

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Occupational Health and Safety Policy Committee Meeting

Minutes of meeting held September 30, 2009
Neatby Building, Ottawa, Ontario

Attendees:

Employee Representatives

Glenn Miller, Agriculture Union, PSAC
Fabian Murphy, Agriculture Union, PSAC
Darrell-Lee McKenzie, Agriculture Union, PSAC
Michelle Coe, Agriculture Union, PSAC
Gaston Mercier, PIPSC
Delmar Holmstrom, PIPSC

Management Representatives

Chair: Denis Petitclerc, Associate Director General, Science Centres Directorate, Research Branch
Denna Dougan, Assistant Director, Integrated Services, Assets Management & Capital Planning, CMB
Sherman Nelson, Manager, Land Management, AESB
Lynden Hillier, DG Assets Management & Capital Planning, CMB
Laurie Hunter, A/DG Performance Excellence, HRB

Technical Advisors

Bob Neilson, A/Head, Occupational Health & Safety, HRB
Marie-Josée Poirier, HR Consultant, HRB
Christine Martel, Administrative Assistant, HRB
Elaine Massie, Service Officer and Technical Advisor, Agriculture Union, PSAC

Guests:

Nathalie Ritchot, Departmental Laboratory Safety Advisor, Science Centres Directorate, Research Branch
Manon Proulx, Research Manager, Crops and Livestock Research Centre - Charlottetown
Christian Toupin, Research Manager, Food Research and Development Centre - Saint-Hyacinthe

Regrets:

Jim McKendry, Director, Integrated Services, Assets Management & Capital Planning, CMB
Gilles Saindon, DG Science Centres Directorate, Research Branch
Jan Salsberg, A/Director, National Program & Strategic Information, HRB

1. Additions to agenda and approval of minutes from the previous meeting

- New items were added to the agenda:
 1. Changes with Health Canada's services
 2. Regional Coordinators – covering training in small centres
 3. Add: Potable Water as Standing agenda item (updates as required; yearly report)
- Corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting
 1. Non-Employees working at AAFC – change sentence

2. Business arising from the minutes

First Aid

- Bob has an inventory of the current Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) owned at our sites.
- A discussion was held about what the next steps are regarding whether we want a program or not and what the budget costs could be.
- The Committee recommended that we develop a program (including guidelines and training) to go to the DM for approval. It would recommend that the program be put into place for all those areas that currently have AEDs. Those sites that want to purchase some in the future would also have to follow this program. Additional information provided to DM would also include budget information regarding the overall costs associated with purchasing new equipment based on an estimated count of AEDs needed (gathered by the Regional Coordinators).

Workplace Inspection Program (WIP) (Agenda Item #3)

- A discussion was held about adjusting the checklist to include visible signs of damage to a vehicle, rollover protection for tractors, as well as columns at the end for Yes, No and Not Applicable (N/A).

OHS Orientation

- Denna confirmed that anyone who has taken the Defensive Driving training can drive a fleet vehicle even though they are not an AAFC employee (such as consultants, students, etc.)
- A discussion was held about the effectiveness of the Defensive Driving training and how managers/supervisors should be involved in verification and signing off on whether employees should be allowed to drive fleet vehicles based on some sort of ride along.
- The Committee recommended that a process be created for assessing the effectiveness of the Defensive Driving training.
- The Committee recommended that the OHS training that is part of the Orientation be done by a qualified OHS representative (such as Regional Coordinator or Employee/Manager Workplace Committee member).
- A discussion was held about including the OHS Orientation in the Core Learning – First Day at Work Program and the possibility of including the training matrix into the training courses list. Also, that supervisors should have some type of checklist summarizing everything that needs to be completed as part of the orientation.

- The Committee recommended that the Program be in place by spring and should include a presentation deck and having some material on the website.

Core Learning Program (CLP)

- Bob updated the Committee telling them that the Core Learning Program was working on updating the learning maps.

Website (*Agenda Item #3*)

- Christine gave an update to the Committee regarding the status of the update. Informed them that parts of it will be done in stages. Informed them that Phase I should be posted online by the end of October.
- The Committee agreed that most of the documents posted would be in AgriDOC format to allow for easier updates to working documents. Also agreement was made that the Committee meeting minutes should be posted in PDF format with signatures.

Workplace Violence Prevention

- Bob distributed documents regarding the Workplace Violence Prevention Implementation Plan and a working draft document for Policy / Program development.
- The Policy Committee recommended that consultation with local Workplace Committees be done to get examples of Workplace Violence.
- Bob recommends a standard for a training program be put into place as well.
- Bob informed the Committee that Security has asked to be a part of the working group.

Ergonomics

- Discussions were held about looking at a training program including basic training (such as online tools) and the need for a contract provider now that Health Canada is no longer providing this service and considering that currently this is only available through accommodations.
- The Committee recommended reviewing training programs with our employees and to keep situations such as moving and the design of new workspaces when reviewing the program.
- A discussion was held about the search for a service provider (to be done regionally) and the possibility of training certain people (employees) but that the second option may have problems when dealing with a lab environment vs an office environment due to the detailed setting.
- Bob suggested that we need a starting point for the program and recommended that a teleconference call to review some of the documents that were distributed at the last meeting.

Non-Employees working at AAFC

- No issues to report at this time.

H1N1 & Business Continuity Plan (*Agenda Item #10*)

- Laurie updated the Policy Committee with regards to the latest situation on the H1N1 flu virus including the roles and responsibilities of the 4 branches who are mainly involved (CMB, MISB, HRB and CCB) and in regards to the communications package that is about to be released. She informed the Committee that the single point of contact for all HR Issues on H1N1 will be Lorraine Voisine.
- Laurie also mentioned that HRB is developing a Manager's Guide on HR Issues and is consulting CMB, MISB and CCB. The Policy Committee asked to be involved in the review of this guide particularly with the union's concerns regarding the employer's requirement to have employees disclose their medical information. The Union reminded the Employer that employees were not required to disclose any personal medical information.
- Lynden updated Policy Committee on the BCP/EM situation and readiness. He informed the Committee that the department has been assessed in all but 2 areas: Table Top Exercise (which now has a plan currently in place to be done in the next few weeks) and Critical Services for the period of time from 48 hours to 1 week (services including buildings/staff, communications, finance and HR).
- Lynden also informed the Committee that Assets was planning on buying hand sanitizers for public areas (such as lobbies) in our buildings where there is no access to soap and water.
- Discussions were held regarding cleaning contracts and distribution of posters. Both items are to be reviewed to get more information and conclusions on protocols.
- Discussions were also held with regards to Travel guidelines and concerns with regards to unnecessarily filling doctor's offices or clinics by having our employees needing medical certificates.
- Laurie also informed the Policy Committee that HRB is the lead with regards to Flu Clinics and that they are currently working on messages but they are facing challenges because of recent provincial and federal information.

OHS Training (*Agenda Item #4*)

- Marie-Josée provided the Policy Committee with a verbal updated on OHS training and that she would provide the Committee with mid year reports at the next meeting.
- Bob updated the Committee regarding the training gap in the NCR. Currently there are training courses scheduled 3 days a week from now through to December. Also, HRB is looking to finalize the funding issue for the 2nd Regional Coordinator in the NCR.
- Questions were raised regarding how tracking was being done. Bob informed the Committee that quarterly reports are now being done with a full list of names. The list is being shared with the Regional Coordinators so that they are able to track employees who haven't taken the training courses.

Hazard Prevention Program

- The Policy Committee recommended putting the Respiratory Program up on the website as an information piece once approved by the Committee.
- Bob recommended looking into a Train the Trainer type program for Respiratory Fit Testing now that Health Canada is no longer providing this service.
- Comments by the committee were given including corrections to dates in the document and that a note be made to the fact that this is not recommended for the H1N1 situation.

Chemical Spill Response

- The Policy Committee has approved the document and decided that this should live under the “Programs” section on the website.

Potable Water

- Lynden told the Policy Committee that Rob May thinks that the spring would be the best time to deliver the annual report to the Committee. Brief updates of any Hot Spots would be made at all other quarterly meetings.
- The Committee asked that the reports be done in a consistent format to meet the required information that needs to be reported on.

Internal Complaint Resolution Process

- Bob confirmed with the Policy Committee that this would be posted on the new OHS website.

Fume Hood Testing (*Agenda Item #6*)

- No new developments to report to the Policy Committee.

Use of personal listening device

- The Policy Committee approved the latest update by Bob. Christine to post on the website.

Budget

- The Policy Committee suggested adding an additional section to track a lump some total of hours spent on all OHS activities including teleconferences, working groups, etc.

Work Refusals/Emergency Response Measures (*Agenda Item #7*)

A. Work Refusals

- Additions / corrections were requested to the Work Refusal Process Flow Chart, in particular a definition of “danger”.

B. Emergency Response Measures

- A discussion was held about making the Emergency Response Measures package a top priority (including protocols, procedures, training decks and communication piece to all staff).
- A discussion was held about identifying the need of Fire Drill procedures. A discussion was also held about training of fire wardens and of all employees on how to use a fire extinguisher. A suggestion was made to have Fire Alarms as a standing agenda item on the local OHS committees' agendas.
- A discussion was held about the communication issues with local committees and the Policy Committee. There is a lack of follow up documentation such as plans not being signed off, which is all open for inspection. There is a need to communicate what exactly needs to be reported on (create a checklist) and figure out a way to monitor better (such as when new programs go through the senior management stream that they are trickled down to the management co-chair on the local workplace committee).
- A discussion was held about possibly creating a NOHS email account. Due to certain administrative problems with such a website, the decision was made to leave communication process as status quo and hope that the new website will help with certain communication problems.

Roll-Over Protection (ROP)

- Regional Coordinators to get an inventory of those machines that do not have ROPs. Then guidelines can be created for those machines and plans can be made to flag problem areas regarding purchasing of equipment in the future.

Communication needs (Agenda Item #9)

- Fire Prevention Week message done again this year and to be posted through News@Work. Suggestions made that next year more could be done once the program is in place.
- Bob still working on setting up the shared drive for the Committee.

HRSDC Reports & Directions on Assurance of Voluntary Compliance (AVCs) (Agenda Item #8)

- Nothing new to report to the Policy Committee.

Communication plan

- Issue of *AgriCulture* to be released in October.

Operational Safety Programs (OSPs) on the Website

- Jeff Bryant is revising the OSPS into Hazard Information Sheets. It will go through the Policy Committee and then be posted on the website.

National OHS Training Programs (Agenda Item #4)

- Bob informed the committee that he monitors the evaluation forms and the reports show that everything is staying at the same percentage.

- A decision was made to review course OHS 303 at the next meeting. Documents to be sent out ahead of time for individual review prior to and then course material will be discussed as an entire group during the meeting.

Lab Safety Program (Agenda Item #6)

A. Biosafety & Biosecurity

- Denis informed the Policy Committee that the new bill (C11) came into effect in July. Biological Safety Officers and Biological Containment Officers and the creation of Local Biosafety and Biosecurity and Local Containment and Biosecurity Committees is in place where needed within Research Branch and that the expert committee is very active and has developed Guidelines consistent with existing standards and legislation, including the *Human Pathogen and Toxin Act (bill C-11)* recently passed by Parliament. The next steps are to share the guidelines with the Research Managers. There are plans to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and working procedures. A communication strategy is being developed to officially release guidelines at the DG level. They are also looking at a training plan and that they did participate in a Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) training evaluation.
- Denis announced that there will be a face to face meeting in Saint Hyacinthe on November 18-19 of the National Containment, Biosafety, and Biosecurity Committee and all Biological Safety Officers and Biological Containment Officers.
- Looking at creating its own website like the Lab Safety Program that would be linked on the OHS Website.
- A discussion was held about the relationship between the Biosafety Officers and the Policy Committee. As Denis is a part of both groups, he will report to the Policy Committee on any activities done by the Containment, Biosafety and Biosecurity Committee (CBBC).
- Glenn was asking for link to be made between the Policy Committee and CBBC by having the co-chairs sign off as a “record of consultation” to have a formal link between both groups. This should also take place at the local level to insure collaboration.
-

B. Lab Safety Program

- Nathalie updated the Policy Committee of the status of the Guidelines and Implementation Plan stating that ongoing changes have been made. That training is a key part of the Implementation Plan and that they have asked the Research Managers to identify 1 person to be trained on Lab Safety for Train the Trainer in March (possibly earlier).
- A discussion was held about CISPRO, CHEMWATCH and CCINFO updates.

C. Radiation Safety Program

- Denis will share the annual status report in the spring.

D. Other

- Manon Proulx gave an update regarding the Lab Safety Coordinator situation regarding addendums to Work Descriptions. Currently in consultation with Classification.

- A discussion took place about concerns regarding the statement of qualifications and the model work descriptions being used at ECORC to staff a position on laboratory safety

Workplace OHS Committees (*Agenda Item #5*)

- Distributed an example of a committee report that could be used as a tool.
- A discussion took place about options for this tool.
- For now, manual reporting is being done until the PeopleSoft module is up and running.
- A demo on the PeopleSoft module will be done at the next meeting.

Update to the Departmental Management Committee (DMC)

- Christine to forward the latest OHS Annual Update deck that was presented at DMC in June to the Policy Committee.

Implementation Plan (*Agenda Item #3*)

- The Policy Committee reviewed the current Implementation Plan.
- They looked at the next 3 priorities being:
 1. Emergency Evacuation Plans,
 2. OHS Orientation
 3. JSA – OSPs
- That Phase I of the JSA would be completed this fiscal year and that a list of hazard identification be done by risk.
- That the Workplace Inspection Program is ready to go
- That focus be put on the Emergency Evacuation Plan to get that out and done.
- That part of the OHS Orientation is ready. That an outline be ready for the next meeting.
- That they will review more of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program next meeting.
- That the Lab Safety Program is just about ready to go.
- That the website is just about ready.
- That they would start reviewing the Ergonomics documents.

10. New Business

A. Health Canada

- The Policy Committee realizes that there is now a challenge to close the gaps left by Health Canada no longer performing Ergonomic Assessments and Investigations.
- Issues raised include the money required for contract services (who is going to pay for these services now) and a requirement for contingency plans (at each site).
- Need to develop a communication piece to flag this to managers and local workplace OHS committees.

B. Regional Coordinators

- Concerns were raised regarding training responsibilities done by Regional Coordinators in smaller workplaces particularly in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It was clarified that we are responsible for training all AAFC employees including those from Farm Income Programs Directorate (FIPD) in Farm Financial Programs Branch (FFPB) but that we are not responsible for the portfolios such as the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC), the Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Farm Product Council of Canada (FPCC).
- Any continued concerns should be brought to the attention of the Regional Coordinator or to Bob

Approved Documents

The following is a list of all the documents that are to be signed and approved following the September OHS Policy Committee meeting:

1. Updated minutes from the February and June meeting as per changes recommended at this meeting.
2. Terms of Reference (once updates have been made).

Next Meeting

- December 16 - 17, 2009 in Ottawa.
- Talks were also had about having 1 meeting per year in a different location.