

AFAG/05/M9

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

ARBORICULTURE AND FORESTRY ADVISORY GROUP (AFAG)

The minutes of the 9th meeting of the AIAC sub-committee on Arboriculture and Forestry, held on Wednesday 9 November 2005 at Forestry Commission HQ, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh.

Present:

Dr R Nourish	HSE (Chair)		
Mr N McKay	ICF	Mr B Hatton	AA
Mr S Richmond	Lantra	Mr G Bonner	TCIA
Mr K Leech	UKFPA	Mrs L Stewart	PCS
Mr R Beaney	TGWU	Mr J Brown	FTA
Mr L McEwan	FCA (sub)	Mrs E Ramsay	FC
Mr J Dewar	FC (Technical Secretary)		
Mr J Bradley	Northern Ireland Forest Service		
Mr P Brereton	HSE	Mr S Ritchie	HSE
Mrs C Keddie	HSE	Mrs F Doherty	HSE
Dr J Liggins	HSE	Mr G Miller	HSE
Mr A Plom	HSE (Sec)		
Mrs N Jack	HSE (Minutes)		

Apologies: Edward Shepherd (PCS), Joanne McAuley (FC) and Frances Hirst (HSE).

1. Welcome and introduction

The Chairman welcomed Lachlan McEwan (FCA), Liz Stewart (PCS) and Robert Beaney (TGWU/Chair of FC's TU's) and introduced HSE's Paul Brereton, Sandy Ritchie, Carol Keddie and Francis Doherty. Roger proposed to hear their presentations on HSE's research (item 6) before discussing the proposed AFAG projects (item 5), to inform discussion on the Workplan.

Nb. A number of other agenda items were discussed under the relevant Projects and are not necessarily recorded in the order discussed.

2. Urgent business

VAT on PPE, raised by Jim Brown – Dealt with under AOB item 13.1

3. MINUTES OF THE 8th MEETING

Agreed subject to the following amendments:

- Min 3.2 (last sentence) to be amended to read “choose *not* to wear gloves”.
- Min 9.2 had been attributed to K Leech but was raised by S Richmond.

ACTION - Sec

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 8th MEETING (14 April 2005)

All actions carried out/discharged, or on the agenda. Following points noted:

4.1 Min 2.8 - FC rep on Utility Arb Group – Simon had liaised with Emily.

4.2 Min 5.3 - Causes of Accidents - The latest stats were being released on day of the meeting. HSE are in discussions with leading insurers, and Roger had contributed to 2 articles in a leading financial sector journal. The Ag Sector intend to organise a meeting with the finance sector next Spring. **ACTION - R. Nourish**

4.3 Min 6.2 - LA rep for AFAG - No nomination received from LACoRS/LGA. Simon recommended contacting NATO. **ACTION - A Plom**

4.4 Min 7.2 & 7.3 - Garry Miller had received some comments on the draft utility arb guidance and would now finalise the leaflet. **ACTION - G Miller**

5. [Part 1] AFAG TERMS OF REFERENCE and WORKPLAN 2005-06

5.1 HSE's 'FIT3' Programme – The Chair reiterated HSE's targets to reduce fatal and major injuries, ill health and days lost, and the Fit3 Programme, outlined in paper presented to the previous meeting (included in AFAG/O5/01 for convenience).

5.2 Accident Statistics – Roger outlined the latest stats (released on day of the meeting) but detailed information not yet available. Members concerned about the negative impact targets could have on reporting and how the forestry and arboriculture industry could demonstrate that they can contribute to the Government's targets. The 'Forestry Initiative' had made an impact in the industry but had not been properly evaluated. To sustain improvement, this effort needed to be maintained in forestry and extended into arboriculture. Members confirmed that accident reporting is a significant problem in arboriculture and forestry, reporting being discouraged in some businesses. It was agreed the data should be analysed in more detail (as proposed by Bomel) and used constructively to promote best practice. There is a need to get this information and the available guidance to those that aren't aware of it. **ACTION – Sector & E Ramsay/Project Group A1.**

5.3 HSE's Projects – HSE's 3-year Forestry and Arb projects were intended to achieve this wider dissemination and application of guidance and good practice, by targeting Forest Works Managers and Arb Clients respectively, through Safety & Health Awareness Days (SHADs). In addition, HSE's H&S Awareness Officers (HSAOs) were sending a standard letter to known/advertised arborists alerting them to recent legislation and guidance. HSAOs will also be contacting non-responders. The Arb Association is providing a list of their members, but it was proving difficult to obtain details of 'non-registered' businesses. Members reported a lack of awareness of SHADs, although the first Arb SHAD this year had only been held the previous day. Three more are planned up to March 06 and these should be more widely publicised. It would also be helpful to compare numbers attending vs possible attendees. **ACTION – F Hirst.**

6. REVIEW OF RESEARCH

6.1 List of Research (AFAG/05/02). - Jim Dewar and Alan Plom had produced this informative summary of past, ongoing and proposed research. This table includes links to relevant reports for future reference by members and Project Groups.

6.2 Hand Arm Vibration (HAV), Whole Body Vibration (WBV) and Noise -

Paul Brereton (HSE) gave a detailed update on each topic and offered to receive enquiries direct (contact Paul.brereton@hse.gsi.gov.uk - but please also cc to J Liggins). Paul's comprehensive ppt presentation will be copied to members [**ACTION - AFAG Sec**]. Members highlighted the importance of proper training in the use of chainsaws to reduce the risk from HAV and suggested comparing management of HAV in other industries. Health surveillance is important in managing the risk from vibration. Industry specific guidance is to be produced and should be used together with the HSE and AFAG guidance. However, felt these need to be clarified. An article by Paul on HAV had already appeared in FBT and another on WBV is due in Dec. A conference on WBV is proposed at HSL in Jan 2006 and members and other interested parties will be invited asap. New Noise Regs are due in April 06. It was agreed the Communications Project Group (D2) will need to review existing guidance. **ACTION - B Hatton/D2**

6.3 Pesticides - Sandy Ritchie and Carol Keddie (HSE Edinburgh) outlined their research assessing pesticide exposure during planting operations and presented their conclusions. The Chair agreed that the FC & FE should be given the opportunity to discuss and comment on these recommendations. It was agreed that a Project Group should be convened, chaired by J Liggins. Other members to include the FCA and a rep from FC's trades unions. **ACTION - Project Group B6 created (See Workplan)**

6.4 Other Research – Other research topics listed on the Agenda were discussed under the relevant Project heading or deferred due to lack of time for discussion. A note on each of these will be issued as an Information Document (AFAG/05/08) for future reference by the relevant Project Groups. **ACTION – A Plom**

5 /Part 2/ AFAG TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORKPLAN 2005-06 (AFAG/05/01)

5.4 Aims and Objectives – Members accepted the aims and objectives added to the draft workplan to reflect those agreed by AIAC since the last AFAG meeting.

5.5 Project Plans - Each project was reviewed, as outlined below. Clear objectives, deliverables, milestones and timescales are now required for each project, asap. Production of a 'route map' based on the intervention logic model approach and illustrating the contribution of HSE and 'delivery partners' had been helpful in describing other projects. It was agreed that AFAG should concentrate on getting the 'non-compliant' parts of the industry better, rather than on the minutiae of guidance.

ACTION – Project Champions to convene meetings/liaise with nominees as described below and produce Project Plans by the end of December.

A1 - Examination of underlying and root causes of serious accidents

- Agreed that this group, led by Emily should include HSE's Jason Liggins and Francis Hirst + Nick Sangha (who has been analysing accidents in the Sector in conjunction with Bomel). **ACTION - J Liggins & E Ramsay**

A2 – Training and Certificates of Competence

- The problems of migrant workers and cross-border working, standards of training, the need for multi-lingual guidance and instructional material and confusion over comparative qualifications across Europe had previously been discussed by AFAG. Roger had been unable to progress this through the EU as part of UK's Presidency, but suggested that the EU's 'Leonardo Fund' was a possible source of funding to help establish equivalence of training and mutual recognition.

ACTION – S Richmond to ask Lantra for details.

- Members were particularly concerned about the rapidly growing problem of training and managing/monitoring migrant workers, on-site. There are major cost implications for 'policing' as well as translating documents and providing interpreters during training and assessment. Employer's duties were reiterated but members felt further communication was needed. It was agreed the Project group should take this matter forward urgently, in liaison with other Ag Sector staff: Further information should be sent to Graeme Walker, who is leading on HSE's Migrant Workers project and the establishment of the Gangmaster Licensing Authority.

ACTION – J Brown

- Jim Dewar reported on progress with the research funded by FC to map Machine Operators Certificates of Competence. The report should be available in January 2006 and will be circulated to members asap.

ACTION – J Dewar.

- Shelf-life of qualifications and the need for refresher training and re-certification was a long-running issue for AFAG but had not been resolved. It was agreed that as these various issues are inter-related it would be helpful to organise one meeting, led by S Richmond, with J Dewar, K Leech, J Brown, G Bonner, B Hatton, R Beaney + a rep from FCA, together with HSE's Sector staff.

ACTION – FCA to nominate rep. S.Richmond (Project Champion) and A Plom (Sec) to arrange meeting to review issues, research, etc, asap.

B1 - Steep Ground Working

- Neil McKay reported that the prime aim of the Project Group was to produce guidance. The scope had been widened from harvesters to include other machinery. Manufacturers and suppliers had been contacted but most would not provide any information on 'safe slopes', fearing litigation. The Forest Machinery Journal wanted a steer and would provide a route to consult the industry. The draft guidance was nearly finalised and subject to HSE's additions and requirements should be out Feb/March '06 for comments. The FCA's 'Harvest sub committee' are to consider the draft on 29th Nov. **ACTION – N McKay/J Liggins**

B2 – Work at Height

- No report as project champion Paul Elcoat was unable to attend the meeting.

B3 – Welfare provision on Forestry sites

- Not started as a low priority, but also relevant to the new Pesticides Group.

B4 – Rigging and Dismantling

- The tender for the research had been delayed, but the research would be carried out during 2006, reporting by March 07, aiming to produce the guidance by Sept 07.

B5 – Winch-assisted felling

- Research was initially proposed on forces encountered using winches but guidance is already available in AFAG leaflets: “Winching Operations in Forestry”, “Tree take down” and “Vehicle debogging”. The project plan will now aim to establish and promote a safer system of work, using harvesters. J Bradley, K Leech, J Liggins and N McKay to take this forward with the involvement of a contractor (Graham Hodgson suggested, also representing LANTRA). **ACTION - J Dewar**
- [Secs Note]: HSE has investigated a recent fatal accident involving off-set winching. This was not discussed due to lack of time. Jason will prepare a paper for consideration by this Group and the Training and Certification Project Group and the Group reviewing the production and maintenance of guidance, to ensure that any issues highlighted during the investigation are properly addressed.
ACTION – J Liggins

B6 – Chain Saw PPE

- Jim Brown had discussed with members of the Working Group and concluded that the use of gloves should now be based on risk assessment. Jason reported HSE had investigated accidents involving 12 injuries to the back of the hand in arb, 8 in forestry and 1 involving a top handled saw in a MEWP. Members considered the advice in HSE’s Information Note should be revised accordingly and reissued to HSE and LA inspectors, to promote consistency in enforcement. AFAG 301 will also need to be amended in due course. Members agreed the following text: “*The use of appropriate gloves is recommended under most circumstances. The type of glove will depend on risk assessment of the task and machine. Consider the need for protection from cuts from the chainsaw, thorny material, cold / wet conditions.*” This should be re-examined in 12 months. **ACTION - J Liggins**
- Standards of trousers for chainsaw use have improved significantly and the guidance also needs to be reviewed by the Group [led by Simon, including J Liggins, J Dewar and J Brown]. **ACTION - S Richmond**

B7 - Market Surveillance

- Information on any significant new products or techniques developed should be reported to Jim Brown.
ACTION - All Members – Ongoing.

C1 - Promotion of rehabilitation services

- G Miller advised that more information and research is required on this subject. AFAG agreed the priority should be downgraded from A to B.
ACTION - G Miller/J Liggins

C2 - MSD

- Members agreed there was a need to promote health issues generally, and MSD in particular, more prominently within arboriculture and forestry. MSD injury stats to be examined, including information provided by Bomel related to climbing. The Project Group led by B Hatton to include P Elcoat, Paulo Bavaresco (co-opted trainer) + Jason and Frances from HSE. **ACTION – B Hatton**

C3 – HAV, WBV and Noise

ACTION – Further to discussion on research under 6.1 above, Jason and Jim Dewar, together with Paul Brereton to organise workshop at HSL Buxton asap.

C4 – Pesticides

- Further to discussion under 6.2 above, meeting to be arranged asap between HSE and FC to discuss the report and then the Project Group to be convened (to include Robert Beaney and others as agreed).

ACTION – J Liggins

D1 – Promotion of Best Practice in Arb

- As reported under 5.3 above, HSE’s SHADs for clients is ongoing and the Arb Liaison Group meet regularly (see item 9 below). Group to review other avenues.

ACTION – B Hatton, S Richmond and F Hirst

D2 – Guidance

- As reported under item 12, G Miller outlined the current position on AFAG leaflets and HSEs publications policy.

ACTION - B Hatton to lead on review of ‘communications’, including forestry and arboriculture guidance.

ACTION – A Plom to amend and circulate the revised Workplan to Members for agreement, following consideration by AIAC.

ACTION - Members to comment to A Plom, asap.

7. STEEP GROUND WORKING GROUP

Neil and Jason introduced AFAG/05/07 under Project B1 as reported above.

8. REVIEW OF FORESTRY AND ARB-RELATED STANDARDS WORK

Jim Dewar introduced AFAG/05/03, a summary of relevant BSI, European and International standards committees highlighting current work items and UK representatives. If members are aware of any other issues, comments or personnel that would like to be involved they should inform Jim Dewar. Alan Plom to add additional information from HSE’s perspective.

ACTION – All members, A Plom

9. UPDATE FROM THE ARBORICULTURE INDUSTRY LIAISON GROUP

Simon Richmond reported on current activities of this group, which includes representatives from across the industry together with insurance and training interests. They are developing safety posters for contractors. The role of tree surveys and pre-inspections had been a matter of some debate and a training course has been developed by LANTRA. This is one of a suite of courses which includes utility arb. The latter is currently delayed but will hopefully be launched next year. Garry Miller volunteered to contact the Office of the Deputy Prime (ODPM) to clarify their position on tree inspections. **ACTION - G Miller**

10. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION ISSUES

The various issues raised, including AFAG/05/04 on migrant workers, were considered and reported under Project A2 above.

11. PPE

Relevant issues raised in paper AFAG/05/05 dealt with under Project B6 above.

12. REVIEW OF AFAG PUBLICATIONS

Garry Miller reported on progress with the following leaflets:

- AFAG 607 ' Firewood Processor, AF AG 703 Debogging and AF AG 803 Fire fighting have been completed. Should be available by Christmas.
- AFAG 220 Tractor Mounted Flails, AF AG 707 Excavators in forestry and AFAG 404 Utility Arboriculture are complete but awaiting final feedback from HSE's 'Utility Interventions Policy Group'.
- INDG 317 Chainsaws at Work being looked at with a view to possibly adding clarification on the ratio of instructors to students during any training courses.
- HSE proposed to revise AIS30 to include the Working at Heights Regs and LOLER

13. AOB

13.1 VAT on PPE - Roger reported that the anomaly of VAT being charged on spares and replacemet PPE (as raised by Jim Brown in paper AFAG/05/06 and proposed for attention of the AIAC) had been referred to DTI who lead on PPE, for them to forward it to HM Revenue and Customs, who are responsible for VAT. **ACTION - R. Nourish/A Plom**

13.2 Migrant workers – Dealt with under Project A2 above. Roger to introduce Jim Brown to Graeme Walker at the next AIAC meeting for Graeme to take issues forward. Jim to send information to Graeme. **ACTION - R. Nourish/J Brown**

13.3 Future Safety ATV Helmet – This new type of 'multi-purpose' helmet was not discussed due to insufficient time. Details to be issued in AFAG information note (AFAG/05/09) **ACTION - J Liggins**

14. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

To be arranged, before next AIAC in March 2006. **ACTION: A.Plom**