

# Farm families ALIVE & WELL



News from The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health

## Halverson Receives Hall of Fame Award

Vol. 12, Issue 4 - 2006

Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) has named Charlotte Halverson the 2006 recipient of its Hall of Fame Award. Halverson is a skilled occupational health nurse who has served the farming community for more than 25 years. She is the rural health training coordinator at the National Educational Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) and Parish Health Coordinator at Mercy Medical Center in Dubuque, Iowa.

Halverson received the award August 11th during the WOI midday radio show broadcast from the Iowa State University Extension booth at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines. The award was presented by state Senator Robert Dvorsky.

Halverson is known in Iowa and throughout the country as a pioneer in the fields of agricultural health and parish nursing. Halverson's contributions include

activities such as providing Certified Safe Farm services to area farmers, implementing health screening programs, and developing farm safety first-aid kits specifically designed for farmers.

Halverson was recently appointed president of the AgriSafe Network's Board of Directors. Her leadership and commitment has helped the AgriSafe Network grow to over 22 rural health clinics providing health and safety services to farmers in their area.

For more on the Hall of Fame Award visit [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash)



Kelley Donham, Charlotte Halverson, and Senator Robert Dvorsky at the Iowa State Fair.

## Respiratory Protection in Agriculture

Agricultural work may lead to exposure to a variety of inhalation hazards, including dusts, microorganisms, chemicals, and toxic gases. In many situations, personal respirators are the only practical method available to control exposure to these hazards. However, the use of these devices is low among farmers and their families. In the Keokuk County Rural Health Study (a health and hazard study of families living in Keokuk County, Iowa, led by Dr. James Merchant of the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health), only 15% of farmers reported wearing respirators when handling grain, 21% when working with hogs, and 3% when applying chemicals. These results indicate that farm families may not recognize the value of reducing their exposures to dusts and gases by using respirators, and thereby preventing future respiratory problems.

Matching the proper respirator for use with specific tasks is very important. If adequate oxygen is not



present or if there is a danger of being exposed to gas concentrations which are "*immediately dangerous to life and health*," such as the release of hydrogen sulfide during manure pit agitation, then a respirator which supplies fresh air is the only appropriate choice. The nature of the contaminant also determines which type of respirator should be used. When exposed to dusts, filtering respirators which are able to capture at least 95% of the dust particles are recommended. However, this type of respirator provides no protection from toxic gases such as hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, or carbon monoxide. For gas exposures, a respirator with a chemical cartridge that can adsorb the specific gas is needed. There are respirators available with cartridges that both filter dusts and adsorb chemicals and gases. However, these gas adsorbing cartridges can be quickly

(continued on page 3)

by Stacey Jenkins

Most people work, but some people simply do their job better than they



have to, and Charlotte Halverson is a great example. Charlotte works for Mercy Medical Center in

Dubuque, Iowa, and partners with the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety. Charlotte joined the AgriSafe Network in 1991. Her typical clinic activities include health screenings, helping farmers navigate the health care system, training agricultural audiences, and facilitating programs.

The most common illnesses that Charlotte sees at her AgriSafe clinic include arthritis, chronic respiratory disease, and hearing loss. Charlotte believes the use of appropriate personal protective equipment would greatly reduce the incidence of disease and injury among farmers.

For Charlotte, the greatest benefits of participating in the AgriSafe Network include networking with other occupational health professionals, maintaining assessment skills, and staying current on agricultural safety and health issues.

Charlotte's advice for starting an AgriSafe clinic:

- Identify the needs in your community and available resources.
- Establish a strong, open relationship with your supervising organization.
- Build relationships within the agricultural community.
- Be patient and open to adapting to your community's needs.

For information on the AgriSafe Network visit [www.agrisafe.org](http://www.agrisafe.org) or call 866/312-3002.

*Stacey Jenkins is the Outreach Specialist for the AgriSafe Network. She can be reached at 248/476-1080 or [sjenkins@agrisafe.org](mailto:sjenkins@agrisafe.org)*

**Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Forum to be held November 16, 2006.** Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) is partnering with the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH) and other safety and health specialists from Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin to organize a fall conference on rural agricultural safety and health. The conference theme will be "Moving Ideas to Action." Check the I-CASH website at [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash) for conference details.



**I-CASH is seeking proposals for its grant program** aimed at decreasing the risk of injury and illness to young people living on Iowa farms or involved in agriculture. Each year I-CASH designates funds for communities to develop farm injury prevention and education programs targeted for Iowa's youth. For more information or an application packet contact Meggan Fisher at 319/335-4226 or [meggan-fisher@uiowa.edu](mailto:meggan-fisher@uiowa.edu). Applications are also available at [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash). **The deadline for applications is January 15, 2007.**



**The 2006 Agricultural Occupational Health Training** was held May 30-June 3 in Iowa City, Iowa. Thirty health care professionals from Iowa, Alabama, Florida, Kansas, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Australia were trained in a variety of agricultural safety and health topics ranging from agricultural respiratory issues to zoonoses. The instructors delivered practical information and their expertise was highly praised by the participants. For information on the 2007 training contact Kay Mohling at 319/335-4219 or visit [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash).



The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) will sponsor the annual **North American Occupational Safety and Health Week (NAOSH) May 6 - 12, 2007.** The purpose of NAOSH Week is to focus the attention of employers, employees, and the general public on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace and its positive affects on quality of life. This year's theme is transportation safety. For more information visit [www.asse.org/naosh](http://www.asse.org/naosh)



**Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health**

100 Oakdale Campus  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, IA 52242-5000

Farm Families Alive & Well  
Published 4/yr  
Kay Mohling, Ed.  
319/335-4219  
fax-319/335-4225  
[kay-mohling@uiowa.edu](mailto:kay-mohling@uiowa.edu)

[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH)

## National Safety Council and NICC Agreement Extends Partnership 5 Years

The National Safety Council (NSC) and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) have announced a five-year agreement to renew a partnership started 10 years ago with the founding of the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS). The agreement is the third, five-year agreement between the two organizations since NECAS was founded to educate and train farmers, ranchers, their families and employees, and emergency rescue personnel, on agriculture safety.

“NECAS would not exist without widespread support on the national, state and local levels, support I hope will continue with this new agreement, allowing both the National Safety Council and Northeast Iowa Community College to continue every effort to reduce preventable injuries, illnesses and deaths on our farms,” said NSC President and CEO Alan C. McMillan at a celebration of the 10-year NECAS anniversary and the signing of the new five-year partnership agreement.

More than 25,000 farmers and their families have been trained at the center since its founding, as well as tens of thousands of other agricultural outreach organizations including farming cooperatives and insurers. The center also trains emergency rescue personnel, and sponsors a number of youth and community programs. Located on the NICC campus in Peosta, NECAS is the only hands-on safety training center in the world dedicated to the farming community. Staffed by a core group of safety and health education specialists, NECAS training is also provided by leading agricultural educators from across the United States.

For more information on NECAS visit [www.nsc.org/necas](http://www.nsc.org/necas).

---

### Respiratory Protection continued from page 1

overwhelmed in situations where very high concentrations of a gas are produced, such as manure pits or around combustion engines in enclosed spaces.

In order to provide protection, it is important that the respirator fit properly to the wearer's face with no leaks between the face and the respirator. Each time a respirator is used the fit should be checked by placing the hands over the air inlet and inhaling, or over the exhalation port and exhaling. If air movement can be detected entering or escaping around the respirator it should be readjusted.

NIOSH is the federal agency that evaluates and certifies respirators. The NIOSH certification number is printed on each approved respirator or its packaging, and only NIOSH-approved respirators should be used. The GPCAH can provide guidance on the proper selection and fitting of respirators, as well as the AgriSafe Network. The GPCAH and the AgriSafe Network will be presenting a one-day training course in Iowa City, Iowa, on November 17, 2006, to provide hands-on instruction focusing on respirator use in agricultural settings. For training details contact Kristi Fisher at 712/363-4067. For more information on respirators visit [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh) or [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

*Dr. Wayne Sanderson directs the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, housed in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health of the College of Public Health. He can be reached at 319/335-4207 ([wayne-sanderson@uiowa.edu](mailto:wayne-sanderson@uiowa.edu)).*

Contact the AgriSafe Network at [www.agrisafe.org](http://www.agrisafe.org) or 866/312-3002.

## calendar

September 17-23

**National Farm Safety & Health Week**

November 3-10

**National Safety Council Congress and Expo**

San Diego, CA

[www.eshow2000.com/nsc/home.cfm](http://www.eshow2000.com/nsc/home.cfm)

November 16

**Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Forum**

Coralville, IA.

[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash)

November 16-18

**2006 National Rural Women's Health Conference**

San Antonio, TX.

[www.hmc.psu.edu/ce/RWH2006/Schedule.pdf](http://www.hmc.psu.edu/ce/RWH2006/Schedule.pdf)

January 15, 2007

**I-CASH Injury Prevention in Agricultural Youth Grant deadline**

[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash)

January 24-25

**Iowa Pork Congress**

Des Moines, IA.

[www.iowaporkcongress.org](http://www.iowaporkcongress.org)

February 12-14

**The Clock is Ticking for Rural America: A Behavioral Health and Safety Conference**

Sioux Falls, SD.

[www.agriwellness.org](http://www.agriwellness.org)

April 3-4

**2007 Iowa Public Health Conference: New Directions in Public Health**

Ames, IA.

[www.idph.state.ia.us/conferences.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/conferences.asp)

May 6-12

**North American Occupational Safety and Health Week (NAOSH)**

[www.asse.org/naosh](http://www.asse.org/naosh)

The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment and in its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preference. The University also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to University facilities. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact the Coordinator of Title IX, Section 504, and the ADA in the Office of Affirmative Action, (319) 335-0705 (voice) and (319) 335-0697 (text), 202 Jessup Hall, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1316.

# +++++It All Adds Up

## Fourth Quarter Farm Injury Profile

Looking at our collection of newspaper clippings since 2003, the next 3 months (October, November, December) have together averaged 24 farm and agricultural deaths and 22 injuries in our 4-state region (IA, KS, MO, NE). The good news is the number of such clippings for the final quarter (Q4) of the year is typically 25% less than the harvest quarter we are now ending.

Farm and Agricultural Injury Monitoring System (FAIMS) history suggests that a reported injury is least likely to come from Kansas during Q4. The most reports for Q4 should be expected from Nebraska, if past patterns repeat.

Overall it is slightly more likely that FAIMS will record a fatal than a non-fatal incident in Q4, by the slim 24-to-22 margin noted above. In records of deaths, Iowa and Missouri should contribute more than Kansas and Nebraska again in Q4.

Collectively, mobile farm equipment is involved in a smaller portion of incidents in the typical fourth quarter, dropping from a dominant 3-to-1 in Q3 (the harvest quarter) to a level equal to other agents in Q4. Nonetheless, over 55% of Q4 farm equipment incidents have historically been reported fatalities: slightly higher than the even fatal – nonfatal split associated with other sources of farm and agricultural injury. Motor vehicle crashes and incidents involving livestock are the most frequently reported kind of incident in a typical fourth quarter. Tractor overturns will probably remain the single event resulting in the largest number of death clips. A similar number of deaths are typically reported involving farm equipment / motor vehicle crashes, in conjunction with grain or manure storage, and while working with livestock during the last three months of a year.

Finally, the extent to which past press clippings provide perspective on the future is affected by many factors. Among them are hazard elimination, awareness, application of safety technology, and conformance to safe operating practices. These actions make a difference. They can be encouraged and, when applied in advance, they can change the experience that might otherwise occur through the end of the year and beyond.

For more information contact Murray Madsen, [murray-madsen@uiowa.edu](mailto:murray-madsen@uiowa.edu) or 319/335-4481.

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
UI College of Public Health  
Dept. of Occupational & Environmental Health  
100 Oakdale Campus  
Iowa City, IA 52242-5000



**GREAT PLAINS CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH**

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 45  
Iowa City, IA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED