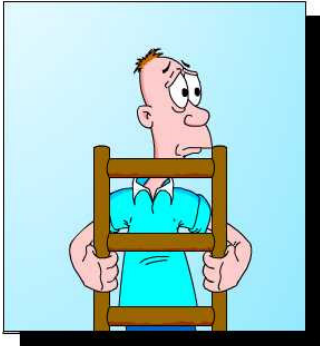


€1.5 million bid to fight farm accidents

More people died in agriculture last year than in any other sector with 18 people losing their lives on Irish farms. Those killed included a 4 year old child and 10 people over the age of 65. Already this year we have lost two people on farm accidents. One of these fatalities involved a 2 year old child in Co. Waterford. According to the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) an estimated 3,000 people are injured in the agriculture sector annually.



A 10 year review of farm deaths was recently carried out by Teagasc which highlighted that tractor and machinery accidents account for 50% of deaths. Being crushed, rolled-over or getting caught in power drives operated in stationary positions are the major causes. Livestock related injuries (13%), falls mainly from heights (13%) and slurry/water drowning (10%) are the other major causes of farm deaths. Children account for 20% of those killed on Irish farms, while in recent years fatalities to farmers over 65 years account for over 50% of persons killed on Irish farms. These

are sobering statistics. Above all they should motivate everyone in farming to put health and safety preventative measures in place.

In order to tackle the issue, a public awareness campaign to keep death off Irish farms in 2007 was launched this month by the Minister for Labour Affairs, Tony Killeen T.D., Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mary Coughlan T.D, and the Acting CEO of the Health and Safety Authority, Michael Henry.

The new fully integrated campaign will include a number of key features including:

- Sponsorship of the flagship agri TV show 'Ear to the Ground'
- A TV advertising campaign commissioned by the Health and Safety Authority
- National and local newspaper advertising
- Other elements of a fully integrated campaign including 48 sheet billboards, use of Mart TV

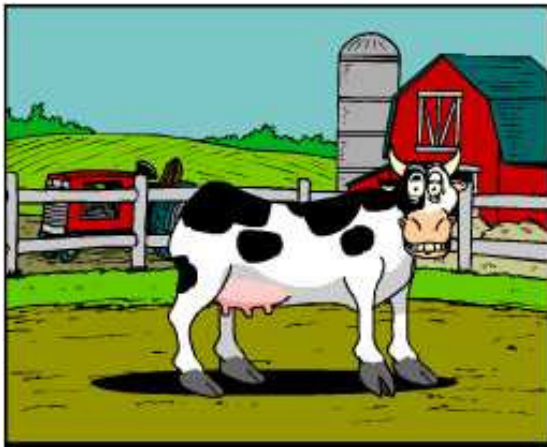
This major advertising campaign will run alongside a training programme for 20,000 farmers that will be rolled out over the next few months. The new approach will be evaluated during January/February at short half-day Health and Sa fety courses given by Teagasc. These will be provided to dairy or tillage farmers in the following counties: Cork (West), Clare, Donegal, Meath, Tipperary and Wexford. Following evaluation, courses will be offered, nationally, during 2006. Attendance at courses in January/February is open to all farmers and will be free to participants.



There is strong international evidence that participation in a short training course assists farmers to implement health and safety measures. In Denmark a 48% reduction in accident levels occurred when farmers attended a short half-day training course and carried-out a farm safety check. Surely if it works in Denmark it should also work in Ireland.

The campaign will support the new Agriculture Code of Practice, copies of which have been sent to every farmer in the country and will encourage farmers to make use of the Code to tackle injury and occupational ill health on farms. A farm safety DVD will also be available from the HSA. The cost of producing and distributing the pack as well as the public awareness campaign is €1.5m.

The aim of the new 'user friendly' "Code of Practice for the Prevention of Accidents and Occupational Ill Health in Agriculture" is to provide practical guidance to farmers,



farm family members, employees, service providers, advisers, trainers and persons with a role related to safety and health in agriculture on the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to help improve the level of safety and health in the agriculture sector. This code of practice is the result of a joint initiative between the Health and Safety Authority and the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee to the Health and Safety Authority.

The incentive of an insurance premium reduction is already available in the market place for both completion of a Safety Statement and attendance at a training course. It is likely that further initiatives like this will be developed in the future. Think safety and take action to safeguard everyone on farms.