

Risk assessments made easy!

Starting a new series, **Oliver Dale** explains how assessments are made on site

HEALTH & SAFETY

No, this is not about paper. There are many very effective ways of assessing risk without reaching for a clipboard. Often the process can be brought to life through discussing risks with staff, identifying priorities and chatting those through in an informal, but organised way. We try to do this wherever staff feel most comfortable – places such as tearooms, mess huts or in workshop areas – wherever staff usually congregate for a chat.

Having already gained a basic understanding of your farm and of your own objectives, we are able to organise and lead these discussions on your behalf. We are often able to get staff to open up, to discuss their concerns and from there work with them to agree how to deal with those risks in a practical way that reduces the likelihood of an accident occurring, but also that does not interfere with their work routines or the productivity of the unit.

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This way staff feel involved, they are driving the discussion, agreeing what needs to be done and how to do it and then getting on with it, backed up by professional guidance and coaching. If there is a need to document the risk assessment, that's our job. We produce a draft, discuss it with staff and then circulate it. Critically when that document gets into circulation it is one that staff will have effectively produced themselves, they will understand it – it will be practical and usable. It will also have been reviewed and formatted by a competent, qualified professional and therefore be a



Oliver Dale of Safety Revolution

useful and important part of proving that you and your team were dealing with risk proactively and that your Health & Safety policy and associated documentation are in good order. Together this will provide a solid body of evidence to support you as the employer in demonstrating that you have discharged your duty of care to staff, contractors and visitors – hopefully delivering peace of mind!

Employers can benefit from collaborating with employees on Health & Safety solutions. Agriculture has one of the worst fatal accident and occupational ill health records of any major employment sector. Driven by recent statistics on fatalities which indicate an increase in farm related deaths, there's likely to be more pressure on those who still show a lack of willingness to engage with the risk reduction process. By taking a proactive approach to workplace Health & Safety, you, as an employer, are protecting your most valuable asset – and that is your employee.

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