



South Cumbria &  
North Lancashire Branch

## Joint Zoom meeting 16 November 2023



South Cumbria Occupational  
Health & Safety Group

**Topic:** *Tilly Pass Inspection and Certification scheme for agricultural trailers*

**Speaker:** Jane Gurney MBE, Farmer and Founder of the *Tilly Your Trailer* campaign

Geoff Price, Treasurer, *South Cumbria & North Lancashire IOSH Branch* welcomed members and colleagues from *South Cumbria Occupational Health & Safety Group (SCOHS)* to their joint monthly meeting. He then introduced our speaker, Jane Gurney MBE, Farmer who set up the *Tilly Your Trailer* campaign after her son Harry was killed in 2014 while towing a trailer with defective brakes; an accident that would not have happened if the trailer that he was towing had been included in a routine trailer maintenance programme.

It was only after her son's inquest that she realised that many farmers and agricultural businesses do not have routine agricultural trailer maintenance programmes. The farming partnership that employed Harry was fined £400,000 plus costs because the trailer that he was towing was not road worthy. This resulted in Harry's fatal accident.

Jane then realised that there were probably many agricultural trailers that were not included in routine maintenance programmes. She therefore decided that she would use her son's story to raise awareness of this problem in the hope that she could make a difference and save other people's lives. When she discovered that there was no official scheme to ensure that agricultural trailers were well maintained and roadworthy, she founded the *Tilly Your Trailer* scheme and publicised the benefits of *Tilly Your Trailer* certification by giving motivational talks to agricultural workers and farmers across the UK.

The 18-point *Tilly Your Trailer* inspection procedure and certificate has since helped to ensure thousands of farm trailers are properly maintained and serviced (see web site [Tilly Pass. Head to Tow.](#)). The inspection procedure includes:

- An annual 18-point inspection that is carried out on the farm by authorised mechanics.
- All checks are made on the basis that the trailer will be used for 12 months before the next full inspection is due.
- A central trailer maintenance database with comprehensive *Tilly Pass* records for farm trailers.
- Issuing a pass certificate. Each year the background colour of the certificate is changed so that it is easy to identify trailers that have had recent *Tilly* inspections.

Jane explained that the *Tilly Your Trailer* scheme is run by farmers for farmers and that there are now 170 authorised *Tilly* depots across the UK.

The inspections include:

- Taking off all the wheels for thorough inspections.
- Brake checks.
- Towing hitch and pin checks.
- Wear and tear of:
  - Essential air and pipelines.
  - Brushes
  - Axles
- Recommending essential repairs necessary to achieve the *Tilly Pass* standard.

Jane then explained that the *Tilly Your Trailer* campaign involves regular engagement with farmers, dealers and others through:

- Dealership open days: to raise farmer and operator awareness.
- Police action days:
  - Random roadside checks by police who have received *Tilly Your Trailer* training.
  - Frequent problems found include incorrect or no number plate, insecure loads, incorrect licences, faulty brakes etc...
- *Young Farmers Clubs*: making young people aware of the potential agricultural trailer problems.
- *All Party Parliamentary Towing Group*: *Tilly Your Trailer* representatives raise awareness of agricultural trailer problems with MPs by attending these meetings.
- *Tilly Your Trailer web site*: provides guidance on topics such as:
  - Safe use of trailer body props, jacks and axle stands.
  - Load security: strapping and sheeting.
  - Use of flashing beacons.
  - Permitted trailer weights and speeds.

Recent *Tilly Your Trailer* initiatives include:

- Development of a load sensing valve that senses the weight of the load and adjusts brake power according to load.
- *Head to tow*: web pages with trailer maintenance information written by manufacturers and available to download, and a video showing the daily trailer checks that should be undertaken before using a trailer have been added to the main web site.

Jane told members that the *NFU Mutual insurance* company recommended that farmers join the *Tilly Your Trailer* scheme, HSE supports the scheme, and some manufacturers have added *Tilly Your Trailer* certification on the trailers that they sell.

Sadly, trailer accidents still happen. Most of these are due to overloaded trailers and/or poor maintenance of trailers. Jane then explained that the use of agricultural trailers is covered by the *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations, 1998* so that farmers using the *Tilly Your Trailer* certification scheme have trailer maintenance records that clearly demonstrate their compliance with UK law.

The *Tilly Your Trailer* initiative involves an annual service by an authorised mechanic, as well as guidance about simple daily checks before a trailer is used on or off the farm. It has won the support of trailer manufacturers, machinery dealers, health and safety experts and the police – as well as farmers. Jane fielded questions from members during her presentation.

Geoff Price thanked Jane for her heartfelt and worthwhile presentation. He then reminded members that the next *IOSH Branch* virtual meeting will be on 14 December 2024 when Ian Dandy, our chairman, will demonstrate how easy *IOSH's Blueprint* CPD system is to use.

### **Related UK Government and HSE web site links:**

HSE agricultural trailers braking system studies: [In-service assessment of agricultural trailer and trailed appliance braking system condition and performance: The Agricultural Trailer Braking Study \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Load security on trailers: [RR924 - Load security on double-deck trailers \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

HSE carrying passengers on farm trailers: [Carrying passengers on farm trailers \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

HSE guidance on farm vehicles and agricultural machinery: [Farm vehicles - Agricultural machinery - HSE](#)

HSE guidance on the *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations, 1998*: [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)