

# Added Value of Networking

## Success Story

Success Story title *Addressing Health and Safety on the Farm*

Theme *Knowledge exchange*

NRN *Ireland* Coordinator *National Rural Network*

Partners *Agricultural Stakeholders*

Period *Summer 2011* Resources *€5,000*

Geo-location *Ireland*

Beneficiaries *NRN, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Health and Safety Authority, Farm Family, Agricultural Consultant*

### Background

The purpose of conducting the Case Study was to address the issue of farm health and safety which is a serious concern and an ongoing problem for the sector. Agriculture is one of the more dangerous occupations in Ireland and it has proven challenging to make improvements in this area with fatalities/serious injury among older people and young people on farms of particular concern. The Rural Development Programme channels significant funding to family farms and has indirectly impacted on safety through various programmes/measures.

### Main activities

The primary action was to undertake a Case Study of a family farm (involving a farm visit) which had undertaken a series of improvements with a specific focus on health and safety in conjunction with developing the farm buildings and infrastructure. As part of the process, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) (the body with responsibility for health and safety in the workplace) were consulted for their perspective on the issues at farm level and their suggestions for changes which could enhance farm safety. Specific recommendations were made which could lead to improved safety at farm level and reduce the number of injuries and fatalities.

### Main results/benefits

The main outcomes from the report were to develop a series of recommendations which could be implemented to improve farm safety. The Case Study also highlighted how measures under the RDP had directly and indirectly contributed to improving farm safety. In doing so, it demonstrated how possible measures under future programmes could place an even greater focus on health and safety.

The completed Case Study was published on the NRN website. However, it was recognized that health and safety on the farm was so important that it merited wider circulation. The NRN undertook a media and publicity campaign to promote the recommendations contained in the Case Study and to generate discussion on how health and safety on the farm could be improved. The author was interviewed by a number of regional radio stations and the recommendations were covered in both national and regional newspapers.





#### Contribution of the NSU

The NRN identified the issue as being worthy of research and developed the Case Study proposal. The NRN engaged an agricultural consultant with expertise in this area to research and complete the Case Study report. The NRN directed the consultant and edited the final report in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The NRN undertook the media and publicity surrounding the publication of the Case Study. The Case Study is published on the NRN website.

#### Contribution of the partners

The agricultural consultant undertook the field research for the Case Study and in doing so he selected the farm family for participation and also engaged with the Health and Safety Authority (statutory responsibility for health and safety in the workplace). The Health and Safety Authority provided their insight on safety on the farm from their perspective of inspection visits. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine provided guidance on the most appropriate recommendations arising from the Case Study. In addition, the Department circulated the Case Study to their key divisions and personnel.

#### Success factors

This Case Study was more than an academic exercise documenting measures taken on a farm to improve health and safety. The Case Study used the example of a real farm situation to highlight changes that should be made at policy and regulation level to improve overall health and safety on Irish farms. The issue is of concern to all agri-stakeholders (including: farming organisations; Teagasc; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; & Health and Safety Authority) and therefore, there was a willingness to hear any new recommendations/suggestions which could reduce the level of injuries and fatalities on Irish farms. In order to gain exposure for the recommendations, it was important to place them in the public domain (regionally and nationally).

However, the implementation of the recommendations is '*work in progress*', no changes have been made to date, and it is necessary to continue to submit the recommendations to all those involved in improving farm health and safety.

Overall, it proved worthwhile and beneficial to undertake a Case Study on an issue of concern to all agri-stakeholders.

#### Additional information

The Case Study is available for download on [http://www.nrn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/case\\_study\\_farm\\_safety.pdf](http://www.nrn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/case_study_farm_safety.pdf).

