EHS Maturity in Agriculture: How Does the Industry Compare?

The Road to EHS Maturity in the Agriculture Sector

The Global EHS Readiness Index (GERI) provides insights from over 1000 Global Health and Safety Leaders. This benchmarking report provides a comparison of EHS maturity in the Agriculture Sector versus all industries in the study.

The agricultural sector is one of the highest risk industries from a health and safety perspective. Working in remote areas with heavy and complex machinery poses significant risks to workers. Issues such machine accidents, exposure to chemicals, animal diseases, falls, vehicle accidents and musculoskeletal injuries are major risks in the sector. Additional challenges include respiratory risks, noise and vibration and exposure to extreme weather. Psychosocial risk, such as fatigue and drug and alcohol abuse is receiving more scrutiny and training is particularly important.

The recent HSI and Focus Network Global EHS Readiness Index (GERI) highlights major gaps in EHS posture in the sector and offers guidance on how to optimise EHS outcomes. Technology plays a key role in managing EHS risk in the agriculture sector.

The research highlights that paper and spreadsheet based safety processses are common. Additionally, pioint solutions are implemented to address specific requirements such as incident management, contractor management, claims, and machine safety.

Given that EHS risk is unusually high in the sector, this approach places the industry in the operational category.

The recent HSI and Focus Network Global EHS Readiness Index (GERI)

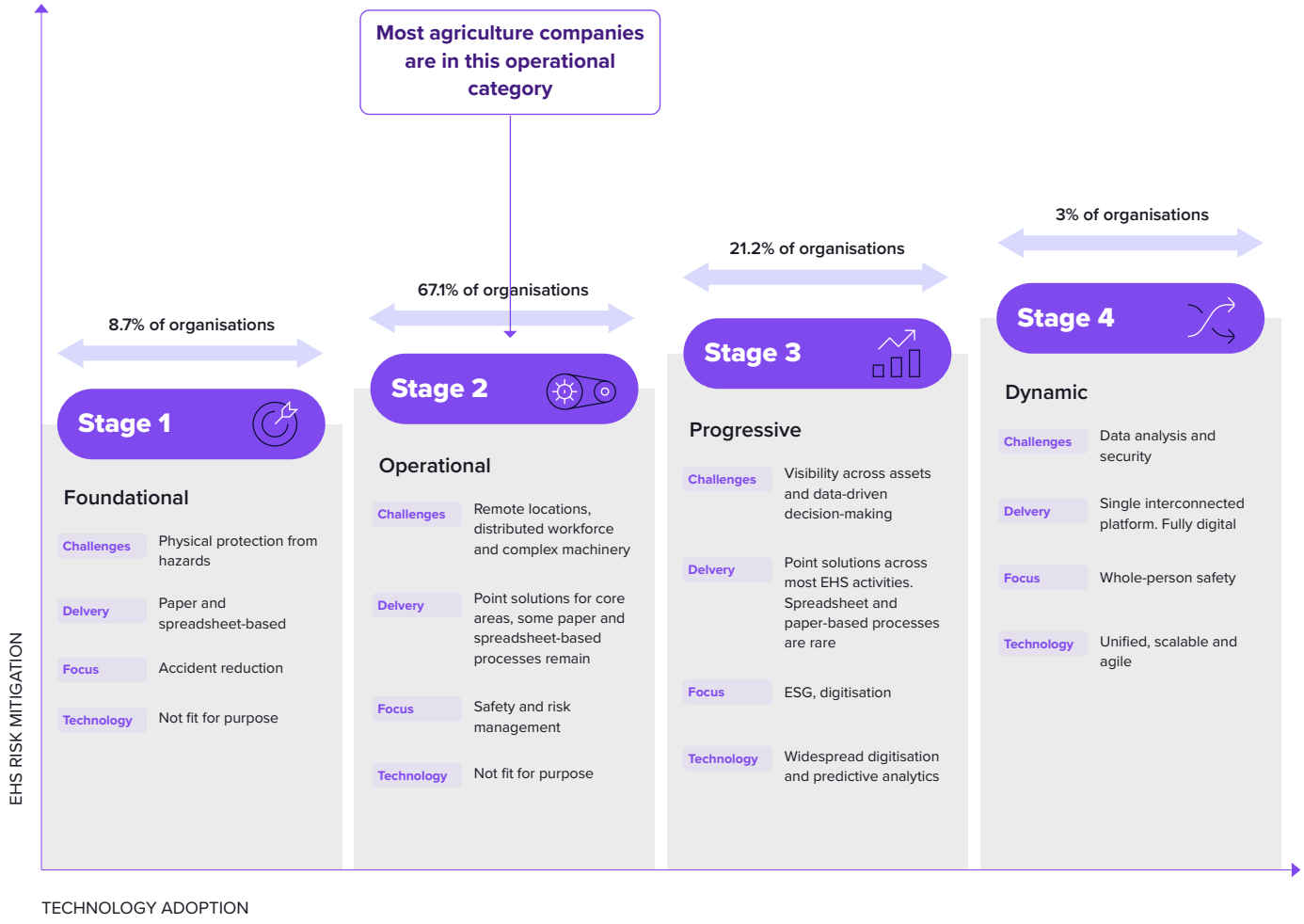
highlights major gaps in EHS posture in the sector

Given that EHS risk is unusually high the sector is notably immature in some key aspects of EHS risk management.

Figure 1 illustrates EHS maturity in the agriculture sector

Figure 1

Evolution of the EHS Function in the Agriculture Sector



The Key Challenges Faced in the Agriculture Sector

The GERI report identified some common challenges within Agriculture, which are outlined in detail below.

The agriculture sector is increasingly under pressure to increase productivity. Simultaneously, the supply chain issues and volatile input prices combined with growing environmental sustainability requirements, make optimising EHS outcomes, a challenge.

The sector is also characterised by the widespread use of highly distributed workforce, often in very remote locations. This is creating increased complexity for EHS leaders and driving an urgent need for greater interoperability. Gaining visibility across agriculture supply chains and ensuring that EHS and ESG policies are implemented consistently is an extremely difficult task.

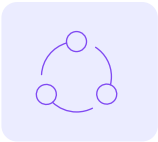
Leading EHS implementation challenges faced by agriculture companies include:

Lack of visibility and integration across assets

The scale and remoteness of farms makes it difficult to gain full visibility across all assets, drive interoperability, and ensure ESG goals are being met. EHS visibility and consistent EHS policy implementation is increasingly important in the sector.

Cybersecurity issues

Agriculture companies are becoming an increasingly popular target for malicious attackers. Data exfiltration spying and ransomware attacks are becoming common, and the risk needs to be addressed at all levels of agriculture organisations, including by health and safety professionals.



Adoption

Ensuring that EHS processes are adopted across farms is a major challenge. Technology is widely embedded into agricultural equipment and training is required to operate it. Building EHS processes into existing technologies and processes facilitates adoption.

Environmental sustainability

The process of farming creates environmental damage and risk which needs to be minimised. The risk can be managed by using technology to manage and comply with ESG requirements.

EHS Maturity in Agriculture: Areas of Focus

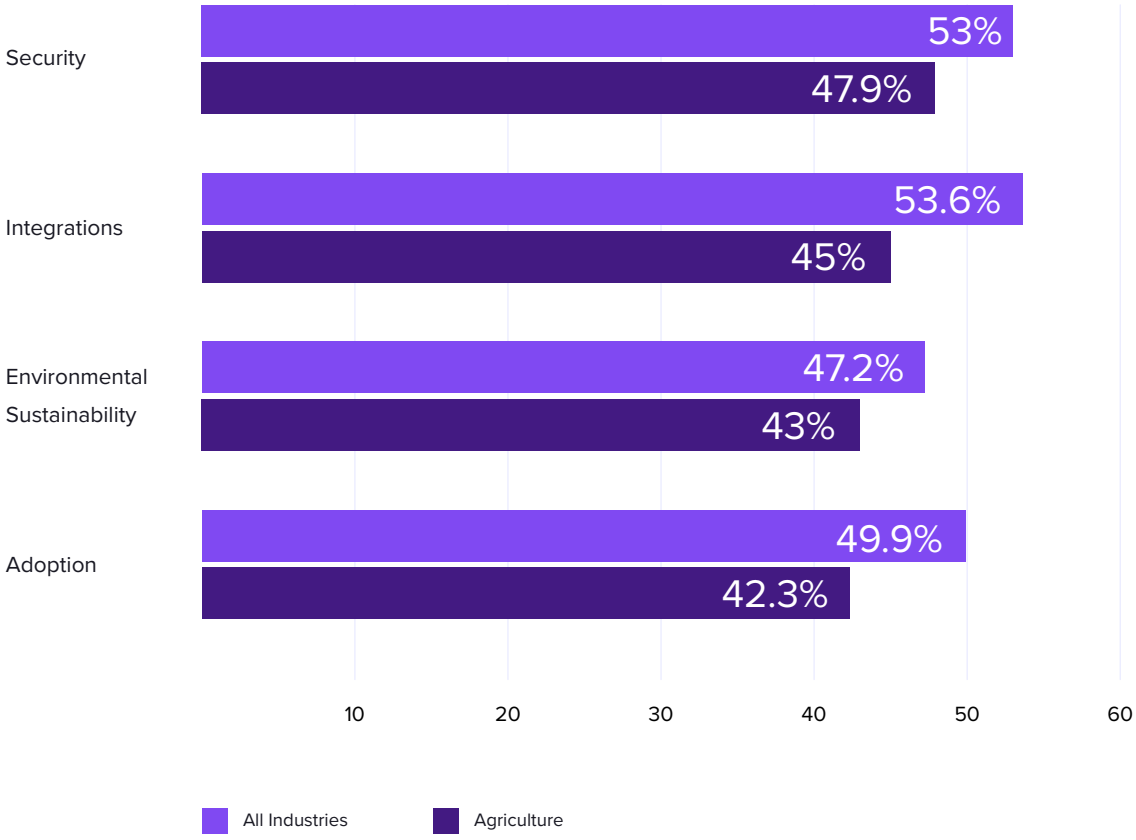
Focus Network's recent Global EHS Readiness Index (GERI) report reveals mean maturity scores by attribute for the agriculture sector as well as other sectors. Maturity is reflected in percentages, where 100% is the highest score. Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to each component of the EHS function. Responses to these questions were then used to determine maturity for each component. For example, an organisation that indicates it cannot detect mental health incidents is given a very low score for psychosocial and mental health maturity. Another example is an organisation that indicates it has a centralised compliance management system in place. This contributes to a higher maturity score for compliance obligations. Maturity levels for each component are then aggregated to give an overall mean EHS maturity score.

The agriculture sector is immature in several key aspects of EHS, such as environmental sustainability and integrations. Overall, it is defined as operational from an EHS perspective and it is worth highlighting the EHS areas that require the most focus.

Figure 2 shows EHS components for the agriculture sector that are the least mature. These reveal the biggest gaps in EHS posture for agriculture companies. It is these areas that require particular attention. It also illustrates the mean percentage score across all industries.

Figure 2

EHS Components with Low Maturity in the Agriculture Sector



Data Analytics and Greater Connectivity are Needed for the Agriculture Sector

Agriculture companies and farms need a comprehensive EHS platform — rather than multiple point solutions — to address their needs.

Central to these requirements lies connectivity and data sharing across EHS functions. Crucially, connectivity and interoperability play a major role in risk reduction and performance by providing actionable insights and predictive analytics. This can help to reduce incidents, improve decision-making, offer predictive maintenance for equipment, remediate, and improve ESG outcomes.

EHS leaders in the agriculture sector need to unify their risk management systems and gain visibility across all EHS functions. This means that companies need to:

Understand their level of EHS technology maturity. They need to identify what they need to do to ensure that they progressively develop their EHS posture.

Have a consistent and unified view of all activities across their supply chains. All documentation and data should be found in one place. Management and individual workers need visibility of all EHS processes and their implementation. Only 9% of agriculture companies have a universal EHS management system that offers visibility across all assets and workers, according to the GERI study.

Ensure workforce adoption. Agricultural workers are frequently being asked to use new technology, often with limited training. Any additional or new technologies must be usable and relevant. 59% of agriculture EHS leaders cite adoption of processes and culture as the major challenge they face according to the GERI study.

Ensure that technology is adaptable and future-proof. The agriculture sector is undergoing radical change as digitisation becomes widespread. EHS solutions will need to keep pace with this change and ensure that solutions can be re-configured and improved continuously.

Fully leverage data. Data needs to be collected and analysed across assets and farms, as well as the wider supply chain, to optimise EHS workflows and ensure compliance. Focus needs to be placed on data integrity and data security. The GERI study reveals that only 8% of agriculture companies have a robust and integrated data capturing system.

Emerging EHS Trends in the Agriculture Sector

As digitalisation transforms the agriculture sector it's also having a significant impact on safety. The progression of EHS processes is summarised below, showing the move from adhoc, manual systems to more advanced solutions.

Figure 3 illustrates the evolution of the EHS function.

Figure 3
The Evolution of the EHS Function in the Agriculture Sector

	Traditional	Modern	Emerging
EHS Function	Manual	Digitised	Data-driven
Delivery	Legacy, proprietary systems and spreadsheets	Multiple point solutions	Single platform across the ecosystem
Staff	Support	Enable compliance	Drive performance
Focus Areas	Reducing physical accidents	Risk management	Whole-person safety
Challenges	Complexity and lack of interoperability	Visibility across assets, sites and workers	Unified view, data integration, cybersecurity

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About HSI Donesafe

HSI Donesafe simplifies safety, compliance, and risk management with an easy-to-use, configurable platform. Trusted by 2,000+ companies globally, it oers 60+ modules, AI capabilities, and built-in reporting. A Verdantix 2025 EHS Software Leader, it empowers teams to streamline safety while ensuring scalability, flexibility, and eciency - without reliance on technical support.

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