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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AIAC)

Subcommittee paper – Knowledge and Skills To drive improvements in H&S performance in Agriculture

Background

1. At the 7th June 2017 AIAC meeting, members mandated a small working group to consider approaches to developing improvements in capability and competence to drive an increase in H&S performance of farmers. This working group met in August 2017.
2. This paper is for discussion and any comments submitted by members will be used to inform the work of the subcommittee and aid further development of the proposal.

AIAC Action

3. This paper sets out an idea that could be explored by HSE , FSP and others to improve performance and increase levels of competence when dealing with the significant hazards encountered daily in agriculture.
4. Members are invited to:
 - Consider if clear 'benchmark' standards for skills, knowledge and behaviours that meet legal compliance would be beneficial and would help drive improvement.
 - Comment on the aims section reflecting on the whether the two primary goals are valid and if there are any omissions that should be addressed.
 - Comment on the outline approach, in particular if this would work and in principle would be supported by the industry
 - Offer contributions to help develop a clear picture of how a well-managed and professional farm manages and controls the risks arising in the course of their work.

**Adrian Hodkinson
November 2017**

Aim

To identify and define the basic levels of knowledge and skills required in the agriculture to improve health and safety performance.

To explore mechanisms to encourage industry adoption of these minimum standards and offer straightforward training routes and mechanisms that allow those working in the industry to demonstrate they have the competence to manage safety and health risk.

Background:

The main causes of workplace deaths and injury in agriculture have changed little over the last decade. The top causes are still; workplace transport, falls from height, livestock injuries, contact with moving machinery, and being hit by moving/falling objects. Other familiar causes such as drowning/asphyxiation, electrocution and exposure to harmful substances are common.

Perhaps the most notable feature of these fatal incidents and serious injuries is the preventative measures are well recognised and not complex. The challenge remains to understand and tackle the risk-taking behaviours, or ignorance of the magnitude of the risk, and to encourage the industry to adopt safe working practices

AIAC has previously agreed that simple and straightforward risk management, to prevent the events that lead to injury, death or injury, is all too often absent, rudimentary or seriously flawed.

Suggested approach:

1. Define the basic set of skills, knowledge and behaviours required to address the principal causes of death, injury and ill health in agriculture (involving employers, providers, insurers, unions and other industry stakeholders).
2. Identify, explore and study mechanisms/schemes in place and operating successfully that could encourage better training and development in risk management in agriculture and ensure the identified base skills, knowledge and behaviours are fully embedded and adopted.
3. Work with suitable stakeholders (including supply chains) to build on this research to explore the development of a product, or products, those in the industry can use to demonstrate they have the necessary competence to manage risk in agriculture both in terms of safety and health. This could encompass a scheme or suite of elements to provide relevancy to different types of farming.
4. Work with relevant partners to develop, pilot and evaluate in a sub-sector
5. Eventual launch of products suited to wider agriculture with associated on-going management, review and evaluation.