

**HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION AND EXECUTIVE  
AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**A Report on progress of the AFAG Workplan and Project Groups**

**Summary**

1 The table attached to this paper provides an update and summarises progress on the various projects set up to deliver the AFAG 3-year workplan for 2005 to 2008. In particular it:

- i. Identifies specific AFAG Projects that will need to continue into the next workplan period (2008/09+) in order to be completed and considers any potential requirements for resources in-year and beyond (i.e. publications, research, etc.)
- ii. Identifies current AFAG Projects where the requirement for industry guidance is highlighted, for potential inclusion in the HSE Agriculture & Food Sector's Communication bid for 2008/09.
- iii. Contains an action plan for the delivery of any out-standing or proposed AFAG Projects.

**Background**

2 AFAG established a number of specific 'task-and-finish' Project Groups, some of which have been able to progress their work more fully than others. At the last meeting of the AIAC on 2 May 2007 members considered AFAG's Progress Report (paper AIAC 070501) and agreed the latest AFAG Terms of Reference and Workplan. AIAC members congratulated AFAG on the progress made and recognised the valuable input of the many individuals from industry and other organisations.

3 AFAG has since reviewed its activities - at a two-day meeting (held on 25-26 September 2007) to enable the full range of projects and other topics which have arisen to be discussed in depth. AFAG confirmed the priority needs for the arboriculture and forestry industries and identified new areas of work that it believes will need to be addressed in the near future.

4 The attached appendix (Table 1) summarises and ‘traffic-lights’ progress achieved on each project so far. A number of high-profile projects have reached fruition or are near to achieving their objectives (e.g. steep ground working), or are well-advanced, (such as the various reviews of training and certification arrangements for the tree work industry, AFAG’s communications strategy, and the availability and production of AFAG and other industry guidance and publications). Some projects are being progressed in other ways to that initially proposed while a few need to be ‘kick-started’ urgently.

5 Each project is traffic-lighted to indicate its status/progress and the attached Table highlights any further actions necessary and identifies related new areas which AFAG needs to consider further. *[NB. Green = Good - requires refinement and systematic implementation ie on target to deliver its objectives; Amber/Green = Mixed - aspect(s) require substantial attention, some good; Amber/Red = Problematic - requires substantial attention, some aspects need urgent attention; Red = Highly problematic - requires urgent and decisive action, high risk of failing to deliver.]*

### **Action/Recommendations**

6. AIAC Members are invited to:

- (i) note the information given in Table 1; and
- (ii) comment on the proposals for future work.

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**AIAC 071005 Table 1 – SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ON CURRENT AFAG PROJECTS (2005-2007)**

*Project Progress/Status definitions:*

*Green = Good - requires refinement and systematic implementation, ie on target to deliver its objectives;*

*Amber/Green = Mixed - aspect(s) require substantial attention, some good;*

*Amber/Red = Problematic - requires substantial attention, some aspects need urgent attention;*

*Red = Highly problematic - requires urgent and decisive action, high risk of failing to deliver.*

AFAG Project (+ Project Leader)	Project Priority	Outcomes remaining	Risk to delivery	Comments	Proposed Action	Status/Progress
<b><u>A. Examination of underlying and root causes of serious accidents, and develop strategies for risk reduction.</u></b>						
A1. Examination of the underlying and root causes of serious accidents and develop strategies for risk reduction (Emily Ramsay)	(A)	<p>Communications plan needed to publicise results of research in the tree work industry.</p> <p>Identification of relevant issues for existing Project Groups and potential issues for inclusion as Projects in the future AFAG Workplan (2008+).</p>	Delays in publication of Bomel Research report, reducing information for Project Groups.	<p>The full/final report of Bomel's research has not yet been agreed with Ag Sector but an interim summary was provided for the AFAG meeting to consider.</p> <p>AFAG agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research confirmed AFAGs priority topics and highlighted areas for further attention (eg hung-up trees).</li> <li>• It established baseline evidence for evaluation of impact.</li> <li>• However, the findings are biased towards forestry as this was the original remit of the project.</li> <li>• It identified key areas/issues (including training) that need addressing, and Bomel workshops highlighted lack of awareness amongst many forestry contractors (NB some used this event to raise concerns over roles/responsibilities). Similar research needed on arb contractors.</li> <li>• Statistical analysis needs to reflect incidence rates,</li> </ul>	<p>Report needs to highlight/simplify key messages.</p> <p>Further analysis needed to extract information re arboriculture and key causal factors, eg training, age, etc to test hypotheses/members beliefs. Proposal for extension of research submitted by Sector and study being commissioned.</p> <p>Additional consultation with HSE Stats Unit and industry and Group to determine incidence rates (using Lantra SSC Industry Group</p>	Amber/ Green

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				<p>but data on working population (using equipment) is difficult to ascertain. NB Changing practices/reduction in chain saw operators indicates even higher incidence rates amongst users.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also to highlight any significant information on ill health. [NB Company reports indicate increasing ill health eg HAVs cases, etc.]</li> </ul>	<p>Business Plan as basis).</p> <p>To identify best ways of using/ publicising the results of the research. Possibly complete work via new AFAG Communities website.</p>	
A2. Training and Certification (Simon Richmond)	(B)	<p>Development of potential T&amp;C frameworks for tree work for further consultation and acceptance by industry.</p> <p>Mapping of European / international qualifications and standards of training. Communications plan for Project Group</p>	<p>Compromise not possible because of conflicting requirements.</p> <p>Ability of relevant organisations to support proposed framework.</p> <p>Practical administration of in-house training.</p>	<p>A thorough evaluation and assessment of the current system of training and certification and an industry consultation exercise has been carried out. Procedures used in other industries have also been identified, but further work is needed to compare T&amp;C recording/CPD systems, etc</p> <p>Members of the Project Group are aware of the range of views and opinions held both by Project Group Members and by those contributing to the industry consultation.</p> <p>Project Group must now consider how the concerns and criticisms of the current system can be addressed by proposing a new framework of T&amp;C, in accordance with the Government's new 'Business Impact Assessment' procedures. A set of proposals was presented to AFAG on 25 September 2007 which drew together the principles that had been agreed to date. AFAG members felt that it is important at this stage not to associate any proposed scheme with any particular organisation or Awarding Body. Rather, the Project Group should design the requirements of the system and then invite potential organisations to tender for the opportunity to offer the scheme.</p>	U	Green

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				<p>Need to carry out further consultation on models with specific industry groups and feed views into NPTC's Review of CS CoC structure (to be completed by 4/08.) Martin Lennon who is coordinating the NPTC review has joined the T and C working group and attended AFAG on 25/9/07.</p> <p>Unable to progress the international 'Mapping' exercise due to limited resources/time available and potential developments in Europe.</p>		
<b><u>B. Operational best practice – Improving and maintaining standards</u></b>						
B1. Steep Ground Working (Neil McKay)	(A)	Monitoring of uptake and industry comments by Sector		<p>AFAG guidance produced (launched at APF 9/06) and advice already included in Forestry SHADs, Members report it is already widely used, but demands (eg from FWMs) for more specific guidance.</p> <p>Now need to monitor and assess uptake by industry and any further work needed.</p> <p>New area of work identified = likely growth in use of sky-line extraction.</p>	<p>Project Group to identify any further training and communications needs (eg articles for journals, running a workshop for FWMs, etc) methods to monitor/evaluate impact.</p> <p>AFAG to consider scope and need for new 'Sky-Line' Project Group in 2008+</p>	Green - Complete
B2. Work at Height (Paul Elcoat)	(A)	Identification of potential issues in addition to those being covered by AA MEWPs WG.		<p>AFAG 401 in need of revision - business case to pursued as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>AA MEWPs WG meeting held on 25/9/07</p>	AFAG 401 to be revised asap	Green

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		Communications plan for Project Group				
B3. Welfare on Forestry sites (J Liggins)	(C)	No Project Plan produced as topic given low priority		Project was unassigned.  Issue rose re facilities for tree planters in discussions with GLA over licence conditions. Need to establish policy re sfairp.	Welfare facilities specifically required during pesticide use to be considered further under Project C4.  AFAG to reconsider wider welfare issues for 2008+ AFAG Workplan.	N/A
B4. Rigging and dismantling techniques in arboriculture (Frances Hirst)	(A)	Production of AFAG leaflet and Guide to Good Rigging Practice.  Workshop(s) to discuss findings  Communications plan for Project Group	Delay in publication of final report	Final research report now due end 10/07. Guidance to be extracted by 4/08; AFAG leaflet and priced publication proposed during 2008/09.	Ongoing.	Green
B5. Machine Assisted Takedown of Trees (Jim Burns)	(B)	Phase II of research outstanding.  Communications plan for Project Group – (To draft guidance by end of Q4	Funds delayed or not released by HSE - leading to scheduled matched funds not being available from FC, in-year.	High priority in view of significant risk of fatal/major injuries confirmed.  Phase I of research by FC completed. Jim Burns has taken over Project Lead from Jim Dewar  Phase II of research ready to be initiated by FC but HSE still to commit funding. [NB If work progressed before end of Dec 07 the Project Group may be able to	Manage through Sector and others in HSE management chain to minimise disruption.  Liaison with Energy Network Assoc (ENA) and UAG needed on revision of guidance + possible industry contribution to practical	Green /Amber

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		07/08)		<p>finish within timescale (ie &lt;4/08, but more likely produce guidance in Q1 08/09.</p> <p>This activity is relevant to maintenance and integrity of overhead power lines – Guidance Note G55 being revised by supply industry and liaison with Utility Arb Group (UAG). NB This will require AFAG 804 to be revised too.</p>	<p>evaluation of techniques.</p> <p>AFAG guidance on Take-Down of Edge Trees to be produced /published in 2008/09. AFAG 804 will also need revision.</p>	
B6. Chainsaw PPE (Jim Brown)	(B)	<p>VAT (on PPE spares) and other reported issues re inadequate chain saw boots and trousers (Type A vs C) to be resolved.</p> <p>No Project Plan produced – Not required as ongoing over-view.</p>		<p>Complainants advised to pursue U/S PPE via local Trading Standards Depts [HSE do not enforce PPE Supply Regs].</p> <p>VAT issue relevant to all industries and referred to HSE Safety Unit/HM Revenue &amp; Customs</p>	<p>Project Group to consider implications re CEN standards.</p> <p>Sector to check progress on VAT issue.</p>	Green (ongoing)
B7. Market Surveillance - Jim Brown	(B)	No Project Plan required – As Project B6 = ongoing		No formal Project Plan needed as deal with issues reactively as appropriate.	Project Group to consider any issues re CEN/ISO standards.	Green (ongoing)

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<b><u>C. Occupational Health – Improving and developing strategies for risk reduction.</u></b>						
C1. Promotion of Rehabilitation Services (Jason Liggins)	(B)	Multi-agency approach needed. Partnership agreements confirmed by other relevant organisations (eg NHS, Safe and Healthy Working, PHASS) to deliver this project in Scotland.	Poor planning and co-ordination is likely to lead to a reduction in the potential impact of this Project.		Propose to include this project in future AFAG workplan 2008+.	N/A (as Project not begun)
C2. Musculo-Skeletal Disorders (Pete Jackson)	(A)	Produce Project Plan  WG meeting to be convened – to identify industry's specific needs, project outcomes and timescales.		Project commencement awaiting detailed accident analysis (by Bomel).  HSE has obtained video-clips of tree planting. Members informed Euro- Week of S&H focusing on Manual Handling.  Group need to consider 'holistically', with WBV and HAVs.  New Project Leader appointed 9/07 (P Jackson).	MSDs associated with climbing and aerial tree work to be actioned initially	Green

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C3.1 Whole Body Vibration (Colin Saunders)	(A)	Discussion of Phase II of the WBV research required.  Guidance to be drafted and published  Communication plan to be produced.	Failure to secure funding/approval for publication.	Draft guidance prepared following Phase I of research – practical advice already incorporated in articles published in Forestry journals.  Phase II – HSL measurement of working operations completed (joint-funded by HSE/FC), but further work needed on travel to/from work areas.  Communication plan required to most effectively publicise guidance and information to ‘hard-to-reach’ parts of the industry.  New Project leader appointed to replace Jim Dewar.	Stuart McGregor (HSE) pursuing funding for further HSL research from Noise & Vibration Programme. Looks likely to be supported.  Guidance to be produced as a priority.  FC focusing on WBV in 2008.	Green
C3.2. Hand Arm Vibration (Jason Liggins)	(A)	Communication plan including the identification and production of appropriate guidance through trade and industry press and the APF show.	Failure to secure funding/approval for publication.	Good practice guidance on management of HAVs in forestry to be developed in line with ‘good practice’ guidance already developed by FC and HSE.  FC focussed on HAV (and noise) in 2007 + Considerable work ongoing (by HSE) through HAV ‘Clubs’ (eg with LAs and amenity sector) and in industry organisations. Group to consider possible links/read across to arb/forestry.  Project allocated from Jim Dewar to Jason Liggins to progress. Propose to include this project in future 2008- AFAG workplan.	Existing messages to be publicised via new AFAG/Tree work community site, in Tree work News and articles in trade press/journals	Green
C3.3 Noise (Jason Liggins)	(A)	Communication plan including dissemination of research results to the industry.  Initiate	None	FC focused on noise (and HAV) in 2007. Report on HSE.FC funded HSLs Woodchipper research – awaiting approval for publication.  Propose to include this project in future 08- AFAG workplan to convey good practice messages, eg on practical assessment/trigger times, etc to arb and rest	Revise AFAG Guide to take into account research results - 2008	Green

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		discussions with manufacturers and suppliers of wood chippers to ensure they adopt low-noise engineering solutions to reduce noise exposure at source.		of forestry industry.  New Project leader appointed to replace Jim Dewar.		
C4. Reduce Exposure to Pesticides Used in Tree Planting (Emily Ramsay)	(B)	Review research and findings of HSE inspections.  Identify appropriate control/welfare measures.  To produce communications plan to effectively disseminate findings to industry.	Insufficient Resource.	The HSE Specialist Report is now available. Draft summary produced as paper for AFAG Project Group. (To be released to interested parties/AIAC Members)  Recommendations are in line with AFAG 105: 'Planting'. However, strategy required to ensure control measures are put in place on site.  Communication plan required.	Findings of the research and field studies to be disseminated.  Relevant welfare issues to be addressed (project B3)	Green

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<b><u>D. Communication – Promoting best practice and maximising the potential for change.</u></b>						
D1. Promotion of best practice in arboriculture and forestry. (Bill Kew-Winder)	(A)	<p>Identification of outstanding guidance resulting from the current AFAG Project Groups for inclusion in Sector Communications bid for 2008+.</p> <p>Decision on whether to bid for future guidance on lone working and the role of site safety co-coordinator in 2008,</p>	HSE reduces publication resource.	<p>Outstanding and future guidance needs to be identified by Project Group Members /Project Leaders.</p> <p>FC has produced a training DVD for their own staff and are willing to share this more widely.</p> <p>Bid submitted to HSE for research to develop and evaluate new techniques (eg IT-based methods, video pod casts, etc). Work to be initiated asap.</p> <p>New Project Leader (from AA) proposed 9/07 to replace B Hatton – To be agreed by AFAG.</p> <p>HSE to exhibit at the 2008/09 APF Show.</p>	<p>Research to be commissioned asap (Sector)</p> <p>Agreement by all AFAG Members that new guidance is needed in relation to lone working and the role of site safety supervisors, as well as interpreting the steep ground working guidelines (for FWMs), and other issues identified by Project Groups.</p> <p>FC Training video to be publicised and made available to others.</p> <p>Propose to include this project in future 2008+ AFAG workplan. Plan to be reviewed/updated</p>	Green
D2. Production, review and maintenance of AFAG, HSE and industry guidance	(A)	Communication plan agreed by Members to be continued into 2008+ AFAG and HSE Workplan.	Insufficient resources applied.	<p>AFAG Community websites launched on HSE website.</p> <p>‘Arb News’ re-badged as ‘Tree work News’ and HSE ‘Tree Work’ Website under development.</p> <p>Communication plans for individual Project Groups to be agreed.</p>	<p>Communication plans for individual Project Groups to be agreed and incorporated in overall AFAG Comms Plan.</p> <p>Propose to include this project in future 2008- AFAG</p>	Green

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(Bill Kew-Winder)				<p>New Project Leader (from AA) proposed 9/07 to replace B Hatton – To be agreed. By AFAG. Meanwhile, a number of outstanding issues are being progressed by Sector.</p> <p>Propose that an action plan is developed to co-ordinate communication of AFAG Project Work in the future 2008- AFAG Workplan.</p>	workplan. Plan to be reviewed/ updated.	