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BASISnews

Promoting Professional Standards

Spring 2010

Store inspection streamlined

A more consistent approach to the annual BASIS pesticide store inspection along with a faster turnaround of results is promised from the introduction of PDA technology.

"PDAs or Personal Digital Assistants have been around for 15 years or so," says BASIS Logistics Manager Lindsay Smith. "We first looked at the technology around eight years ago but the screens were poor and the equipment often unreliable," she comments.

But technology doesn't stand still and PDAs have moved on. They are now well proven so about 12 months ago the decision was taken to develop specific software for the BASIS store audit.

"We have worked with software developers Muddy Boots who have plenty

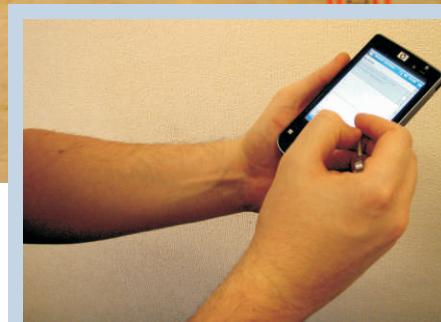


of experience of the agriculture/ agrochemical sector," explains Lindsay.

Senior staff from distributors have contributed to the development along with Lindsay's BASIS colleagues Rita Raisin and Karen Slatcher. BASIS assessors Greg Dixon and Tony Bates have also been closely involved in trialing the new software.

The purpose of the annual inspection is to ensure that pesticide stores are operated safely and present minimal risk to people and the environment. The BASIS store certificate is awarded to stores which successfully pass the inspection. It is recognised by the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency, Local Authorities, the Chemicals Regulation Directorate and the Fire Authorities.

"BASIS, however, is not an enforcement agency we are there to help," says Lindsay. "Our assessors are looking to spot issues and raise them to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice. In the past with the old paper-based system it could take two to three weeks to turnaround



PDAs are being introduced to speed up inspection and increase consistency.







the data, now it can be done within days with the report being issued to distributors much faster than under the old system."

With everything computerised BASIS will also be able to produce trend reports and, for organisations with multiple sites, year end reports. "We can see these being particularly helpful in negotiating things like insurance premiums."

Consistency of inspection across the country has always been important. The PDA technology will increase consistency still further. "To make the system computer friendly we have revisited the questions and tightened them up removing areas that might have been open to interpretation."

The new system was introduced at the start of the year.

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Moving Forward

New premises for BASIS

BASIS completed its move into premises more suited to its needs in early February. The newly refurbished offices are in St Monica's House Business Centre in Ashbourne and provide almost twice as much space as the old premises.

"BASIS has always prided itself on keeping costs to a minimum so let me emphasise straight away that there has been no change in that philosophy," says Managing Director Rob Simpson.

"The move has been carefully costed and



Sarah Thomas, Amanda Capsey and Rita Raisin get packing

represents good value for money," he adds.

Anyone who visited the BASIS offices in recent years could not fail to have noticed that the organisation has simply outgrown the old building. The office space was spread over three floors and there was a lack of storage.

"The new building will provide a much better working environment for our staff and help them do their jobs more efficiently," adds Rob. "We will also now have access to a good sized meeting room which we anticipate will bring cost savings on meeting room hire. Another benefit for visitors will be that we now have somewhere to park."

The new address is:

BASIS (Registration) Ltd
St Monica's House Business Centre
(37-39) Windmill Lane
Ashbourne
Derbyshire DE6 1EY

Telephone numbers and email addresses remain the same.



The new offices are located in the re-developed St Monica's house on the outskirts of Ashbourne. This photo, taken during January's snow, would make a lovely Christmas card – perhaps another saving from the move!

An interesting history

Located on the Northern edge of the town, St Monica's was built in 1911 by Mr and Mrs Peveril Turnbull who presented to the *Waifs and Strays' Society* in memory of their two deceased daughters, Monica and Dorothea.

It was officially opened on 9 August 1911, by The Dean of Lichfield.

The first two children arrived on September 27 and it was filled to its capacity of twenty soon after.

The home closed after the war and later became an independent preparatory school. It has recently been re-developed and refurbished as a Business Centre.

FQAs take note FACTS

If you are an FQA – FACTS Qualified Adviser – then please take a few minutes to read through the special insert enclosed in this issue. In it we outline key changes to the new training requirements announced last year. In particular FQAs may find the flowchart useful. This shows what has to be done to retain the FQA status.

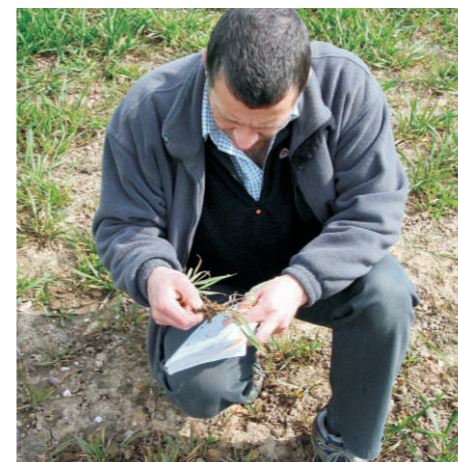
In summary, FQAs who qualified before 31 December 2009 have five years in which to complete the six Nutrient Management Planning (NMP) training modules and complete the online assessment. Those who want to use the NMP training as one of their modules leading to the BASIS Diploma in Agronomy must also take the formal exam.

VI builds on success

If success breeds success then the Voluntary Initiative is poised for yet more glory. As the VI enters its tenth year the Crop Protection Association's assertion at the outset in April 2001 that 'it would deliver real benefits' has proved to be absolutely correct.

The secret of success has not just been the coming together of manufacturers, distributors, advisers, farmers and other pesticide users (an achievement in itself), but also the inclusion of government and other stakeholders – organisations such as RSPB, LEAF, Water UK and, of course, BASIS.

Members of the BASIS Professional Register are worthy of special mention as they have been pivotal in passing on best practice knowledge and changing farmer behaviour.



As well as providing advice, agronomists are key to getting farmers to change behaviour

More directly BASIS has contributed to the VI success by:

- Acting as a focal point and delivery mechanism for all advisers, for example, by distributing leaflets and information on key projects like SAFFIE
- Revising the requirements of the BASIS Professional Register to recognise the environmental training that agronomists do.



- Developing relevant training and qualifications such as Biodiversity and Environmental Training for Advisers (BETA) and LEAF ICM training
- Awarding Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points to training and other events
- Providing data to the VI and regulators on uptake of qualifications and number of active advisers.

Some key ways that the VI has made a difference

Delivering environmental benefits through:

- ☑ the concept of skylark plots – creating small patches on uncropped ground to increase chick survival;
- ☑ creation of field margins;
- ☑ water protection measures leading to up to 80% improvement in the amount of pesticides in water courses.

Implementing responsible use by:

- ☑ the National Sprayer Testing Scheme – every year 13,500 sprayers tested representing 85% of the land sprayed. Testing reduces the risk of sprayer drips and leaks and improves application accuracy, protecting hedgerows and streams;
- ☑ the National Register of Sprayer Operators – 85% of the arable area treated annually is sprayed by NRoSO trained operators;
- ☑ Crop Protection Management Plans – 30% of Britain's arable area returns a CPMP to the NFU. Many more farmers complete the plans or the LEAF audit;
- ☑ Professional advice and training – e.g. almost 1,000 advisers now hold the BETA qualification and 13,000 farmers/operators complete best practice training annually;
- ☑ New techniques such as biobeds and low drift nozzles.

Exciting amenity sector plans

There is a lot happening in the amenity sector as it prepares for the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive - see page 2:

- BASIS is pleased to announce the introduction of a new Professional Register for the Amenity sector. Membership of the **BASIS Amenity Register** is open to people in the sector who are involved with decision making, contract management and in the provision of professional advice. It sits alongside a new City & Guilds NPTC register for amenity operators.
- Developments are also taking place which would see the **Amenity Assured Standard** becoming part of any Code of Practice introduced under the Sustainable Use Directive. BASIS is working with the Chemicals Regulation Directorate supported by the Crop Protection Association, City & Guilds NPTC and the National Association of Agricultural & Amenity Contractors (NAAC) to achieve this goal.
- BASIS has also recently introduced a new qualification for the sector; the **Amenity Foundation Award**. The foundation course offers a basic introduction to amenity pesticide use and will be useful for staff who do not need the full BASIS qualification but do require an understanding of the way pesticides are used in the sector.

VI farmland bird advice

Advice on *Pesticides and Farmland Birds* has been published by the VI.

The four page document can be downloaded from the 'Library' section of the VI's new website at www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk



If you've not already done so you can also sign up here for regular updates or why not simply add the site to your favourites.

Important pesticide legislation consultation underway

The consultation on how the EU's Sustainable Use Directive and new Plant Protection Products Regulations should be implemented in the UK was issued on 8 February.

Together these two represent the biggest change in the way pesticides are regulated since the introduction of FEPA (1985), the Control of Pesticides Regulations (1986) and the Registration Directive 91/414/EEC (1991). BASIS will be reviewing the 224 page document carefully before contributing.

In general the UK is ahead of the game when it comes to fulfilling the requirements of the new EU legislation which covers topics such as training and certification of advisers and operators, testing of application equipment, safe handling, storage and waste disposal as well as the protection of water and the use of Integrated Pest/Crop Management.

Copies of the documentation and details of how to respond can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/pesticides/

Responses must be in by 4 May latest.



New impetus for PROMPT

A new national promotional campaign to explain the benefits of BASIS PROMPT, the register for professional pest controllers has been launched. Put together by an industry-wide group the theme for the campaign is 'Have you achieved the status of a registered BASIS PROMPT professional?'

A new booklet is being produced along with a promotional DVD and there is an ongoing advertising and editorial campaign. It has also been agreed to promote the benefits of registered professionals who can prove their expertise to employers and customers.

"We are extremely pleased to see the industry getting behind PROMPT, says BASIS Managing Director Rob Simpson. "The register has been running for nine years and whilst we have a loyal band of people who collect their CPD and renew every year there are many in the industry who have yet to benefit from the scheme."

Why NPTA's chairman joined PROMPT

One of the more recent recruits to BASIS PROMPT has been NPTA (National Pest Technicians Association) Chairman Peter Crowden.



Peter says, "Being BASIS registered is a mark of professionalism. Once you've qualified there's a tendency to get complacent and think you know it all. But things change and it's absolutely essential that pest controllers keep up to date. PROMPT tells your customers that you're a true professional."

And the winner is...

Kylie Borchardt from Langmead Farms made a little bit of history on 20 November when she became the first female candidate to win the coveted Barrie Orme Award.

Now in its ninth year the Award recognises excellence in plant protection and is presented annually to the best candidate in the BASIS Crop Protection Certificate exams.

The certificate was presented by Defra Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Lord Bryan Davies of Oldham.

Congratulating Kylie on her achievement Lord Davies also thanked BASIS and the industry organisations which sit on the BASIS board for providing factual information to government on the pesticide industry.

Runners up were Vicky Brooks an agronomist with UAP in North Essex and Nic Drever-Smith who farms 142ha of combinable crops near York. Kylie's training was provided by David Godsmark who also trained the 2006 Award winner. The Awards are generously sponsored by the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC), C & J Supplies and Nufarm UK Ltd.



Kylie Borchardt is pictured with BASIS MD, Rob Simpson (left) and BASIS Chairman Ian Smith.

Refresher training in Northern Ireland

Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) in Northern Ireland have received refresher training from BASIS prior to implementing

a spring campaign of pesticide store inspections across the Province.



Whilst the legislation in Northern Ireland is similar to that of England & Wales the Province has its own Codes of Practice and guidance.

Jim Prentice, pictured centre, from BASIS led the training session. The EHOs have now begun the first phase of the safety initiative and are visiting wholesale and retail premises which store pesticides.

Coming soon for Members of the Professional Register

Register members will soon be receiving Professional Register key tags. These handy devices contain all your id data in bar code form and are designed to keep on a key fob. They will cut down on the need to fill in your name and membership number when you attend events. It will simply be a matter of coming along to the BASIS stand with your key tag and our portable bar code readers will do the rest.



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