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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AIAC)

Overview of the AFAG meeting held on 20 May 2019

Significant matters discussed

1. Industry representations on issues that were likely to arise as a result of ash die-back were discussed. Particular challenges around chainsaw operator competence although existing guidance is adequate. Traffic management is a significant cost which HSE would expect to be considered as part of the planning process.
2. An update was provided on the development of the AA Technical guides. An issue has arisen regarding climbing techniques and terminology which is relevant to compliance. This will be addressed for a site meeting planned in June. Additional challenges will come with regard to supervision, which has always been a challenge in arboriculture.
3. LOLER in arboriculture – the lack of adverse insurance reports from inspections of climbing equipment has highlighted an area of non-compliance. It is covered in training but would appear that is not included in refresher training. Message on the requirement to report equipment that fails LOLER examination to be reinforced although there is no natural arena in which inspectors congregate.
4. European Chainsaw Certificates – An update was provided. Attempts have been made to contact ABA International to restart the process but a player had not replied to emails. A reply has subsequently been received and arrangements made to re-start the assessment in October.
5. Reports back from FISA have been received, summary provided to AIAC.
6. Management of trees – changes in the guidance to reflect recent Civil cases are proposed but changes will be minor. Concern was expressed about the uneven standards of training for tree inspectors. New guidance likely to be out by the end of the year.
7. A reply to HM Coroner for Nottingham was sent by BEIS describing current arrangements for information on safe chainsaw use to be provided to the end user. A low impact publicity campaign was run before Easter encouraging gardeners to adopt good practice.
8. Network Rail advised that guidance on working on trees next to railways had been drafted and would be circulated. It has links to relevant FISA guidance.

9. AOBs - FISA is collecting accident and near miss data from the industry with the hope of getting 85% returns to identify trends and underlying causes. Concern was raised regarding that electric chainsaws are quiet and so not giving people in the area adequate warning that treework was taking place.

Andrew Turner
20 June 2019