

Partnership on Health And Safety in Scotland

AGRICULTURE IN SCOTLAND: 2008/09
(updated 06 February 2008)

Introduction

The Commission reviewed HSE's strategy for agriculture in October 2007. Acknowledging the work of HSE and the external stakeholders in communicating with and influencing difficult, hard-to-reach target audiences, it expressed disappointment that the statistics were stubbornly flat and felt that new ways needed to be found to reach the target audiences. Further progress would be achieved by refining the existing strategy, not by increasing or decreasing the resources available for agriculture. HSE needs to return to the Commission with proposals for a new plan before the end of the 2007/08.

At present it seems likely the proactive element of the FOD Plan of Work 2008/09 will be comprised of:

- Work directed by the priority topic programmes under the Injury and Disease Reduction Programmes (FIT3);
- Local (discretionary) projects resulting from the Fine Tuning Review – Barbara Healey's note of 17th September suggested that FOD Scotland would be able to fund 4x16 day projects (or the equivalent?); and
- Other directed work. This will for example include work on vulnerable (in particular migrant) workers. Initial indications are that the divisional resource allocations for this work in 2007/08 (see SIM 01/2007/04) is likely to be increased by 20% in 2008/09.

Strategy for Agriculture in Scotland

Agriculture is an important part of the Scottish economy. In terms of employment and turnover it is proportionately more important to Scotland than to the rest of Great Britain.

Based on current information about the planning arrangements for 2008/09, the following strategy is proposed for work in the agriculture sector in Scotland:

Objectives

- (a) To maintain an appropriate level of engagement with key stakeholders and dutyholders sufficient to promote compliance, competence and effective management of health and safety, principally by capitalising upon a multiplier effect; and
- (b) To maintain HSE's reputation in the sector.

The promotion of these priorities should help to bring about a step change in competence and attitudes within the industry, which are prerequisites for a reduction in the accident and ill-health rates for the sector.

The following programme of work is proposed under the broad strategy. It should be noted that the Safe and Healthy Working advisory service of SCHWL would be promoted at all relevant contacts.

Proposed/suggested Workstreams

Promotion of health and safety management by working with SEERAD

a) Development of a pilot in which SEERAD monitor farms are used as the mechanism to promote health and safety management, including the industry specific vocational training in health and safety management. Two approaches are proposed. In the first, an Inspector would work closely with an SCHWL adviser from within the monitor farm community group (each attending alternate meetings i.e. 3 each per year). Working with the group will ensure that appropriate health and safety implications are considered in the context of business management. The second approach is to seek to influence a community group by addressing a meeting as a specialist speaker. As speakers attend meetings only by invitation of the group it would first be necessary to influence the group facilitator (usually an SAC adviser).

10 days resource. The initiative supports: Injury Reduction Programme - FFH and Workplace Transport; Safe Interventions - reducing fatal injuries: machinery and confined spaces; Reducing Ill-health Programme – MSDs, Stress and Disease Reduction Programme - management of asbestos and exposure to grain dust.

b) Building on relationships developed above, to encourage SEERAD to develop the "Whole Farm Review" to ensure that it more nearly achieves its apparent objective, by including analysis of the adequacy of the management of health and safety. This will help to ensure that reviews assist farmers in the identification of all critical business risks. At present not all Farm Advisers have specific health and safety competence.

Given the importance of agriculture in Scotland and of partnership working to HSE, this work could be delivered as one of the local Fine Tuning Review project. More detailed planning would be required but the objectives could be achieved by allocating 12-15 days of Band 3/4 time.

Aquaculture

a) Operational contribution to the work of the Aquaculture Health and Safety Committee. This involves:

- attendance at the biannual meetings, providing practical operational input; assisting partner agencies and major employers in planning/delivery of a pilot aquaculture SHAD, based on the HSE model - HSE to promote health and safety management, transport and manual handling (delivering one scenario).

5 days resource (primarily due to pilot SHAD). The work largely contributes to the priority topic programmes which support FIT3, in particular Injury Reduction Programme - FFH and Workplace Transport, and; Reducing Ill-health Programme – MSDs. It is also significant stakeholder engagement/partnership work.

- contributing to HSE's work with MCA and LA in approach to lifejacket manufacturers to address a serious defect resulting in the failure in use of the firing mechanism - particularly assistance with collation of information and data and in the dialogue with the manufacturers (S 6 HSWA applies by default in this matter). The Ag & Food Sector has offered to lead in discussion with industry stakeholders. The operational resource commitment from FOD Scotland would be minimal – possibly 2/3 days.

b) Continuation of the floating fish farm walkways initiative (April 2007 edition of express refers) by: working with the trade press to dispel myths and reassure industry; follow-up visits to uncooperative firms and to a sample of ostensibly cooperative firms (to be combined with Fit3 inspection); and enforcement as appropriate. It is important to maintain pressure on the industry and momentum on this issue.

The initiative supports the Injury Reduction Programme - FFH and Slips and Trips and the Reducing Ill-health Programme – MSDs.

c) Work to ensure prevention of falls from vehicles in the live fish haulage industry by carrying forward the successful work with carriers of salmon smolts and addressing prevention of falls from vehicles carrying trout fry.

Directly supports the Falls from Vehicles campaign which seems likely to continue into 2008/09.

d) To establish a compliance profile against Fit3 topics in the largely so-far-uninspected trout fish farm sector, and inform future strategy with the industry, by inspecting a sample of establishments. To include safety at floating fish cages and employment of temporary and migrant workers.

5 -10 days. The initiative addresses FFH, Slips and Trips and MSD (as above), and Temporary and Migrant Workers project.

e) Engagement with all relevant parties and agencies involved in hand gathering of shellfish in tidal estuaries, particularly the Solway and Moray Firths. To include:

- a limited programme of planned inspection, jointly with GLA as appropriate (5 days);
- participation in multi agency planning/review/operational meetings as instigated by SEERAD Inshore Fisheries Division or other agencies (as necessary, max. 5 days and
- reactive work as necessary (*the balance of resource*) . A report is currently with PF in relation to poaching incident on Solway Firth.

Forestry

a) To focus on high risk chainsaw operations, manual handling and employment of temporary and migrant workers by a programme of inspection of seasonal harvesting at Christmas tree farms.

5-10 days. The initiative supports: the Temporary and Migrant Workers Project and the Injury Reduction Programme - Workplace Transport; Reducing Ill-health Programme – MSDs.

b) Continued membership of the Forestry Advisory Committee of the Scottish School of Forestry, part of Inverness College and the University of Highlands and Islands. Locally based FOD Inspector is most appropriate participant for this work which supports the sector.

1 Day. The initiative is important stakeholder engagement/partnership work.

c) Those working in the forestry and arboriculture are at particular risk from work-related illnesses, such as MSDs, WRULD and those associated with exposure to noise and vibration. The successful provision of rehabilitation services is a key element in reducing both the incidence and the number of work days lost from occupational illness.

HSE will form a specific project group to examine the existing provision of rehabilitation services in Scotland and assess how well this provision matches with the needs of those employed in tree work. The group will include key stakeholders such including PHASS, SHWLs, NHS, Scottish Executive and the Forestry Commission. The group will work with rehabilitation service providers to increase their awareness of both the nature of forestry/arboriculture work and to facilitate the provision of specific services for those in these industries.

The project contributes to the ill health reduction programme and will raise the awareness of occupational health issues within the tree work sectors and within rural communities.

Communications and publicity

a) Continued development and maintenance of a network of influential contacts to promote health and safety priorities, as agreed with FOD Scotland Stakeholder Manager. Targets groups to include NFUS, TGWU, Young Farmers, Machinery Rings, BAGMA¹ members, SAC advisers, Scottish Crofting Foundation, Crofters Commission and appropriate trade associations. Contacts to be made by local inspectors, and where possible to involve some face-to-face contact, as this is an industry that particularly values personal contact. Such visits would be "fill in" or adventitious visits while staff are in an area for other purposes. The groups listed frequently request speakers, and such requests should be accommodated if possible. Would appear to be largely opportunistic and/or reactive.

Across Scotland, estimated at 3 days. Stakeholder engagement/ partnership work.

¹ British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association

b) With the support of the Sector, HSAOs to supply topical articles for the Newsletters produced by most of the above-mentioned organisations. Most of the organisations make regular requests for such articles, and a number covering priority issues already exist, which can be adapted for topicality. This pool, together with HSE and Sector press releases, may be used to meet this demand and continue this communication method.

This work has been largely opportunistic and/or reactive. HSAOs to develop this as a routine communication channel.

c) HSE stand at the Royal Highland Agricultural Show 19 – 22 June 2008. Funded from FOD Scotland's communications budget.

Working in partnership

a) National Trust for Scotland/South Ayrshire Council: continuation of the tripartite LAPS agreement signed in 2005. Work involves site visits and liaison meetings.

b) Continued participation in the annual joint agency Safe Highlanders events in Inverness, Caithness, Lairg, Skye and Fort William. Partner organisations include the Police and Fire Service. In excess of 3000 children attend the events each year, receiving instruction and guidance on a wide range of safety issues (Stranger Danger, the dangers of building sites etc). HSE contributes a farm safety scenario, using display model and video. This requires mainly HSAO resource, with some Inspector input. Given the recent trend on child fatalities, the Sector would support this and similar initiatives on child safety.

2 persons per day. Main event (Inverness) = 8 days, + 1 person for set-up day. Minor events 1 day each. Co-ordinator needed to liaise with other partners.

c) To identify ways in which HSE can work with other agencies to promulgate health and safety information to migrant workers. For example, a local Information Day in Tayside was supported in 2007. Similar work could be supported by the resource allocated to temporary and migrant working.

Max 2 - 3 days.

d) To continue work with the Cairngorms National Park authority (CNPA) to promote priority topics, as a model for work with other stakeholders such as NTS, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, Crown Estates, and large estates such as Balnagown. CNPA provided full funding for HSE's Aviemore SHAD in 2006 and is keen to support further work. The following are proposed: a pilot farm demonstration on safe work at height; and exploration of the opportunities for CNPA to foster local support/study groups to take up the new VQs in health and safety, in order to increase competence in health and safety management within the farming community.

6 days. Supports FFH programme. Competence initiative supports all programmes.

e) Completion of "On track for tractor safety" young persons' training initiative: working in partnership with Turriff Academy to pilot a scheme whereby secondary schools

promote and facilitate Lantra tractor training for young persons who work on family farms. Again the Sector would support this innovative stakeholder initiative.

6 Days. Supports Child Safety and Workplace Transport programme. Possible partnership work with LA Road Safety Team. Possible support from AIAC's Transport Working Group.

f) To support agricultural vehicle stop check operations organised by the police and VOSA, if HSE participation is requested and resource is available. To focus on transport management by employers.

g) To secure improvements in safety at small agricultural shows by communicating guidelines on stock/pedestrian segregation etc to Local Authority and police events licensing personnel.

It is proposed to review the programme of work annually and to revise and develop it in accordance with priorities within HSE and Scotland.

FOD Scotland has been advised that some resource could be made available in the Agriculture Sector Team to support some of the work described above, in particular the work with SEERAD and other partnership work. This will be of great assistance.

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