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Lost Time from Agricultural Injuries and
Occupational Diseases in Finland.

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Background: Although work related injuries and illnesses are common in agriculture, the magnitude of lost time due to disability are not well known.

Objectives: This study aims to characterize lost time due to disability and to quantify risk factors for disability in injury and occupational disease cases.

Methods: We studied 10,922 claims from the Finnish farmers' workers' compensation insurance. All cases, which occurred in 1996, were included. Various statistical methods were used to identify disability characteristics and risk factors. The outcome measures were length of short-term disability (up to one year) and long-term disability (over one year). Risk factor variables included age, gender, income, work activity, cause, nature of incident, and ICD10 code.

Results: A total of 1590 out of 137,002 productive person years (1.16%) was lost due to disability. About 727 person years (0.53%) of productive time were lost from short-term disabilities within one year, and an estimated 862 person years (0.63%) were lost from long-term disabilities. Occupational diseases comprised 8% of the cases and 28% of the lost time. The mean lost time per case was 53 days for injuries and 194 days for occupational diseases. Disability time increased with age. Older persons had more fractures, amputations, and other serious conditions compared to younger people, and they also had longer disability times for similar conditions, as did younger persons. Gender had little effect on short-term disability time. Specific categories of health outcome, cause, work activity and nature of injury/illness were identified, which had an association with length of disability. A much higher proportion of occupational diseases (47%) were long-term disabilities compared to injuries (2.2%).

Conclusions: About 1.2% of the productive work time is lost due to injuries and occupational diseases. The risk of long disabilities increased with age and occupational diseases had a much greater risk of long-term disability than did injuries. Various specific risk factors for disability were identified.