

Farm Safety Action Plan



April 2017-March 2020

Sustainable Safety



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Foreword

The Farm Safety Partnership (FSP) was launched in May 2012 by Ministers Foster and O'Neill. It brings together key stakeholders with an interest in farm safety in Northern Ireland (See Appendix 1). Since its formation the FSP has undertaken 2 action plans designed to address the unacceptable levels of death and injury in the industry.

Improving farm safety is of critical importance. There have simply been too many lives lost, too many serious injuries, and too many families devastated in our rural communities over recent years. The Farm Safety Partnership is committed to making such tragedies a thing of the past. We will work tirelessly, together, to improve the current situation and this new Action Plan builds on the successes of recent years and introduces some new areas for action. The focus of this plan is to change behaviour in a sustainable way. Awareness of farm dangers is as high as its ever been - but this is not enough and we need the support of everyone in farming and rural communities to make that important journey from awareness to changed attitudes to changed behaviour. Please read this Action Plan carefully and ask yourself the question 'What am I doing? / What can I do to improve farm safety on a personal, family, company or organisational level?' Please, please think FarmSAFE.

Kaith Monson

Keith Morrison, Chair of the Farm Safety Partnership

Since its formation, the Farm Safety Partnership has worked vigorously to change the mindset of farmers and farm families. To date the Partnership has delivered on its aims and objectives within both Action Plans and I firmly believe that this work has contributed to farm safety becoming a priority on more farms in Northern Ireland. The level of engagement at farm level has been crucial in increasing the awareness of safety on farms and for us more farmers are now considering the 'SAFE' way of doing a job before doing it. However, despite the progress made to date, there is still more work to be done in turning this awareness into changed behaviour.

Barclay Bell, President, Ulster Farmers Union

Introduction

Since being established in May 2012 the Farm Safety Partnership has worked to address the poor record of health and safety within the agriculture industry in Northern Ireland, as evidenced by the unacceptable numbers of farmers losing their lives and the high incidence of serious non-fatal workplace accidents over recent years.

The Partnership produced its first Action Plan to cover the period from November 2012 to March 2014. It sought to change perceptions and create awareness of the importance of farm safety practices within rural communities. The second action plan, which ran from April 2014 - March 2017, was intended to maintain the awareness message and develop and maintain tangible behavioural change within the sector.

Throughout the course of this and previous action plans, the Partnership has continued to highlight the four main causes of fatal accidents - Slurry, Animals, Falls, and Equipment (SAFE) and promote the need for farmers and their families to stay vigilant and take those next steps towards safer farms and work practices. Additionally this plan aims to actively address issues which cause serious nonfatal incidents and common causes of work related ill health as well as reducing their effects within the sector.

The Partnership continues to recognise that there are no "quick fixes" available to address what has proved to be such an intractable problem in many countries the world over, and is committed to continuing its effort in effecting long term sustainable change within the industry. It is recognised that the Partnership cannot bring about sustainable changes on its own and it is key that farmers acknowledge safety issues and make their own choices responsibly.





Progress on 2014-17 Action Plan

Considerable progress has been made over the past three years. Some significant highlights include:

The provision of information and promotion of safe working has been a key area of work. Through ongoing advertising, media, promotions and events throughout the year there have been over seven million opportunities to view these messages.

According to the advertising tracking figures supplied by Millward Brown Ulster, awareness of the multimedia farm safety advertising campaign is very high with 89% of farmers indicating awareness. This has been supplemented through the use of digital media channels such as websites, Facebook and Twitter. In order to influence safe farm behaviours regular safety reminders are issued through social media. The messages issued by social media are then further distributed and shared by Ulster Farmers' Union, UFU.

In order to increase the coverage of farm safety through talks and events, 18 ambassadors were trained and equipped to promote the farm safety message and over 80 talks were completed by HSENI and YFCU during the period of the action plan. HSENI have distributed over 82,000 farm safety packs to the farming community which addresses the SAFE message.

Since April 2014, nine farm safety spotlight weeks have been completed delivering safety messages about slurry, power take-off shafts, and child safety on farms. HSENI contributed to two International Farm Safety Weeks, showcasing survivor stories of local farmers supporting the SAFE message.



Four survivor stories were produced, launched and uploaded to the HSENI YouTube channel. They feature four local farmers relaying lessons learned from their own experience of farming incidents. All were well received with a combined viewing figures exceeding 74,000.

Training has also been a key area of action building on the excellent work during the first action plan. During the period over 3,000 people completed the Farm Safety Awareness training either 'on farm' or 'online'. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has also developed a Farm Safe Awareness program for development groups to encourage the sharing and knowledge transfer between small groups of farmers in relation to farm safety. The initial training for the members of the groups was delivered during this plan and will be developed further through the new Farm Safety Partnership plan.

Child farm safety education has also continued with over 250 primary school farm safety presentations completed reaching over 24,000 pupils and 26 'Be Safe' events. The Farm Safety Calendar competition also ran during the three years of the plan with over 10,000 competition entries and 110,000 calendars distributed to rural families.

The FSP also financially supported the realisation and launch of a undergraduate project by students of the University of Ulster (nursing degree) who developed a prototype child safety on-farm app for smartphones and tablets.



Assisted by funding from the NFU Mutual and the Farm Safety Foundation, the partnership have worked with The RADAR¹ centre to include a farm safety area aimed at raising awareness of farm safety issues for children and young people using the facility.

Working with other FSP partners, the DAERA developed an online risk assessment programme to allow farmers to review the way that they work and to direct them towards making important changes towards achieving safer farming practices. The programme allows the farmer to assess the current health and safety standard on their farm and also provides them with an action plan to tackle issues that have been identified. Completion of the 'Making it Safer' self-assessment programme has also been made mandatory for all applicants to both tier 1 and tier 2 of the Farm Business Improvement Scheme - Capital. Over 5,500 people had completed the assessment by the end of the plan.

In 2015 and 2016 the Farm Safety Partnership sponsored the Farm SAFE Award category in the Farming Life Danske Bank Farming Awards. The aim of the award was to recognise a person/s who had made a significant contribution to raising awareness of health and safety on farms. The winner in 2015 was William Sayers with Liam McCarthy winning in 2016.

HSENI continued carrying out advisory visits on farms across Northern Ireland with 2,800 visits being carried out in the past three years.

The FSP affiliate scheme was launched in January 2016 and 13 organisations were awarded affiliate status in June 2016. A further two organisations have achieved affiliate status during the period of the plan. FSP affiliates support the work of the Partnership through a wide range of activities for example, sharing news stories, running events, providing training or expertise and part sponsoring the child safety on farms calendar, to name but a few. A full list of the affiliates can be found in Annex 2.

The Partnership has also continued to enjoy significant political support. The DAERA and DfE Ministers have prioritised funding for the work of the partnership and supported farm safety messages during the two international farm safety weeks (2015 and 2016). Both Ministers also attended the launch of the FSP Affiliate scheme in July 2016. Support has also been evident from members of the DAERA and DfE Committees and local MLAs, MPs and MEPs have shared our farm safety messages through their social media.



RADAR (Risk Avoidance and Danger Awareness Resource) brings safety and life skills to 9 – 16 year olds through its life-sized interactive safety and life skills education centre based in Belfast



Facts and Figures

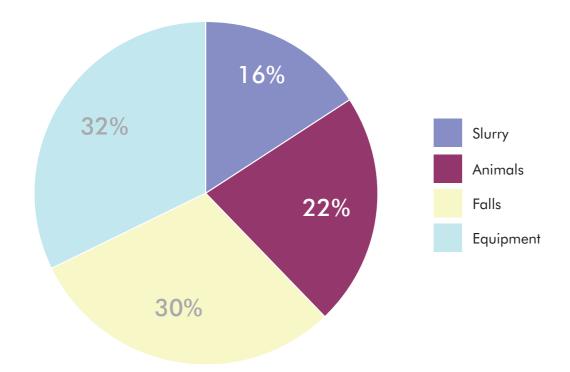
Farming remains a vital part of the Northern Ireland economy providing employment to nearly 47,700 people across 24,500 farms. 55% of farmers work their farms on a full-time basis, while the remainder seek employment outside the farm to supplement income.

Prior to the development of the first action plan the sector had a deteriorating safety record with 29 work-related fatalities between January 2009 and December 2012, with an average of 10 people dying every year.

In 2013 there were four deaths which was a significant improvement on the previous two years, however it is clear that continued effort is required to ensure a long term and sustainable reduction in fatal accidents related to agricultural activities.

Over the period of the second action plan (2014 – 2017) there have been 20 fatalities (7 in 2014, 6 in 2015 and 7 in 2016) Whilst this represents a 50% reduction in fatalities since the establishment of the FSP in 2012, there is clearly more work to be done to reduce these figures further.

Analysis of fatal incidents since January 2009 until 2016 has shown that fatal accident causation remains linked to four main issues namely, slurry (8), animals (11), falls (15), and equipment (16).



Non-fatal incidents

Additionally, new data obtained as part of a survey carried out on behalf of the FSP and published² in November 2015 has helped quantify non-fatal incidents as well as providing insight into the risk, practices and attitudes of people in the agriculture sector.

Key findings from a survey of over 4,000 farmers included:

- Based on the accident rate per farm, an estimated 1,276 farm accidents requiring medical attention occurred in Northern Ireland in the previous 12 months.
- Following an accident requiring professional medical attention 47% of the injured took no time off work, 35% undertook no farm work for between 1-30 days, 8% required 31-60 days off and 10% required over 60 days off.
- The main causes of non-fatal accidents requiring medical attention were: being hit / trampled by an animal (24%), a slip or trip at ground level (22%), a hand tool injury (10%) and a fall from height (10%).

- The five main farm safety hazards identified by respondents on their farms were: being hit or trampled by an animal (76%), contact with machinery (61%), slips or trips at ground level (56%), a fall from height (52%) and manual lifting which might go wrong (46%).
- The two main barriers to working safely identified by respondents were: cost of improving safety measures (cited for 70% of farm businesses) and time pressure of other farm work (cited for 53% of farm businesses).

These important findings can have a dramatic impact on individuals and the farm business and have been used to inform the contents of this new Action Plan and will help shape and target our actions.

Northern Ireland Farm Safety Partnership Survey 2015, https://www.hseni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-farm-safety-partnership-survey-2015



Aims and Objectives

It is the firm belief of the Farm Safety Partnership that by working together a sustainable reduction in injury rates and occupational ill health in the Northern Ireland farming industry is achievable.

The aim of this plan, continuing from previous work is "To change behaviours by ensuring that farmers, their families and their employees are capable, motivated, and able to work safely and thereby reducing accidents on farms".

- Capability relates to an individual's capacity to work safely in terms of knowledge and skills.
- Motivation, the processes that energize and direct safe behaviours are also critical to good decisionmaking and includes habits, emotional responses, appropriate societal expectations as well as analytical decision-making.
- Ability relates to the factors that lie outside the individual's control that make the behaviour possible or prompt it, for example having suitable equipment, infrastructure or controls.

The action plan is designed with a series of interventions, some new and some ongoing, developed to address one or more of these requirements.

Continuing on from progress made in the first and second action plans, the Partnership has identified four key areas of work below. Three are carried forward from the previous plan with the addition of a specific stream relating to children and young people. The aims and objectives remain broadly similar to those set previously but reflect changes in delivery of actions designed to achieve the aims and objectives of the Partnership.

Plan Objectives

Objective 1: To ensure that straightforward, appropriate information is produced in ways that are understandable, easily accessible and deemed to influence the farming community.

Objective 2: To ensure that information is effectively communicated through a wide range of channels with the aim that every person involved with farms and farming is made aware of the key risks and knows how to reduce/remove these risks.

Objective 3: To ensure that there is a clear understanding that accidents and work related ill health are avoidable, that there are positive benefits from the proper management of health and safety on farms and that there are negative consequences for poor health and safety management and practices.

Objective 4: To promote the widespread uptake of relevant health and safety training for farmers and farm families which improves awareness and encourages positive behavioural change.

Objective 5: To use research to better inform improvements and interventions which sustainably improve farm health and safety.

Objective 6: Maintain the progress made in relation to child safety on farms for children between the age of 6 and 12 by ensuring they receive age appropriate information on staying safe on the farm through talks, events and competitions.

Objective 7: That young people (12-20) are engaged through talks, events and competitions designed to raise awareness of farm safety-related issues and promote safe behaviour.

Objective 8: To ensure that, where possible, improved health and safety management and practices³ are implemented within the sector.

Objective 9: To ensure that poor practice is discouraged and penalised, where appropriate.

Objective 10: To reduce the impact of accidents and ill health on farm families through education and advice.

Key Targets

- A) That the average fatal accident rate, compared to the previous plan, is reduced by 20%.
- B) That the estimated number of farm accidents requiring medical attention (as measured by the FSP Farm Safety Survey) has fallen by 10% over the life of the plan.
- C) That at least 90% of farmers and farm families are aware of the FSP Campaigns (MB 2015 90%).
- D) That at least 85% were influenced to protect themselves from accidents (MB 2015 80%).
- E) That 9,000 people have completed farm safety-related training during the period of the action plan.
- F) That over 85% of farmers completing courses (physical and online) have indicated that they understand the risks presented and subsequently plan to change work and regularly review practices and behaviours.

Health and Safety Management and Practices includes hazard identification, risk assessment, risk elimination and control, safe systems and equipment and incident mitigation.



Action Plan

Info	Information & Promotion		
1.1	Further develop the farm safe Information and Promotion Programme through advertising, media, events and other	Create a sustainable approach to the use of advertising, media, promotions and events to maintain high recognition levels for farm safety or occupational health messages.	
communication channels.	communication channels.	Reach minimum 90% of identified target audience through multimedia channels.	
		 Issue media releases and articles to inform of relevant safety messages at key times of the year. 	
	Further develop digital media channels – explore possibilities of further organisations carrying clear link to HSENI 'Stay farm safe' website.		
	Publish farm safety messages via social networking channels, develop existing and new network opportunities to promote events and strategic messages at key times of the year.		
		Capitalise on existing and new "one-to-many" contact opportunities through continued promotion of farm safe messages through the annual programme of events in the farming calendar.	
	Publish and distribute through print and electronic means 10,000 farm safety or health guides.		
1.2 Expand the Spread the Message initiative to increase the coverage of farm safety through talks and events by increasing availability of speakers and the topic areas covered.	Train and equip an additional 10 ambassadors by March 2018.		
	farm safety through talks and events by increasing availability of speakers	 Expand the range of topics for which ambassador training is available in line with action plan priorities including Child Safety and Occupational Health. 	
		 Carry out a study of potential audience groups and their potential to influence change and approach them to provide opportunities to address their members. 	
		Deliver 200 talks and presentations by the end of the action plan.	

1.3	To signpost and promote existent Advice & Support Schemes to ensure that farmers are aware of the range of assistance available to help farmers to properly manage health and safety.	 By December 2017 identify key advice sources and publish them via the FSP website. Include pointers to relevant advisory services in published literature and press releases etc.
1.4 Ex	Expand the Affiliate Scheme to encourage more businesses and organisations to support the aims of the Farm Safety Partnership in Northern Ireland.	Continue the FSP Affiliate scheme with existent members.
		Promote and encourage the scheme with new members.
		 Award the affiliate who has been judged to have contributed the most to supporting the aims of the FSP.
		 Publish a report on the range of activities completed by Affiliate Members.
1.5	Continue to support and promote the Farm Safety Awards Scheme.	Over the life of the action plan arrange for an annual award to recognise excellence / good practice or innovation to encourage improvements in farm health and safety.
Farm Safe capitalize	Deliver a series of seasonally relevant Farm Safety Spotlight Weeks to	 Run 9 Farm Safety or Health Spotlight Weeks by the end of the action plan.
	capitalize on existing one-to-many contact opportunities.	Participate in an International Farm Safety Week by the end of the action plan.



Traii	Training & Research		
2.1	To deliver and further develop farmer and farm-users Health & Safety awareness through the roll out of the Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) H&S training.	 Through FFKS, 4,000 people to be trained over the life of this plan. Over 85% of farmers attending courses indicate that they are more aware of the risks presented and subsequently plan to change and review work practices and behaviours. This will be evidenced by (i) monitoring of training for FFKS and (ii) number of farmers completing the 'Making it Safer' online assessment. 	
2.2	To deliver and further develop farmer and farm-users Health & Safety awareness through the Business Development Groups (BDG) H&S training.	 Provide FSP ambassador training to BDG facilitators. Engage with 3,000 people over the life of this plan. All participants have H&S as a component part of their Farm Business Development Plan and that it would be reviewed annually as part of their overall plan review. 30% of participants who complete the BDG programme will gain a Level 3 Agricultural qualification (within which H&S is an integral component). 	
2.3	Conduct post-graduate research into farm safety, awareness and how to effectively change behaviours.	Over the life of the plan, 3 postgraduate (MSc or PhD) studies in areas such as technology, behavioural change and communications.	
2.4	Conduct and analyse surveys of agricultural businesses.	Carry out and analyse 2 repeat FSP Surveys (based on the 2015 survey) to monitor progress and identify interventions required during the life of the action plan.	
2.5	Along with partners, develop easily accessible online training to complement other training delivery channels on identified risk areas.	 Develop 3 online training modules which cover key aspects of safety or occupational health within the period of the plan. To encourage in excess of 1,000 people to have completed the online training modules within the period of the plan. 	

Child	Children and Young People		
3.1 Continue to deliver and further develop the Child Safety on Farms Programme.		Deliver 240 Primary School Farm Safety Presentations by March 2020.	
	Programme.	Attend 15 'Be Safe' or equivalent child safety events, delivering key farm safety messages by the end of the plan.	
		Run 3 Farm Safety Calendar Competitions and publish 3 farm safety calendars, one in each of the three years of the programme with appropriate partners.	
		Identify, train and provide resources to 3 partner organisations to deliver additional Farm Safety Awareness Training to school age children.	
3.2	Work with Young People to raise awareness of key aspects of agricultural health and safety for future farmers.	Continue with YFCU farm safety mentor scheme (60 talks provided during plan).	
		Expand and update the YFCU mentor scheme identifying additional delivery opportunities with partners and affiliates.	
		Include farm safety articles in YFCU Members magazine Rural Dispatch (3 issues per year).	
		Ensure 'Farm Safety Week' campaigns are highlighted on social media.	
		Create farm safety videos with dedicated YFCU farm safety mentors giving farm safety tips and circulate to YFCU clubs and other interested parties.	
3.3	Identify age specific skills based training for young farmers.	To make the Lantra tractor driving course for 13–15 year olds (or equivalent) available to those wishing to drive tractors on farms in NI.	
		Through YFCU, provide farm-applicable first aid training (5 courses).	
3.4	Through the Farm Safety Foundation continue to support initiatives to raise awareness of farm safety for children and young people.	Continued support of the following:	
		RADAR CAFRE Student H&S day	
		3) Safety Promotion at Balmoral Show	
		4) Farm Safety Week	
		5) Identify potential for other initiatives.	



Dev	Developing Behavioural Change		
4.1	To continue to promote and develop the Making it Safer risk assessment tool to allow farmers to risk assess their farms and identify simple solutions to manage risk.	To review and where necessary update the content of the online and paper based Make it safer tool over the life of the plan.	
		To encourage and promote the use (and reuse) of the tool resulting in an additional 4,000 completed assessments/reassessments.	
		To utilise anonymised data obtained from the use of the tool to identify areas for future advice and assistance.	
4.2	Provide tools to assist farms in improving risk management via online assistance packages.	Provide up to 500 farms in Northern Ireland with the NFU Mutual Risk Management Farm Safety Hub. This will be based on the risk presented, type of farming or other more hazardous activities undertaken.	
4.3	To continue to conduct a series of Advisory Inspections on the key SAFE message or targeting specific risks to farm businesses.	To deliver 2,400 farm advisory visits by HSENI staff to assist farmers in identifying significant risks and implementing appropriate controls by the end of the action plan.	
4.4	Develop, with the assistance of farmers, a suite of Quick and Simple guides demonstrating safe working practices.	Develop and publish 6 'quick and simple guides' tackling the perception that safety is expensive or time consuming, on key farm health and safety issues by the end of the action plan.	
4.5	Discourage repeat and serious failings by those who ignore basic safety standards by utilising existing, and identifying new, proportionate penalties.	Prosecute cases where there has been a blatant disregard for achievable and recognised minimum legal standards by farmers resulting in harm to others (family members, employees or members of the public).	
		Identify methods to deter those who are found repeatedly ignoring basic safety measures putting themselves and others at risk.	

4.6	Run an initiative to improve health and safety standards amongst Agricultural Contractors.	 HSENI along with NFU Mutual will design and conduct an 'Agricultural Contractors Initiative' – 2 year initiative to improve standards within the agricultural contractors sector including an initial advisory phase, followed by a programme of HSENI targeted inspections. Develop a checklist for farmers using Agricultural Contractors to understand responsibilities, improve safety standards and reduce incidents.
4.7	Reduce the impact of incidents and improve outcomes for people affected by farm accidents.	 Agree the content, format and pilot a 'Farm First-Aid Training Course' by March 2018. Promote and encourage uptake of First-Aid Training for farmers and their families. Promote the use of clear farm/property numbering in rural areas to assist emergency services locating incidents in rural areas. Signpost support services and counselling for those who have been involved in serious incidents.
4.8	To encourage improved management of Stress & Mental Health within the sector.	 Through information and promotion activities provide advice on stress management/mental health and signpost relevant services. Develop and pilot a stress and mental health training course for farm families and persons interacting with farmers by April 2018.



Implementation and Monitoring

The FSP Steering Group, made up of senior representatives from each of the partners, will continue to provide strategic leadership for the Partnership and four FSP Action Teams, monitor the implementation of the Farm Safety Action Plan, review the effectiveness of the Plan and make recommendations for future work.

Reporting to the Steering Group, the Action Teams will monitor the delivery of the actions within the four key areas, and continue to act as a conduit to ensure sharing of information and, where appropriate, resources and to co-ordinate activity.

The Action Teams will be made up of appropriately experienced staff from each of the partners, and where necessary other persons with relevant skills and expertise will be seconded into the team. These teams will also identify issues or opportunities around the delivery of the actions and produce plans to address issues and capitalise on opportunities.

Based on structures put in place to oversee the successful delivery of the previous action plan, the FSP Steering Group has modified the remit of the Action Teams to manage the new action plan, as detailed below.

Research & Data Gathering

There will be an ongoing need for research and data gathering in a range of areas to assist the Partnership to develop, implement and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and programmes. Research on specific areas of work or issues will be commissioned as required by the partnership based on need and available resources. This will be coordinated by HSENI with assistance from all partners under the oversight of the FSP Steering Group.

There will also be a need to repeat the Farm Safety Survey, which was run in 2015, during the period of the plan and in the final year of the action plan to assess the effectiveness of the interventions and identify future needs.







Appendix 1: Membership of the Farm Safety Partnership

The members of the Partnership at the time of the publication of this Action Plan are as follows:

Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI)

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU)

National Farmers' Union Mutual (NFUM)

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU)

Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association (NIAPA)

Appendix 2: Membership of the Farm Safety Partnership Affiliate Scheme⁴

The affiliate members of the Partnership at the time of the publication of this Action Plan are as follows:

ABP Group

AES UK & Ireland

ASDA

Autoline Insurance Group

Danske Bank

Glens of Antrim Potatoes

Girlguiding Ulster

IOSH (NI Branch)

Lakeland Dairies

Livestock & Meat Commission Northern Ireland

Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Northern Ireland Safety Group

Power NI

Rural Development Council NI

Ulster Bank

Ulster University - School of Nursing

⁴ Membership as of the 31/3/2017











