

# Celebrating success – ‘Her Majesty’s Agricultural Inspectorate’ and the ‘Machinery Safety Inspectors’

In opening the first Open Meeting of the Agricultural Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC) on 29 June 2006, HSE's Chief Executive Geoffrey Podger looked back at the improvement in the industry's health and safety performance. Recognising that whilst much still needed to be done to change the deep-seated culture of unwise risk-taking and the continuing high death toll in the industry, he acknowledged the work of the AIAC over the years in tackling these challenges.

Reflecting on the achievements of HSE's Agricultural Inspectorate and its forerunners Geoffrey reminded delegates that whilst the industry still suffers from an unacceptable 40-50 fatalities each year, there were around 150 fatal accidents a year, 50 years ago. This remarkable improvement was achieved by targeting specific risks, much as is being done by HSE today, the most notable example being the introduction of the Tractor Cabs Regulations in 1974. Effective publicity, advice and enforcement, coupled with significant improvements in the design of tractors had resulted in a reduction in the number of deaths resulting from overturning from 25 each year to approx one or two each year, over a 20-year period.

He also acknowledged that HSE's Agriculture Sector had been innovative in developing new ways of influencing the farming and forestry communities e.g. in developing Safety and Health Awareness Days and memorable publicity campaigns, many of which had received awards, nationally and internationally.

This year sees two notable anniversaries. It is 60 years since the first agricultural "Machinery Safety Inspectors" were appointed and fifty years since Farm Safety Officers were established in MAFF, following the introduction of the Agriculture (Safety, Health and Welfare Provisions) Act in

1956, many of whom subsequently transferred into HSE to form Her Majesty's Agricultural Inspectorate (HMAI). In times of continuous change HMAI has had to evolve and finally ceased to exist as a separate entity about 18 months ago, following further restructuring within HSE.

Successive Chief Agricultural Inspectors and the many Inspectors and other staff involved over the years can be justifiably proud of their contribution. Most have retired now of course, but some are still working within HSE's Field Operations Directorate or have moved into other parts of HSE.

It is intended to organise a special event to celebrate these significant anniversaries towards the end of this year. For further information please contact Alan Plom ([alan.plom@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:alan.plom@hse.gsi.gov.uk)).