

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION AND EXECUTIVE

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Agricultural statistics and trends including major accidents

Summary

1. This paper provides an up to date analysis of HSE's official statistics for fatal and major accidents in Agriculture for 2005/06 and 2004/05 respectively and considers incidence rates, longer-term trends, patterns of accident causation and the potential lessons and communications messages to be drawn from them. This is supplemented with additional provisional (members in confidence) data collected by the Sector for 2006/07 (up to approx end September 2006) which, though as yet is unchecked/unvalidated by HSE statistics branch, provides up to date in year data about which AIAC has previously asked to be kept informed.

Background

2. At a previous AIAC meeting on 21 March 2006, members requested an update of accident statistics including an analysis of the lessons which may be learned from the small proportion of major accidents that are actually reported to HSE (approximately only 5% estimated to be reported by the self employed, 25% by employers).

3. The attached presentation by the Head of the Agriculture and Food Sector draws upon the statistical data contained in the annual 'Fatal injuries in farming, forestry and horticulture 2005/06' report which was recently published by HSE on it's agriculture webpages. In accordance with HSE protocol, the agriculture fatal injuries report was published on 18 August after the national launch of all industry fatal statistics by the HSC Chair Bill Callaghan at Rose Court on 17 August.

4. It had previously been decided by HSC/HSE in 2005 that there would be one all-industry national launch of statistics and that the three Royal Shows would no longer be used to launch agricultural fatal accident statistics. This position and the alternative positive messages to be promoted at agriculture shows were the subject of a previous AIAC discussion (AIAC meeting at LANTRA 14 November paper number 140502).

5. Recognising that only one agriculture journalist attended the national launch at Rose Court last year, it was agreed that the Head of the Agriculture and Food Sector would not attend this year's national launch.

6. On 18 August 2006 the Head of the Agriculture and Food Sector copied to AIAC members an electronic "press notice" summarising the headline statistics and the key messages the Sector chose to promote this year (for example, drawing attention to the tragic loss of life to children on farms and the involvement of AIAC members and stakeholders in a range of intervention methodologies and communications directed targeted at the hard to reach audience the industry represents).

7. Subsequently, the Head of Sector handled a number of media enquiries and the Sector are grateful for the messages which were taken up and incorporated by members in their own in-house journals and communication networks.

8. AIAC's concern and interest in the fatal accident statistics and their desire to be kept up to date through in-year monitoring and review was specifically mentioned in a new preface to this year's agriculture fatal injuries report (see **Annex 1**).

Presentation

9. Dr Nourish will draw on the data more fully described in the Sector's agriculture fatal injuries report, supplemented by more recent in-year provisional Sector data (in confidence to members), using the attached presentation in order to signal identified key trends, lessons and messages which can be drawn from it.

Action/Recommendation

10. Members are invited to:

- a) note the latest statistical report and provisional Sector conclusions (the full report is available on <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/pdf/fatal0506.pdf>).
- b) offer comment and discuss emerging trends and lessons to be learned and any indicated changes necessary in HSE's/AIAC's current strategy and approach towards the industry (see HoS paper of 21 April 2005 to inaugural meeting of AIAC and "Vision for Ag" on the website).
- c) make recommendations as to how key messages can be promulgated more widely throughout the industry (e.g. more widespread incorporation in and through member organisation's own communication channels, networks and publications).

'Fatal injuries in farming, forestry and horticulture 2005/06' report

INTRODUCTION

Part 1 of this report is a summary of the fatal injuries occurring in the agricultural sector (comprising of agriculture, horticulture, forestry and associated industries) in Great Britain during the year 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006 which were investigated by Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). **Data in part 1 of this report is provisional.**

Part 2 summarises fatal injuries notified to HSE within the agricultural sector for the ten year period 1995/1996 to 2004/2005. It indicates points of interest and trends in fatal accidents involving employees, the self-employed and members of the public during this period.

Part 3 is a summary of the non-fatal injuries in the agricultural sector for the ten year period 1995/1996 to 2004/2005. This part includes an analysis of points of interest in the non-fatal injuries in the agricultural sector reported during 2004/2005 under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995.

Part 4 shows the total estimated number of accidents occurring within the agricultural sector during 2005/2006, and their costs.

Part 5 includes a number of case studies that covers some of the key causes of fatal and major accidents in the agriculture sector. Each case study gives details of an accident or incident, highlighting the causes and the action HSE took following the investigation as well as the lessons to be learnt from the accident.

These case studies have been included to help show how things can so easily go wrong and to give advice on how they can be avoided. For detailed advice on legal requirements and practical ways to reduce health and safety risks, HSE produces a wide range of leaflets and videos for the agricultural sector.

Explanatory note on the presentation of statistics in Part 1 of this report

1. HSE's official statistics are published by HSE's Statistics Branch and are subject to detailed review and scrutiny in line with National Statistics protocols and quality standards. Fatal accident statistics are published for all industrial sectors annually in (usually) July when provisional figures for the 12 months to the previous March and final figures for the preceding year are made public.

2. The figures published four months from the year end are provisional not because of any doubt as to whether people are actually dead but rather because of the detailed questions and checks which have to go on to determine whether the fatality is genuinely reportable and that it is properly classified to the appropriate industry and other statistical characteristics. Such checks are important. Wider lessons cannot be fully learned from individual tragedies and HSE's interventions, and media messages appropriately targeted unless for example we accumulate reliable information about the industrial sector in which the accidents occur and their frequency of occurrence (incidence rates). Statistics Branch and HSE's industry sectors utilise historic data of this kind to determine patterns of accident causation, accident trends and incidence rates to help the organisation prioritise and design HSE's intervention strategies. The reason for not finalising the fatality numbers until 16 months from the year end is that people injured at work who die from their injury within 12 months are, by international statistical convention, counted as work fatalities in the year of the injury.

3. In Agriculture both the absolute number and the incidence rates for fatalities are amongst the highest of all major industrial sectors and continue to be a cause of concern for HSC/HSE, the HSC's Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC) and the industry itself. For this reason HSE (the Agriculture & Food Sector) have agreed to keep AIAC fully informed as to indicative statistics and accident trends - so that as the year unfolds any emerging patterns of accident causation or seasonal trends (sometimes apparently weather or work activity dependent) can be flagged up to the industry via the Agricultural media and others, as part of HSE's/the Sector's overall strategy for prevention. The situation is a changing one and there is a trade-off between speed and certainty. Because of the importance in the agricultural sector of feeding back information on fatalities, the latest accident data including that as yet not fully verified by CoSAS, is utilised for this purpose.

4. For these reasons the collective headline statistics recorded on this Agriculture website include:

- HSE's official (provisional statistics) i.e. this year a total of 43 deaths (33 workers and 10 members of the public)
- Two other fatal accidents which from HSE Field Operation Division (FOD) inspectors' accident investigation reports are clearly associated with agricultural activity although their RIDDOR reportability is unclear.
- There is also one case where the deceased was alleged to be informally employed on an unpaid basis. That person's (provisional) statistical classification is therefore one of "a member of the public", but the agriculture sector analysis shows this case as a worker because there is some uncertainty about the deceased's actual employment status. This difference will be resolved before the final statistics are drawn up.

5. We hope this approach will not lead to any confusion or even suggest any discrepancies between the two HSE reports; HSE is keen to be transparent about its methodology; to provide up to date information and to maximise the immediate use to which this statistical information can be put - with the overall goal of promptly learning lessons and hopefully to prevent further tragedies occurring.

John Ewins
Deputy Director of CoSAS & Head of Analytical Services

Dr Roger Nourish
Head of Agriculture & Food Sector

Further advice: Most leaflets are available free from HSE Books or can be accessed through the Internet.

HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA
Tel 01787 881165 Fax 01787 313995 website: www.hsebooks.co.uk

HSE agriculture home page: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture>

HSE Videos can be purchased from HSE books.

For general enquiries about health and safety in the agricultural sector, call the HSE Infoline: 08701 545500

(revised powerpoint attachment to follow)