



**Final Report**  
**Pre-start Farm Safety Induction Program**  
**for Entry Level Workers**

**24 June 2010**

**J Temperley**

## Introduction

In July 2008, the NSW Government announced Work Cover's Drought Recovery Package aiming to support rural communities as they recover from the effects of drought.

The Entry Level Farm Safety Program is part of the Assistance Package and is designed to facilitate the movement of inexperienced workers into the NSW agriculture industry.

The Program consists of two components:

1. A Pre-start Farm Safety Induction – a general farm safety induction program to be undertaken *before* starting work and receiving on-farm safety induction. This aims to provide workers with a basic overview and understanding of key hazards and risks commonly found on farms and how these hazards should be controlled.
2. An on-farm Safety Induction Guide – for farmers and farm managers to use to appropriately induct new workers on farms.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Identify the health, safety, workers compensation and injury management of experienced and inexperienced NSW farm workers.
- Refine Entry Level Farm Safety Program materials.
- Arrange and conduct pilots of the Entry Level Farm Safety Program materials across three agricultural regions in NSW with at least six groups of workers, totalling at least 50 people, and
- Incorporate feedback from pilot Entry Level Farm Safety Program materials into a final draft version of the Entry Level Farm Safety Program.

## Stage 1

### *Review of literature*

A review of available and relevant farm safety training materials, programs and standards was undertaken. This review identified needs in relation to generic health and safety, workers compensation and injury management information for workers and employees on NSW farms.

A search for farm safety induction resources in an Australian context using the terms "farm safety induction", "farm induction" and "farm OHS induction" was conducted to identify resources to guide the development of:

- A pre-start farm safety induction program, and
- On farm safety induction guide

Search engines used for the assessment were Google, Google Scholar and Medline. A total of 1,400 papers were identified for OHS induction, seven items for farm safety induction, and a number of documents citing the Farm Safety Induction resources developed by Farmsafe Australia and the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety.

These materials were developed as part of the Managing Farm Safety program, which aimed to deliver OHS training to farmers and farm managers. The materials aligned with the elements and

competencies described in the 1998 Rural Training Package, RUAG4021OHA – Establish and maintain the enterprise occupational health and safety program.

#### *Review framework and principles*

To review these documents in a systematic manner, a framework and program principles were developed for Farm Worker Safety Induction (based on the principles of safety induction developed by Safe Work Australia for the construction industry):

- Temperley, J B and Fragar, L J. 2009. *Farm Worker Safety Induction. Manual 1: Framework and Program Principles*. ACAHS, NSW.

The framework and program principles were then utilized to assess materials against current best practice approaches.

#### *Resources reviewed*

##### **a. Pre-start farm safety induction**

A farm worker safety induction Module was developed in association with the Managing Farm Safety program to deliver general farm safety induction for Australian farm workers.

This Module formed the Pre-start Farm Safety Induction Program and was modified to develop a workbook for use with employees and employers that complied with the content identified by the framework for General Farm Safety Induction.

- Temperley, J B and Fragar, L J. 2009. *General Safety Induction for Farm Workers in Australia – an introduction to farm health and safety*. ACAHS, NSW.

##### **b. On farm safety induction guide**

In 2008, the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety updated and developed a series of Rural Safety Induction Guides for indigenous and young (entry level) farm workers. These guides were part of the Farm Injury Prevention Project, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. These resources included:

- Rural worker safety induction - a practical guide for employers. A. Employer Guideline. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Rural worker safety induction - a practical guide for employers. B. Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Rural worker safety induction - a practical guide for employers. C. Extra for Cattle Handling Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Rural worker safety induction - a practical guide for employers. D. Indigenous Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Rural worker safety induction - a practical guide for employers. E. Extra for Horticulture Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Rural worker safety induction - a practical guide for employers. F. Contractor Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.

Assessment of these resources against the framework identified there is no reference to safe work method statements, with limited reference to safety signage.

## **Stages 2-4**

### Client review

Following the development / refinement of the resources by the Centre, resources were provided to WorkCover NSW for review and comment. Mutually agreed modifications were made to the materials with piloting commencing at a program organised by Narelle O'Brien, WorkCover NSW and held at the Riverina Wine Grape Growers Association, 121 Yambil St, Griffith, NSW on 30 November 2009.

### Conduct Pilots

Subsequently, an iterative process to refine the materials based on participant feedback from a series of pilots was used to further strengthen the validity of the resources.

Pilot programs were conducted in:

- Griffith x 2 (16 participants) - 30, 31 November, 2009
- Moree x 1 (13 participants) – 3 March 2010
- University of New England Grain x 1 (12 participants) – 30 March, 2010
- Young x 2 (5 participants) – 20, 21 April, 2010

In total, 46 participants were involved in the pilot program with the breakdown being 31 employees and 15 farmers/employers.

### Resource Development

A flyer promoting the Pre-Start Farm Safety Induction program has been developed and will be featured on the WorkCover NSW web site. This flyer will direct interested parties to the ACAHS web site where details of the program, including all resource materials will be available for download.

Based on feedback from all participants throughout the pilot sessions and in consultation with NSW WorkCover, existing resources have been revised and new versions developed (based on the existing pro-forma) for grains, dairy and sheep production.

A list of changes and modifications to these documents, made as part of the revision process, was provided to NSW WorkCover by the ACAHS. Approval has also been granted to WorkCover NSW enabling usage of the ACAHS logo in promotional activities associated with the program.

The full list of resources available is as follows:

- Farm Safety Induction - a practical guide for employers. Employer Guideline. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Farm Safety Induction - a practical guide for employers. Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Farm Safety Induction - a practical guide for employers. Extra for Cattle Handling. Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.

- Rural Safety Induction - a practical guide for employers. Indigenous Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Farm Safety Induction - a practical guide for employers. Extra for Horticulture. Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Farm Safety Induction - a practical guide for employers. Contractor Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Farm Safety Induction - a practical guide for employers. Sheep and Wool Production. Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Farm Safety Induction - a practical guide for employers. Grains Production. Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.
- Farm Safety Induction - a practical guide for employers. Dairy Production. Worker Discussion Guide. ACAHS, Moree, NSW.

The full range of resources developed, are appended to this report as a separate electronic file (Attachment 1).

#### Availability of Resources

Approval was been provided to WorkCover NSW to create a direct link on their web site to the AgHealth website where the resource materials can be downloaded. All resources have now been uploaded onto the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health website ([www.aghealth.org.au](http://www.aghealth.org.au)).

To enable tracking of resource distribution, individuals will register online on the web site allowing any future updates of resources to be notified to them by email.

#### Facilitator's recognition

The Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety's website incorporates information and instructions that allow potential employers and facilitators to obtain and download the Pre-Start Farm Safety Induction training resource. In agreement with WorkCover NSW, it has been resolved that facilitators should meet the following criteria based on self-assessment:

- Demonstrated knowledge of agricultural production systems
- Demonstrated knowledge of occupational health and safety principles
- Hold a Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment

#### Facilitator's guide

Once prospective facilitators have completed the self-assessment checklist, they will be able to download the Pre-Start Farm Safety Induction for Entry Level Workers - Facilitators Guide accompanying the Pre-Start Farm Safety induction for entry level workers (Attachment 2).

### Communication Plan

A communications plan (Attachment 3) has been developed to guide the dissemination of the Pre-Start Farm Safety Induction program. The communication plan will:

- promote the Pre-Start Safety Induction program to educate target audiences on the benefits of safety induction for young and inexperienced workers, and
- contribute to reducing the incidence, severity and impact of farm injury in young and inexperienced workers

Target audiences within the communications plan include - farmers, farm workers, farmer organisations/commodity groups and labour hire/backpacker organisations.

The Pre-Start Farm Safety Induction program is being promoted on the AgHealth and Farmsafe Australia websites and the June 2010 edition of Farm Safety Snippits (NSW Farmsafe).

### Program Launch & Dissemination

The ACAHS will work in partnership with WorkCover NSW to officially launch the initiative in early June at a date and time to be confirmed.

The ACAHS will also continue to promote and disseminate the resources in accordance with the communications plan, with a specific emphasis on rapid uptake in the next six month period.

As a component of the ACAHS quality assurance and evaluation systems, a brief review of the uptake of the resources based on website downloads, will be provided to WorkCover NSW after a six month period (data available mid-December 2010). This will also include feedback on the Facilitator's Guide.

### **Conclusion**

This iterative process has strengthened the existing resources and increased the breadth of coverage in specific commodity sectors. It will assist primary producers in enhancing their induction systems and processes.

The considerable interaction with industry representatives throughout this process to ensure that it meets the needs of producers, employers, labour hire companies and individuals utilising the Harvest Trail, will undoubtedly help to increase the uptake of these resources.