



RAS
***Submission regarding
the New Zealand
Workplace Health and
Safety System***



1. Introduction

The Royal Agricultural Society, which was established in 1924 and is one of the few organisations in New Zealand with a “Royal” charter, acts as an umbrella organisation for 97 A&P Associations and over 65 Breed and Kindred Societies throughout New Zealand.

The Royal Agricultural Society of New Zealand (RAS) promotes the development of agricultural, pastoral, horticultural, stock-raising and forestry resources in New Zealand. Historically, it is an organisation that has paved the way for initiative and forward thinking in the rural sector, playing an active part in the formation of laws relating to agriculture.

The RAS is a volunteer based organisation, with an original base of 97 member Agricultural and Pastoral Association (A&P) members as well as 65 Breed and Kindred Societies culminating in over a 30,000 plus membership. Each A&P undertakes various activities such as agricultural and livestock competitions, whereby the public are present on grounds under the control of (though not necessarily owned or leased by) the Association. The RAS therefore has employees; volunteers; public safety and the interests of the farming sector to consider in relation to the consultation document.

2. Consultation Document

This submission has been structured in line with the consultation document. Our main comments on the consultation document follow.

1.1. Regulatory Issues

- Many RAS and A&P volunteers are retired, without a strong understanding of the complex health and safety system described in the consultation document. They are not always people who will readily understand the concepts they find themselves responsible for. Regulations and guidelines need to be clear and understandable for ordinary New Zealanders.
- Regulations need to recognise that some organisations/sectors have specific needs and hazards (such as livestock which can be unpredictable). A one size fits all approach to legislation is not appropriate in a country where so many farmers operate small businesses.
- The RAS welcomes greater clarity from the regulators in terms of what they consider best practice in an A&P environment. A small number of incidents have occurred on A&P grounds and the RAS would appreciate guidance from the regulator on issues such as hazard management.

1.2. New Zealand’s Changing Workforce and Work Arrangements

- Both the farming sector, and in turn the volunteer nature of the RAS, would be negatively impacted by maximum hours legislation if introduced. The nature of agricultural employment is seasonal and therefore standard hours of work each week is unlikely to be realistic (or applied in family operated small businesses). Better fatigue management guidance would be more appropriate.



1.3. Worker Participation and Engagement

- The RAS would welcome an opportunity to discuss how participation of workers can be addressed within a farming environment.
- We acknowledge that as in many environments, within Agriculture literacy and language can interfere with comprehension and participation.

1.4. Capacity and Capability

- Unfortunately our volunteers are often frightened by the legislative compliance required of them, making it difficult to retain their involvement. Suitable educational offerings for our volunteer base would assist in reducing their concerns and enable improved compliance from each A&P.