

# Sector plan for health and safety: **Agriculture**

This sector covers the traditional farming and forestry industries – crop and animal production, forestry, logging, arboriculture, fishing and aquaculture.

Around 340 000 people work in the sector, with a mix

of the self-employed, employees, family, casual and gang labour for seasonal activities. Agriculture as a sector contributes around £11 billion to the economy.

## Current position

Agriculture has a poor record for managing health and safety. The sector covers 1% of the GB workforce, but accounts for 20% of worker deaths.

On average, agriculture kills 32 people each year including 4 members of the public. Over the last 35 years the fatal injury rate, at around 20 times the all-industry average, has shown little sign of improvement. The main causes of fatal incidents include being struck by moving vehicles, falling from height and being injured by animals.

Around 4% of workers are injured in non-fatal incidents annually, a rate double that across all industries and equating to 15 000 workers each year.

The main causes include slips, trips and falls, being injured by animals, and lifting and handling.

Around 4% of workers suffer an illness they believe to be work-related, an average of 16 000 workers each year. The most common work-related health issue is musculoskeletal disorders (accounting for around half of all cases) while other conditions include occupational lung disease.

## Outcomes and priorities

Agriculture will continue to be a priority sector for HSE. We want to see significant improvements in all

areas of health and safety performance, particularly in achieving the following outcomes:

- A reduction in the fatal injury rate
- A reduction in cases of occupational lung disease and musculoskeletal disorders
- Increased ownership of the challenges by industry and leadership on developing and implementing solutions



## What HSE will do to #HelpGBworkwell

### **We will secure effective management and control of risk by:**

- producing and delivering an agriculture intervention strategy that promotes legal compliance through:
  - effective targeting of inspection activities;
  - a targeted programme of appropriately blended interventions using our insight research, intelligence from other government departments and the latest communication techniques to amplify messages;
  - highlighting our expectations of, and findings from, our inspection activities to have an educational and deterrent effect across the industry;
  - maximising the reach and impact of our investigation and enforcement activities.

### **We will lead and engage with others to improve workplace health and safety by:**

- changing behaviours and attitudes through an industry-wide strategic approach that:
  - achieves behaviour change by sharing insight research to identify audience segments, channels and trusted messengers;
  - maintains our tripartite approach, challenging existing partnership groups to take ownership of the problems, develop shared solutions and deliver consistent actions and messages;
  - integrates health and safety compliance into the curricula of land-based colleges and training organisations, so that management of health and safety becomes part of a modern, professional business;
  - reinforces the message that farmers are not exempt from health and safety law, engendering a culture of professionalism and compliance for all;
  - inspires the farm and forestry safety partnerships, and their member organisations, to promote legal compliance and improve health and safety performance;
- ensuring partners focus their activities on driving improvements in on-farm health and safety performance.