

## **Stop suffocation**

### **KOSHA works together with hog farmers to prevent accidents and train workers of the pig farming industry**

June 18, 2013

Recent series of suffocation cases in the hog farms raise concern over workers in the stock breeding industry especially during the summer. In Yang-ju, Gyung-gi province, two workers who were cleaning septic tanks in the farm were suffocated to die on April 22. After this, another three workers were also dead for the same reason, on May 4.

In the monsoon season, it is likely that bacteria propagate speedily in the confined space and high temperature makes workers there take a casual attitude to the danger both of which lead to cause suffocation.

Swine feces in the septic tank generate one of hazardous gases: hydrogen sulfide which can kill a person once he or she inhales it only a few times when the toxic material's concentration level goes over 700 ppm.

Suffocation accident cases in the recent five years are on the rise because of lack of awareness on toxicity of the substance as well as suffocation itself.

The number of fatal suffocation cases in the hog farming industry was 14 over the past five years among which many were dead while rescuing victims without safety equipment.

In that sense, president Hun-ki Baek of KOSHA decided to move to lower the accidents by cooperating with the related industry, and signed Memorandum of Understanding with Byung-mo Lee, president of Korea Pork Producers Association, on June 18.

KOSHA would give intensive support to around 4,500 farms registered to the association to prevent accidents of workers in the hog farming industry.

The support includes: training of farmers by regions on possibility of suffocation and how to deal with it; technical training on the field; rental services for safety equipment such as ventilation fan, air-supplied respirators and gas concentration gauge which are used for repairing and cleaning the septic tank.

Other programs would also be delivered to prevent poisoning of pesticides and musculoskeletal disorders of workers as they are usually dealing with heavy stuff.

Meanwhile, KOSHA set July through August as the period to focus on preventing suffocation in the confined spaces. The agency also issued alerts in the hazardous places in terms of suffocation.

A person from KOSHA said that suffocation could even kill workers. Still, however, many workers are lack of awareness, adding that we should pay more attention to prevent this type of accidents and encouraging workers in the hog farming industry to make sure ventilation, measuring of the hazardous gas and wearing of protective equipment.

