SafeHabitus shapes the future of farming safety, health and wellbeing

- **4-year EU project concludes with discussion of lessons for future sustainability of family farming**
- **Final conference to focus on understanding and improving everyday working conditions of farming**

(Dublin, 3 November 2026) Researchers, policymakers, farm advisors and farmers from across Europe met in Dublin for the culmination of four years of work dedicated to improving health, safety, and wellbeing in agriculture.

The final conference of the SafeHabitus project brings together lessons from a pan-European initiative to address occupational health and safety challenges faced by farmers and farm workers.

Farming is one of Europe's most dangerous occupations, yet the true scale of the problem is not known. SafeHabitus research estimates that official EU statistics miss around four in ten farm deaths, because most national systems record mainly employees, while family members do most farm work. At the same time, Europe's largest survey of working life finds that agriculture offers the lowest earnings and poorest career prospects of any sector, even though farmers are among the most enthusiastic workers in Europe.

Closing gaps like these has been at the heart of SafeHabitus. Over four years, the project's Communities of Safe Farm Practice have brought researchers, farm organisations, trade unions, advisors and policymakers together with the objective of building the evidence on farmers' and farm workers' health and safety. The CoPs have focused on translating this evidence into policy and practice by engaging with policy makers and stakeholders at both national and EU levels.

SafeHabitus project coordinator Dr David Meredith (Teagasc) reflected on what four years of work have achieved:

"By establishing national and transnational Communities of Practice in 11 EU countries SafeHabitus has challenged the idea that farm health and safety is only a matter for individual farmers or workers. Through the activities of the consortium policymakers, farm organisations, trade unions and health authorities now have a much clearer picture of the risks farmers and farm workers face, and of how the way farm work is experienced shapes who will farm in future. The task now is to turn that understanding into better policy and governance, in Brussels and in every Member State, so that farms become safer and healthier places to work."

Seamus Boland, President of the European Economic and Social Committee addressed the Dublin conference highlighting the importance of good working conditions to secure generational renewal in agriculture:

"Farmers and farm workers are the backbone of Europe's rural communities, and the conditions they work in will decide whether those communities have a future. The European Economic and Social Committee has long argued that farming must become a genuine career choice for young

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people. That means fair incomes, safe and healthy work, and a real voice for farmers, workers and civil society in the policies that shape their lives."

Grassroots engagement has been central to the success of SafeHabitus, thanks to the active involvement of Communities of Practice (CoPs) in 11 countries. These bring local farmers, advisors, and stakeholders together to ensure that top-down directives align with realities inside the farm gate.

Final conference: SafeHabitus Conference and Film Awards 2026: The Attractiveness of Farming: Working Conditions, Safety, Wellbeing and the Future of Farming in the EU

Date: 3-5 November 2026

Location: Dublin, Ireland

An Associated Event of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2026

Conference themes:

- Farmer health and safety
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Work organisation and labour
- Gender balance and inclusion
- Generational renewal and social sustainability
- Enterprise viability and social protection

Film Festival: As part of the closing conference, SafeHabitus showcases films recognised through its festival partnerships with Corto e Fieno in Italy and Alimenterre in Belgium, each honouring work that brings attention to the challenges faced by agricultural workers. Winning entries will be screened during the conference.

Conference agenda

About SafeHabitus: SafeHabitus (Strengthening Farm Health and Safety Knowledge and Innovation Systems) is a Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Action coordinated by Teagasc, Ireland, running from January 2023. It works to strengthen the knowledge and innovation systems that support farmers, farm families and farm workers to adopt healthier and safer ways of working. SafeHabitus has received €4.73 million from the European Union's Horizon Europe programme under Grant Agreement No. 101084270.

Partners: The consortium brings together 20 organisations from 13 countries, with Communities of Practice in Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

About EESC: The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is the voice of organised civil society in Europe. It represents employers, workers and civil society organisations. The expertise of its 329 members helps optimise the quality of EU policies and legislation.

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