

Health and Safety Executive		Sector Information Minute	
Agriculture and Food Sector		SIM 01/2004/08	
Cancellation Date	28/01/2009	Open Government Status	Fully Open
Version No & Date	1: 28/01/2005	Author Unit/Section	Agricultural and Food Sector

Target Audience:
Inspectors inspecting agriculture
Staff supporting agriculture inspectors/FMU's
HSAO's

FARM SELF ASSESSMENT SOFTWARE

This SIM provides information to both inspectors and their support staff on the actions to take on receipt of a submission made by a farmer using the new self-assessment software.

BACKGROUND

1 During the past 18 months the Sector has been developing, piloting and evaluating a self-assessment software tool for farmers. The software is now complete and will be available from late December 2004 on CD-ROM or by downloading from the HSE website.

2 The main aim in producing the software is to help farmers carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of their farms as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and to raise the levels of health and safety awareness in the industry. The software also contains an optional facility allowing the farmer/user to submit their assessment electronically to HSE. Further information on the development of the software and its evaluation can be found at www.hse.gsi.gov.uk/agriculture/self-assess/

3 The CD-ROM version will contain the self-assessment software plus the full suite of HSE's free agriculture and associated guidance (in .pdf format). Due to filesize constraints, the downloadable version will contain the self-assessment software only.

4 The launch of the software will consist of:

- a) A press release during w/c 4 January 2005;
- b) The webpage containing a downloadable version of the software will go live during w/c 20 December 2004;

c) 106,000 copies of the CD version of the software will be inserted in the New Year edition of Farmer's Weekly;

d) A further 24,000 copies of the CD-ROM have been produced and will be held at HSE Books and included in the catalogue for anyone who wishes to order a copy. They will also be available to give away at shows, SADs, visits, etc;

e) Other media publicity and promotion by the Sector.

5 A small number of the CD-ROMs will be sent to Band 2 inspectors prior to the launch. However, please note that due to security restrictions on HSE computers, staff will not be able to install the software on their work machines.

6 Staff who wish to view the questions contained in the assessment should refer to **Appendix 1** which sets out the questions, benchmarks and associated benchmark notes which form the main content of the assessment.

SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT TO HSE

7 Please note that the software has an optional facility which allows the farmer to submit their assessment to HSE. If farmers choose to submit their assessments to HSE they will be sent an email confirming receipt. Given that the future resource available to the Agriculture Programme has yet to be confirmed, the wording of the email (below) has been deliberately written to be non-committal:

Name
Address
Address
etc

Reference number: CPH number to be inserted here

Thank you for submitting your farm's assessment to HSE. We may contact you within the next few weeks to discuss the assessment and proposed action plan.

In the meantime, if you would like to draw our attention to any particular part of the return or wish to discuss any specific health and safety matter(s) please contact HSE's Infoline quoting the above reference number.

8 The webpage and associated publicity will make it clear that submission to HSE is optional i.e. we will not be actively encouraging users to submit their assessments. Experience from the pilot was that a considerable amount of farmers downloaded the software, but only a small number made a submission - this despite our encouragement for farmers to submit during the pilot. The Sector believe that the number of submissions will be low.

9 If a submission is made to HSE, then admin. staff will be able to access and print the assessment before passing it to an inspector.

ACTION BY ADMIN - ACCESS AND PRINT SUBMISSIONS

10 The farmer's County Parish Holding (CPH) number is used to determine to which HSE office the assessment should be. A series of admin. screens - one for each HSE office - have been set up and are available via the intranet.

11 The url address to access the admin screens is <http://btlwb01/ageforms/index.aspx> - we suggest admin staff bookmark/add the above to their 'favourites' menu so it is available for future use.

12 A pull down menu provides a list of all the HSE offices. The password to access the submissions for that office is the office name (e.g for Ashford the password is 'ashford' - for Cardiff the password is 'cardiff', etc). Please note the password is case sensitive and should be entered in lower case.

13 If any submissions have been made, they will be listed in order of the date submitted. To access the submission, simply click on the CPH number and the submission will be displayed on screen.

14 At the top and bottom of the submission are two options - i) to print the submission, and ii) to return to the main list. The submissions should be printed off and passed to the Band 2 / inspector.

15 On return to the main list, the 'viewed' date will be completed and can be used to determine which have been accessed and which have not.

16 Given experience from the pilot, the Sector estimate it will take a maximum of 30 minutes of admin. time per week to access and print each offices' submission and suggest that admin. support staff should check for submissions at least twice a week.

ACTION BY INSPECTORS - ASSESSING SUBMISSIONS

17 For the remainder of the 2004/05 work-year, the Sector would encourage Agriculture FMUs to assess all the submissions received. This will involve reviewing the question responses, the proposed actions and the action dates, as well as discussing with/providing feedback to the farmer. It is important that contact is made with the farmer for the time to be counted as 'contact'.

18 During the pilot, the assessment discussion with the farmer was generally made by telephone and FOD HQ (Planning) agreed that this time could be counted as contact for work recording purposes.

19 From April 2005, the action to be taken by inspectors will depend on; i) future operational resource allocated to agriculture/associated work (currently unknown) and, ii) how local offices wish to respond to the submit

facility/handle assessments given that the email receipt to the farmer is non-committal.

20 Options for local offices include (this list is not exhaustive):

- a) Full assessment of all submissions, contacting the farmer to discuss / provide feedback;
- b) Assessment of the submissions, contacting the farmer only where key issues are identified during the inspectors assessment;
- c) Local projects i.e. targeting and inviting farms to submit with an incentive of no inspection, working with local farm assurance schemes, etc;
- d) Filing of submission in FOCUS/COIN file without assessment;
- e) Local training/coaching of HSAOs to perform an initial assessment of the submission, passing only those of concern to an inspector.

Date first issued: 28 January 2005