

A safe, healthy environment for primary industries

Five RDCs currently collaborate to deliver the Primary Industries Health and Safety Partnership (PIHSP), with the aim of creating healthy, safe and productive working lives in primary industries.

ISSUE

All is not well on the farm, on the water and among the trees: more workplace deaths are recorded each year in the Australian agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector than any other. While the number of incidents has declined, primary industries remains the most dangerous sector in which to work; in 2015 56 workers died, almost 30 per cent of worker fatalities in Australian industry.

SOLUTION

PIHSP is a collaborative initiative driven by the Cotton, Grains, and Rural Industries RDCs, as well as the Australian Meat Processor Corporation and Meat and Livestock Australia. The collaboration was established to improve understanding about the physical and mental health of primary producers, their families, staff and contractors, and promote safe environments and working practices.

The project shares information with business owners, managers and employees in primary production, as well as health professionals and researchers specialising in rural health and safety.

RESULTS

Recent efforts by PIHSP have focussed on translating research outcomes into actions. This has included building awareness of key safety risks, the development of tools and resources to promote improved Work Health and Safety planning by primary producers, and the development and delivery of safety training.

Clearly there is still work to be done, but producers are noticing the behavioural changes driving improvements on-farm. Cotton grower Jonathan Mengel says awareness of the risks of injury and fatality are now high at his property at Nangwee, near Dalby in the Darling Downs region of Queensland. Jonathan has introduced several measures to ensure employee safety and wellbeing, including an induction program for all staff, and a daily group "smoko" to discuss the specific risks in the paddocks they will pick to address that day.

“Focusing on practical steps that farmers can take to improve safety will not only help minimise the number of further tragic deaths and injuries, but lead to better productivity and improved returns for the farm business.”

Primary Industries Health and Safety Partnership (PIHSP)
Former Advisory Committee chairman, Gordon Gregory

Vibrant Communities

New skills and changed practices deliver better jobs
and boost regional capacity

