

VegIMPACT, short for 'vegetable production and marketing with impact', aims to improve vegetable production and marketing of small farmers in Indonesia. VegIMPACT contributes to increased food security and private sector development in Indonesia and is financed by the Netherlands Government. One of the work packages of the vegIMPACT project is Occupational Health. This work package intends to reduce the occupational health risk caused by pesticides, with specific attention to women.

Problem statement

In Indonesia, pesticide use is one of the most significant occupational health exposures for agricultural workers. Pesticides are used extensively based on the idea of preventive spraying to protect the crop to ensure good yields. In addition pesticides are often handled and applied irresponsibly and incorrectly. Farmers, labourers, and rural communities are jeopardized by the high dependence on pesticide in vegetable production and are exposed to pesticides on a daily basis. Farmers often do not use effective Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and labourers, often women, are present in the field during spray activities. This leads to unacceptable levels of exposure and related health effects. Furthermore, at the moment there is limited awareness about the chronic negative health effects of exposure to pesticides. Especially women receive no or limited information on pesticides. Major steps have to be taken regarding pesticide exposure, handling and application in order to reduce pesticide related occupational health risk in Indonesian agriculture.

Occupational health targets

The targets to reduce occupational health risks of farmers and (female) labourers:

- ✓ Reduction of exposure to pesticides
- ✓ Reduction in use of highly hazardous pesticides
- ✓ Reduction in amount of pesticides used
- ✓ Increase public awareness of potential health risks
- ✓ Training farmers and female agricultural labourers on pesticide hazards and safe pesticide use

Approach

The work package Occupational Health implements several activities to reduce occupational health risks and pesticide hazards and exposure. A pilot study is carried out in the Brebes district, central Java. A baseline survey and focus group discussions are part of the pilot study in order to reveal and understand the actual situation for farmers and farm labourers. Based on the outcomes of the baseline survey and focus group discussion and in collaboration with possible project partners like e.g. local government, health clinics and local community, the approach for interventions is further developed. Intervention activities consist of among others training and coaching activities, development and distribution of awareness raising material and implementation of mitigation measures. After implementation and evaluation of the pilot study, and based on the experiences, a strategy will be developed that can be rolled out to other areas.



For more information

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