions whether a return to the “status quo” is a desirable feature of labour markets in developed countries’ agricultural systems. The group will confront various pressures that impact agricultural employees, particularly migrants and temporal workers, including risks of extreme weather, socio-political shifts and of demand and supply. It will also explore the effects of current policies and market-based tools on risk and resilience in agri-food labour markets. The group aims to share new knowledge on current challenges shaping agri-food labour markets in different developed country contexts.

Format: Traditional research presentations and group discussions.

WG16 – Climate change and transformation of work in animal husbandry

Convenors: Christa Gotter ((PECO-Institut, Germany - christa.gotter@peco-ev.de) Alexandra Voivozeanu, (PECO-Institut, Germany - alexandra.voivozeanu@peco-ev.de)

This working group examines perspectives of workers in the animal husbandry sector on climate-related transformations, related working conditions and worker opportunities to actively shape transformations. It explores the following questions: How is climate change changing the working conditions of employees in agriculture? How do employees in agriculture perceive climate change? What experiences do workers have when farms adopt measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or increase biodiversity? What political measures help cushion the potential negative consequences of these changes for workers? Finally, what role do trade unions play in these transformation processes? The working group encourages cross-border knowledge exchange and will explore opportunities for cooperation on joint future projects.

Format: Presentations followed by discussion.

WG17 – Impact of animal welfare improvement on working conditions

Convenors: Caroline Depoudent (Chambre d’agriculture de Bretagne, France - caroline.depoudent@bretagne.chambagri.fr), Carole Jousseins (Institut de l’élevage, France - carole.jousseins@idele.fr), Xavier Boivin (INRAE, France - xavier.boivin@inrae.fr), Elsa Delanoue (Institut de l’Elevage, France - elsa.delanoue@idele.fr)

This working group explores how regulatory, structural, technological and farming practice changes deemed to improve animal welfare impact the way farmers work, how farmers interact with animals and affect their respective welfares. The aim of this working group is to describe the impact of the changes due to animal welfare improvement on the agricultural work in all its dimensions: working hours, job content, physical or psychological strain, meaning of work, skills, fulfilment, etc. Participants will present the results of studies from a variety of production sectors, countries and disciplines (animal husbandry, ergonomics, psychology, sociology, applied ethology). One welfare approaches are welcome.

Format: Traditional research presentations and plenary discussions.

WG18 – Documenting strategies of preservation in agricultural work

Convenors: Goutille Fabienne Goutille (Université Clermont Auvergne, France - fabienne.goutille@uca.fr), Cécile Barbier (Université Paris 8, France - cecile.barbier@univ-paris8.fr), Sophie Chauvat (IDELE, France - Sophie.C Chauvat@idele.fr)

This working group documents and compares differentiated strategies developed by women and men farmers to sustain health, quality of work, and relationships with living beings, at different scales: within farms, within working collectives, and across territories. It explores how situated practices contribute to the vitality of farms, the transmission of knowledge, and the transformation of production models towards more decent and desirable forms of work

The group aims i) to document concrete strategies of preservation of self, others, and the living in agricultural work, ii) to identify the effects of these strategies on health, attractiveness, and sustainability, and iii) to compare practice-based approaches to documenting and transforming actual work across different agricultural contexts.

Format: Traditional research presentations and practice-based discussions.

WG19 – Gendered work and working gender

Convenors: Maya Rastouil (UMR LISST Dynamiques Rurales, DYNAFOR, France - mayarastouil99@gmail.com), Eva-Marie Meemken (ETH Zurich, Switzerland - emeemken@ethz.ch)

This working group explores the gendered dimensions of global agricultural labour, focusing on the specific challenges women face, including low wages, limited access to land and resources, precarious employment, and heightened health risks. It also engages with the data, methods, and theoretical frameworks needed to study gendered agricultural labour, highlighting the importance of intersectional, feminist, and transnational approaches. The aim is to bring together gender and labour researchers to share ongoing research on gendered work and conditions in global agricultural labour, identify key research gaps, advance gender sensitive methodologies and explore theoretical approaches.

Format: Traditional research presentations with discussion.

WG20 – The human element of sustainable farming

Convenors: Martina Jakob (ATB-Potsdam, Germany - mjakob@atb-potsdam.de), Prathamesh Bachche (ATB-Potsdam, Germany - PBachche@atb-potsdam.de)

This working group explores how to effectively implement policy relevant to workplace health and safety by using practical tools from ergonomics and risk assessment. It aims i) to showcase new knowledge on how a proactive, ergonomic approach can solve long-standing health and safety challenges in agriculture, ii) to discuss various risk assessment methodologies that prioritize the degree and the severity of the risks, enabling farmers to make targeted changes, iii) to develop a collaborative, actionable plan for implementing ergonomic solutions on different types of farms, from small-scale to large-scale operations, and iv) foster networking and future collaborations among participants to continue sharing best practices in agricultural health, safety, and policy compliance.

Format: Traditional research presentations and interactive follow-up.

WG21 – Management of occupational health and safety (OHS)

Convenors: Caroline Jolly (IRSST, Canada - caroline.jolly@irsst.qc.ca), Jessica Dubé (IRSST, Canada), Anouk Aubert-Simard (IRSST, Canada), Marion Poirier (IRSST, Canada)

This working group explores health and safety of very small companies in the agricultural sector. Very small businesses pose several challenges for all countries with occupational injury prevention and compensation systems and workers in the agricultural sector are exposed to a

range of risk factors. The working group aims at a systemic view on the organizational of the health and safety (OSH) management in the very small companies in the agricultural sector. Hence it also discusses workforce sustainability, sharing of practices, ecosystem of intermediary players and policy environment. With the international point of view of the participants, a diversity of knowledge and practical examples will be discussed.

Format: World café.

WG22 – Health and safety in farming (Gesundheit und Sicherheit in der Landwirtschaft)

Convenors: Elisabeth Quendler (BOKU University, Austria - elisabeth.quendler@boku.ac.at)

This working group dedicates itself to the challenges of health and safety in agriculture, a matter often overlooked yet essential. Beyond physical perils such as accidents and health strains caused by heavy lifting, machinery operations, and harsh environmental influences, increasing attention is given to psychological aspects such as burnout, stress, and isolation. Hence, the working group covers i) physical hazards and preventative measures; ii) mental health (burnout, stress, and social isolation) and strategies for prevention; iii) political and legal frameworks to prevent and reduce workplace hazards, and iv) innovative approaches and technologies to improve working conditions. It aims at exchange of knowledge, discussion and networking, development of recommendation and exploration of future perspectives.

Format: Research presentations with discussion and world café, English and German.

WG23 – European farmers' mental health - *cancelled*

Convenors: Uta Devries (Thünen Institute of Farm Economics, Germany -

uta.devries@thuenen.de), Christine Niens, (Thünen Institute of Farm Economics, Germany)

Elke Baranek (Thünen Institute of Farm Economics, Germany), Zazie von Davier (Thünen Institute of Farm Economics, Germany)

This working group explores the state of mental health in agriculture (e.g., prevalence of burnout, depression, suicidality) in different countries to identify risk factors. It also investigates how to make mental health measurable and quantifiable and how and to what extent government can influence the factors affecting mental health. The working group aims to bring together experts from science and practice to discuss mental health issues among farmers. The focus is on documenting and structuring the current state of research and reveal potential research gaps. The group further aims to identify risk factors and protective factors that determine the extent of exposure, and pinpoint specific risk groups. Another goal is to share experiences, particularly regarding surveys and policy measures.

Format: traditional research presentations and discussion

WG24 – Landscapes and lifescapes of support

Convenors: David Christian Rose (Harper Adams University, United Kingdom - [drose@harper-](mailto:drose@harper-adams.ac.uk)

adams.ac.uk), Jennifer Howse (Royal Agricultural University, United Kingdom - [jen-](mailto:jennifer.howse@student.rau.ac.uk)

nifer.howse@student.rau.ac.uk), Rebecca Wheeler (University of Exeter, United Kingdom -

R.Wheeler3@exeter.ac.uk), Sarah Kyle (University of Exeter, United Kingdom - [\[Kyle@exeter.ac.uk\]\(mailto:Kyle@exeter.ac.uk\)\), Conor Hammersley \(New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and](mailto:S.Nyczaj-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Health, USA - conor.hammersley@bassett.org), Tomás Russell (University College Dublin,

Ireland - tomas.russell@ucd.ie), Linda Reissig (Agroscope, Switzerland - [linda.reissig@agro-](mailto:linda.reissig@agroscope.admin.ch)

scope.admin.ch)

This working group explores how life and work (in all its forms) in the agricultural sector can affect mental health and what types of support networks and interventions, including those provided through, or for, networks of advisors or other so-called 'accidental counsellors', can help to reduce stressors and help individuals cope with challenging situations. It investigates

how strengthening mental health across these interconnected groups not only reduces harm but also enhances the sustainability and attractiveness of farm work, helping to retain a skilled and healthy rural workforce. The working groups aim to shed further light on how the mental health of those who live and work in farming communities (including farmers, workers, family members, and ‘accidental counsellors’) can be better supported including from a structural or psychological perspective.

Format: Traditional research presentations and more creative contributions.

WG25 – Living and working in agriculture

Convenors: Florence Becot (Pennsylvania State University, USA - Florence.becot@psu.edu), David Meredith (Teagasc, Ireland - david.meredith@teagasc.ie), Sandra Contzen (Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland - sandra.contzen@bfh.ch), Majda Černič Istenič (University of Ljubljana/The Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia - majda.cernic-istenic@zrc-sazu.si), Duška Knežević Hočevar (The Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia - duska.knezevic@zrc-sazu.si), Julie Sorensen (Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety, USA - julie.sorensen@bas-sett.org)

This working group is about understanding farm populations’ lived realities in agriculture and identifying solutions that support decent and fair living conditions as a conduit to increasing social sustainability and the attractiveness of the agricultural sector. It conceives social sustainability as that farmers, farm workers, and their families can meet their households’ social and economic needs along their life course and are satisfied with their quality of life. The aim of this working group is 1) to further the scientific debates on social sustainability in agriculture with an eye towards understanding who works on the farm, under what conditions, and how to best support them and 2) to develop new networks of scholars to work towards transnational and transdisciplinary collaborations. The group invites theoretical, empirical, and discussion paper submissions along with interactive session proposals that explore aspects connected to the social sustainability of farming.

Format: Traditional research presentations and interactive follow-up such as panel debates, fishbowl and world café.

Das Arbeitswissenschaftliche Kolloquium des [AKAL](#) wird im Jahr 2026 zusammen mit dem [ISWA](#), Symposium der International Association on Work in Agriculture ([IAWA](#)), und dem [Hugo P. Cecchini Institut](#) der BFH-HAFL organisiert.

Wissenschaftlicher Ausschuss

- Melf-Hinrich Ehlers, Agroscope, Forschungsgruppe Sozioökonomie, Schweiz (Co-Leiter des wissenschaftlichen Ausschusses)
- Katja Heitkämper, Agroscope, Forschungsgruppe Sozioökonomie, Schweiz (Co-Leiterin des wissenschaftlichen Ausschusses)
- Sandra Contzen, Berner Fachhochschule, Hochschule für Agrar-, Forst- und Lebensmittelwissenschaften (BFH-HAFL), Schweiz (Leiterin des lokalen Organisationskomitees)
- Bruno Dorin, Französisches Agrarforschungszentrum für internationale Entwicklung CIRAD/CIRED, Frankreich
- Nathalie Hostiou, INRAE, UMR Territoires, Frankreich
- Priscilla Malanski, INRAE, Frankreich
- Ruth Nettle, Universität von Melbourne, Australien
- Mohamed Taher Sraïri, Hassan-II-Institut für Agronomie und Veterinärmedizin, Marokko
- Zenebe Uraguchi, Berner Fachhochschule, Hochschule für Agrar-, Forst- und Lebensmittelwissenschaften (BFH-HAFL), Schweiz