

Health and Safety Executive Board		Paper No: HSE/11/62	
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<b>AGRICULTURE REVISITED – AN UPDATE</b>			

## Purpose

1. To report on progress under the Agriculture Revisited Initiative.

## Background

2. The Board agreed recommendations on a refreshed programme of work for agriculture - focussing specifically on farming - in May 2008 (HSE/08/24 refers). The resultant Agriculture Revisited initiative was developed with the aim of reducing the level of fatal injuries in the farming sector. The initiative sought to exploit new opportunities and techniques such as direct mailing and marketing whilst building on the best of existing intervention strategies. The result was a strategy based on the following coordinated activities:

- The “Make the promise” (MTP) direct mailing campaign
- Development of the farming Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs)
- Development of the HSE presence at selected Agricultural Shows
- Promotion of training and vocational qualifications in farming
- Work with the equipment supply chains to improve machinery safety; and
- Stakeholder mapping and engagement.

3. In May 2009 the Board committed in principle – subject to evidence of impact and conditional on HSE’s future financial settlements – to extending the initiative beyond March 2011, recognising the time required to bring about the necessary sustained behavioural and cultural changes (HSE/09/46 refers).

4. In March 2010 the Board reviewed HSE’s work in agriculture including progress with the initiative and reiterated its commitment to seek ways to achieve a change of culture in the industry (HSE 10/33 refers). In February 2011 the Board was informed of the findings of an independent retrospective evaluation of the initiative, agreed options for its future direction and requested a further report on progress in 6 months time (HSE 11/14 refers).

5. In the interim, activity under Agriculture Revisited has been carried out against a background of Government initiatives including in particular, Common Sense, Common Safety the Red Tape Challenge and Defra’s Farming Regulation Task Force which reported in May 2011.

6. As reported to the Board in the Chief Executive’s Report in May 2011 (HSE/11/25) the Macdonald Report

- endorsed HSE’s risk-based approach to inspection and its proactive approach to improving compliance; and
- placed the onus firmly on farmers to provide an explicit commitment to their own health and safety, and to that of their family and their workforce before

suggesting that if the farming community wants to avoid more inspection and regulation, it must address the issue more seriously.

Whilst there appear to be no recommendations directly related to health and safety, a number of others e.g. to do with pesticides and emerging energy technologies have a bearing on the work of HSE.

### **Current health and safety performance**

7. The provisional number of fatal injuries in agriculture in 2010/11 was 34 workers (employed and self employed); with an incidence rate of 8.0 per 100,000 workers. This is a slight reduction from the average of 8.2 per 100,000 workers in the previous 5 years. These figures involve an encouraging, albeit small, reduction in the number of workers killed and an increase of approximately 50,000 in the number of workers employed in the industry. However in statistical terms this size of dataset will always be prone to chance variation; which can be presented as significant percentage increases or reductions year-on-year.

8. However it is clear that agriculture still has the highest fatal accident incidence rate of all the major traditional industries in Great Britain. The fatal injuries continue to be predominantly in the “hard to reach” family farm and small farm sector and to involve farmers over 45 years old. The common causes of the fatalities have remained the same: workplace transport, falls from height, machinery and being struck by falling objects. (For more details on the statistical picture see HSE/10/33) These figures reinforce the point discussed by the Board in 2008 and subsequently, that a sustainable reduction in the prevalence and incidence rates for fatal and non-fatal injuries and ill health in agriculture is a long term aim requiring behavioural and cultural change in the industry. In this respect there are some encouraging signs of progress as some industry leaders respond to the challenge.

### **Argument**

#### **Progress with developing “Make the promise” as a brand**

9. The Make the Promise (MTP) knot has been registered as a trade mark which will enable trusted partners to badge their safety campaigns and messages under the brand. Although the Agriculture & Food Sector (the Sector) has been working with key stakeholders and partner organisations for many years, the introduction of formal partnership marketing is one way in which HSE hopes to compensate for the impact of the communications spending freeze. The Sector has identified a number of organisations which are ready to build on these longstanding relationships and on the momentum of the MTP campaign. By way of example, the major insurance company in the industry, NFU Mutual, is negotiating to pay for a print run of 90,000 copies of HSE’s ‘Farmwise’ publication that will carry their logo alongside HSE’s and the MTP knot.

#### **Working with others to encourage leadership within the industry**

10. The success of the MTP campaign, together with the Board meeting at Northampton and the intervention by the Chair and Board Agriculture Champion with industry leaders in the past 16 months, have proved to be a tipping point in engagement with industry leaders. Partnership working in the farming sector has taken on a new impetus and key industry leaders have risen to the twin challenges

of taking ownership of the industry's poor health and safety performance and of demonstrating leadership in tackling the problem.

11. In June 2011 sixteen members of the Farm Industry Safety Partnership led by the National Farmers Union (NFU), and supported by the HSE Chair, launched a Farm Safety Charter thereby publicly demonstrating their commitment to providing leadership on health and safety and challenging traditional attitudes to risk in the industry. The Charter ties in with the NFU's wider strategy of changing culture and perception of the farming industry, both internally and externally. A similar approach is being developed in Wales, led by NFU Cymru and supported by HSE, to tackle the particular challenges of the industry in the principality.

12. A central element of the Agriculture Revisited initiative was a stakeholder proximity mapping exercise to review existing stakeholders and identify other organisations which might be able to work with us to deliver the necessary changes in culture and behaviours in the farming industry. Sector staff have devised a strategy for engaging with these organisations, starting with those whose aims appear to be closest to those of HSE. Promising contacts to date include the NFU Mutual, the National Federation of Young Farmer's Clubs, The Co-operative and Dairy Crest. Other organisations which have been identified as potential future partners include the Country Land and Business Association, the Tenant Farmers Association and the Royal College of Vets.

13. Partner organisations are also being encouraged to develop guidance and provide training opportunities for their members. In response the NFU has developed a series of Farm safety focus guidance leaflets on key topics such as machinery, transport and slips, trips and falls (see <http://www.nfuonline.com>) and others are planned. Similarly a number of organisations are exploring the scope for delivering "bite size" training for farmers. Work already underway, includes a pilot project by the NFU Mutual under which they are offering an insurance premium discount voucher for those who attend a training event; Landskills East which organised a month of farm safety events in East Anglia earlier this year; and three County Rural Hub groups which are organising several mini-SHADs.

14. A longstanding mechanism for engaging with industry stakeholders has been the Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC). When the AIAC met in June 2011 it discussed how it could take a more strategic and overarching role in future and agreed that specific and tactical activities should be delivered through the industry led Farm Safety and other stakeholder partnerships; supported by the committee and HSE. Informed by the outcome of the stakeholder proximity mapping exercise, the opportunity is also being taken to review the membership of the committee to ensure appropriate coverage of the land-based industries and the right level of representation. A consultation exercise with existing members is currently under way.

#### **Delivery of the traditional farming Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs) and the Agricultural Shows programme 2011/12**

15. Notwithstanding delays due to uncertainty over budgets, delivery of the programme of 26 SHADs in 2011/12 is well underway. As of the end of August, there were 19 firm and 4 provisional bookings. Revised contractual arrangements

with Lantra who provide the training at the events are also working well with regular meetings being held to monitor the contract and respond to issues that arise.

16. Feedback from the retrospective evaluation carried out by Ipsos MORI and from FOD staff during 2010 suggested a new strategy for attendance at agricultural shows; focusing on a limited number of technical shows which we know are attended by our target audiences. Subsequently, business cases were approved by HSE's Communications Governance Group (CGG) and the Corporate Efficiency Board (CEB) for attendance at the Cereals and Royal Highland Shows in June and the Royal Welsh Show in July. The HSE mobile unit was taken to the Cereals Show with materials supporting the aims of the MTP campaign and the safe use of tractor/trailer combinations. For the first time many of our key stakeholders, e.g. NFU, NFU Mutual and National Association of Agricultural Contractors (NAAC) promoted core health and safety messages at the show.

### **Financial/Resource implications for HSE**

17. The resourcing of the Agriculture Revisited initiative was addressed in Board paper HSE/09/46. Programme management of the initiative is operating within the allocated budget. The other work streams continue to be delivered by Sector and FOD divisional resources.

18. Savings in staff resource from the cancellation of the MTP direct mailing campaign have been redirected to supporting industry stakeholders in developing industry-led initiatives aimed at tackling the poor health and safety record in farming.

### **Actions/Next Steps**

19. The Board is invited to note:

- The continuing progress under Agriculture Revisited, particularly by working with and through others to tackle the industry's poor health and safety record;
- That the original aims of Agriculture Revisited have been discharged and the ongoing work required to support the work streams has been embedded in the Agriculture and Food Sector; and
- That the course is now set, the leadership of the industry is behind us and is driving new initiatives to raise health and safety awareness and change the culture among the farming community. Although this may take some time to deliver the cultural change HSE needs to continue to both support and push industry to deliver it.

### **Paper clearance**

20. This paper has been cleared by the SMT at its meeting on 7 September 2011.

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