

#SEEITCHANGEIT

Overview

The National Farmers Union (NFU) is launching a farm safety campaign at the NFU Conference on 20th February 2018. Unfortunately farming has a poor safety record when compared to other sectors of the economy. The NFU plays a leading role in farm safety activity along with members of the Farm Safety Partnership and together we are working to raise awareness and reduce the risk of harm faced by those in our industry.

Background

As part of the NFU's latest health and safety initiative, last October saw 75 farmers and delegates attend a joint event by the NFU in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), aiming to improve health and safety within the farming sector. The workshop 'Safe and Healthy Farming for All Ages' highlighted the importance of a proactive attitude towards minimising risk and included table discussion focused on ways farmers can take a more preventative approach to health and safety. NFU Vice President and Farm Safety Partnership chair Guy Smith opened the event, alongside HSE chairman Martin Temple.

Mr Smith said: "By far the most difficult part of my job as NFU Vice President is when the HSE notifies me of fatalities or injuries on farms. It is particularly disheartening that most of these accidents involve similar and reoccurring circumstances such as working in enclosed spaces with animals or on live machinery."

All industries involve an element of risk that must be managed, but at the moment we recognise the farming sector has a very poor safety record and we are doing all we can to address this.

"In most instances, it only takes a bit of thought or simple precaution to make safe what could be a fatal or life-changing situation. We need to adjust this culture as a matter of urgency, learn from each other and our past mistakes, and start preventing the risk from forming in the first place."

The key message for the campaign is 'See the risk and change it.'

This year at NFU Conference a workshop on health and safety is planned with the aim of highlighting that the safety record of agriculture can and should be improved. Chaired by NFU North East Regional Director Adam Bedford, attendees heard about how a real and sustained improvement can be achieved by encouraging all participants in the industry to put safety first; to focus on changing attitudes and behaviours and to challenge poor practice whenever it is seen.

How can you help?

There is nothing inevitable about farming's poor safety record. The causes of injury in the industry remain the same every year. Farm transport, livestock, contact with machinery and falls from height always feature as major causes of death and injury.

Accidents from these causes can be prevented by changes in attitudes and behaviours. A good example of how a simple change in behaviour can improve agriculture's safety record is to follow the Safe Stop procedure every time a driver leaves the cab of a farm vehicle. Every year farmers are run over by their own vehicle. These accidents can be stopped and Safe Stop is the way to do it – every time a driver leaves the cab it should be automatic to put the hand brake on, put the controls in neutral, turn the engine off and take the key out.

We would like the farming community to be aware of and share best practice and turn the tide against an acceptance of poor practice industry wide.

Help us to spread the campaign message by sharing our posts and using the hashtag: #SEEITCHANGEIT Make you own #SEEITCHANGEIT promise and promote on twitter tagging the @NFU_FarmSafety account into your tweet