

# NEWS LETTER

## Musculoskeletal Injuries

### WORK INJURY?

*The Union is aware of several instances where the employer is challenging whether or not an injury occurred in the workplace.*

*Workers need to ensure that they report ANY INCIDENT, no matter how trivial it may seem as this greatly enhances your chances of having fewer problems gaining cover and entitlements.*

**REPORT! REPORT!  
REPORT!**

**WORK DEATH  
TOLL for the year  
1 July 2009 -  
June 2010**

(SOURCE—Safeguard  
Magazine)

**39**

Did you know that musculoskeletal injuries (sprains and strains) are the biggest injury group in the New Zealand Meat Industry? These injuries can occur when you lift things the wrong way, when you try to lift something that is simply too heavy for you, or when you do this during your working day over and over again without adequate rest or work rotation.

Workers need to consider where they want to be (physically) by the end of their working life, working unsafely now could mean an unhappy and unhealthy retirement. With an ageing workforce, the meat industry needs to ensure it addresses things such as adequate rotation work, provision of light duties, perhaps even consideration of medical retirement provisions in their collectives.

One thing is for sure, with the current uncertainty on ACC providing adequate remedies and entitlements, the emphasis should be even more on **injury prevention**. Take the time to consider the job you are doing, can you do it safely every working minute every working day? What can you do to improve the health and safety of your work tasks, talk to other workers, see your health & safety representative and/or Union delegate—often the best solutions are those made by the people doing the actual work!

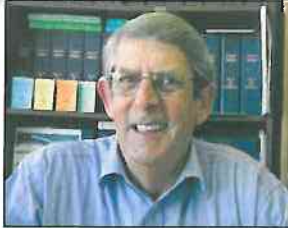
Workers should also consider approaching their site health and safety committee—they have resources such as the Reducing Sprains and Strains in the Meat Industry document which they can use to help guide improvements being made.



**Reducing Strains  
and Sprains in the  
Meat Industry**

A Resource Guide





**SAFETY REPS -**

Have you issued a hazard notice to your employer?

Make sure you send a copy to the nearest Department of Labour Office (OSH)

**AND**

**send a copy to the Union's national office, fax to Amanda on:- (03) 379-7763**



**General Secretary—*Dave Eastlake***

**39<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NZ MEATWORKERS AND RELATED TRADES UNION INC. PRESENTED AT THE CHRISTCHURCH CONFERENCE HELD 14 & 15 APRIL 2010**

Mr Chairman, Conference delegates, and observer's, I present to you my annual report.

The past twelve months have been pretty mixed as far as earnings to our members go, whilst last season tailed off okay the start of this season has been the worst we can remember for some time. There have been some weeks of minimum payments in some areas and also some early season lay offs. Some employers continue to treat their workers like water – turn it on when you need it, lay it off when you don't! During May/June 2009 period Maurice Teen and I conducted delegate training courses through out the North Island. Although this has been going on in the South Island for several years, it was our first session up that way and we thoroughly enjoyed meeting a great bunch of enthusiastic delegates. This year Maurice and Amanda will run courses from Whangarei to Invercargill. Also in May 2009 I participated in a whirlwind visit to Denmark, organised and funded by the NZ industry Training Organisation. We visited what is supposedly the most modern processing plant in the world. This pig processing plant had some smart technology in it but the finished product was far from what is produced in our plants. The Meat Industry Association in NZ is currently organising and overseeing a special technology project, trials are being undertaken at various plants on both slaughter processing and boning. The Union will monitor these trials closely.

Towards the end of the year we were busy with negotiation of both Alliance and AFFCO collective agreements; both took considerable time to settle due to the economic position and the lack of stock being processed. The results were not what everyone expected or hoped for but probably reflected the difficult period we were negotiating in. The National Government is moving slowly on employment legislation changes, recent changes to ACC laws have not been favourable to seasonal workers and there is more to come.

Union membership remains steady and the financial position of the Union continues to consolidate. There has been no staff changes in the National Office however at Branch level two long serving branch administrators retired during the year and we acknowledge the work of Ann Gamble (Auckland office) and Margaret Bailey (Dunedin office). National Office Manager Sherryl Haughie is currently on maternity leave, congratulations to Sherryl and Neil on the arrival of their son Connor and thanks to Sherryl for keeping in contact when we need her advice, a special thanks also to Amanda and Karina for their efforts. As usual I acknowledge the support of Branch Officials and the retirement of Graeme "Pinky" Niles, welcome to Robbie Magee and Tony Materson, thanks to our sub-branch officials and delegates.

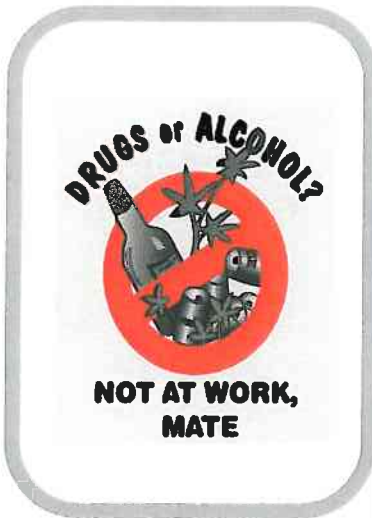
To all who suffered losses of family and friends I extend my personal sympathy.

*Dave*

**D W Eastlake, General Secretary UNITED WE STAND**

## INJURY-RELATED HEARING LOSS and ACC

- ACC cover for injury related hearing loss will be harder to obtain, as from 1 July 2010 a person's injury related hearing loss must reach a 6% threshold before they can be considered for ACC cover.
- This will not affect claims lodged before 1 July 2010 where ACC has not made a decision on the claim.
- Members who think they may have injury related hearing loss should urgently make an appointment with their GP and make a claim as soon as possible—ACC cover can assist with things like the cost of hearing aids.
- The Union also recommends that anyone aged 55 years or over should make an appointment with their GP and have their hearing tested.



## The value of PPE —personal protective clothing and gear



1. Protect your hearing by using the correct ear muffs or earplugs for the task you are doing. Re-view the protection required on a regular basis.



2. Protect your eyes and face by wearing the safety glasses or face masks relevant to the task you are doing. You can prevent nasty burns or splinters by wearing the PPE, as well as protect yourself from illnesses such as Leptospirosis.



3. Protect your feet and head by wearing your hard hat where and when required; make sure you have the correct footwear to look after your feet.

**Prevention is better than cure.**



NEW ZEALAND MEATWORKERS UNION

NATIONAL OFFICE,  
LEVEL 2,  
TUC BUILDING  
199 ARMAGH STREET, CHRISTCHURCH

**Website:**  
**Nzmeatworkersunion**  
**.CO.NZ**



**NOT AT WORK,  
MATE**

### Bits 'n' Pieces/Odds 'n' Sods

**National Health & Safety Guidelines for the New Zealand Meat Industry**—the Union is currently involved in sorting information for a national health and safety guideline document. This will contain practical solutions for on-the-job safety and health in our industry and will be relied upon by many in the industry to strengthen health and safety in our work-places. The Department of Labour will be able to consider the document's recommendations when investigating workplaces and accidents. The document will be based on similar publications internationally.

Watch this space

**Overtime and Saturday work when on rehabilitation/ACC**—this issue keeps coming up;

*members need to remember to discuss this with their GP and get it into the medical certificate as to whether or not they can do over time.*

*Remember that if your 'normal hours' include a Saturday or other overtime, you need to be clear with your GP as to what hours of work you are medically able to do.*

*It is not generally considered a good idea to work extra hours unless you are 100% fit, as your body takes longer to recover from normal work when you are not 100%.*