

VACC

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January 27, 2004

Ms. K. Murray
Executive Officer
Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee
8 / 35 Spring Street
MELBOURNE. VIC. 3000



Dear Kristen,

INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSE OF INJURIES AND FATALITIES ON VICTORIAN FARMS

At the public hearing of the Rural and Regional Services Development Committee, held on January 20, I undertook to provide some additional information.

Please regard this reply as a supplementary submission to the initial VACC written submission.

I have answered below a series of questions, which were asked, but in the available time, VACC did not answer on January 20.

I have also arranged for additional copies of the VACC HAZCheck Management System to be delivered to you for distribution to Committee Members.

The role of the HAZCheck Management System, levels of participation and ways, if any, this system could be improved?

The VACC HAZCheck Management System should be used universally by farm machinery dealers, farmers and WorkSafe as an assessment tool. It is a particularly useful tool for field use, farmers could assess their own risk using HAZCheck. It is evident that farmers need the support of a well documented system, like HAZCheck.

VACC recommends that the HAZCheck system be adopted as a national standard and that it should also attract Government support and funding in order to establish one system for on-farm and off-farm agricultural machinery OH&S risk assessments.

HAZCheck is already being used widely in Victoria and has been introduced into New South Wales and Queensland and accepted as a national standard.

HAZCheck was developed by the Farm Machinery Dealers and VACC, over a ten year period. It is currently operating in its third edition and will be continuously upgraded and improved.

How could industry and government more effectively support the work being undertaken by the Farm Safety Training Centre, Ballarat?

VACC recommends that the Government could more effectively support the Farm Safety Training Centre in Ballarat by establishing consultation and co-ordination between it, Rural Safety Centres, WorkSafe, and with the Farm Machinery Dealers Association.

We believe that a greater awareness among farmers is required before the next level of improvement in farm safety will occur. Therefore, a co-ordinated approach is highly recommended and VACC would appreciate establishment of a formal Farm Safety Co-ordination body.

How could enforcement activity be more effectively targeted to increase compliance with ROP's laws?

All ROP Laws should be applied consistently to all eligible vehicles, on all farms.

At this time, it is not known how many tractors manufactured prior to 1981 have not been fitted with an ROP. There are far too numerous examples of non-compliant ROP's, home-made or poorly engineered, which do not effectively protect the operator.

VACC recommends that WorkSafe be provided with extra resources to inspect and audit fitment of ROP's to tractors.

At this time, we are unaware of any prosecutions or fines being applied for failure to fit ROP's.

Members also advise that there are numerous second hand tractor imports that do not comply with the requirement to fit ROP's. It is our view that much more can be done in enforcement and compliance, and through an awareness campaign which could encourage tractor owners to assess, fit and comply with the ROP's legislation.

The importance of hazard and risk management systems in reducing death and injury associated with ATV use and the role of engineering or design in accidents involving ATV's.

VACC is aware that the Victorian Coronor is currently inquiring into four fatalities on farms, involving All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's).

We are awaiting the Coronor's report and would prefer to make further comments to the Committee once that report has been made public.

As we said in our initial submission to the Committee, any solution that is suggested for ATV's must be practical.

It is our view one measure that can be taken with ATV's immediately is to encourage and/or regulate that appropriate protective helmets be worn at all times, by ATV riders.

The use of advertising and promotional campaigns to improve farm safety and how this could be made more effective?

VACC recommends to the Committee that advertising and promotional campaigns can improve farm safety if they delivery a single and easily understood message.

To achieve this objective, we believe there must be co-ordination by Government, industry and farm representatives. We are attracted to the method used by the Transport Accident Commission to promote road safety.

In order to achieve this single message, a far greater level of consultation would be required and agreement on the content of the message should be achieved. There is a need for a consistently delivered farm safety message, which can, over time, change attitude and behaviours in order to reduce farm injuries and fatalities.

How could the VACC be supported in its current activities to reduce preventable death and injury in the agriculture industry?

VACC recommends that the HAZCheck system be promoted, financially supported and endorsed by the Victorian Government. It should become the recognised system for assessment of farm machinery risk management. Therefore, HAZCheck should be incorporated into all government rural safety programmes and also included in farm safety training curriculum.

As suggested at the public hearing on January 20, 2004, VACC invites the committee to visit farm machinery dealerships and experience first hand exactly how VACC Farm Machinery Dealer Members contribute towards safe use of farm machinery. Included in such an inspection would be a full demonstration of the HAZCheck Management System.

Should you or the Committee Members have any further questions regarding this supplementary submission, please do not hesitate to call.

VACC Farm Machinery Dealers are keen to assist the Committee in any way possible.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Russell', with a long, wavy horizontal line extending to the right.

DAVID RUSSELL
SENIOR MANAGER
GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS