

Farm families ALIVE & WELL



News from The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health

GPCAH Visits John Deere

Vol. 16, Issue 4 - October 2010

by Murray D. Madsen, GPCAH Associate Director

The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH) Director Fred Gerr and Murray Madsen met with Laurie Zelnio, Director of Product Safety, Environment, and Standards at Deere & Company September 24th in Moline, IL. Dr. Gerr thanked Ms. Zelnio for her participation on the GPCAH External Advisory Committee and for Deere's long-standing interest in the safety and health of farmers, ranchers, farm workers, and their family members. GPCAH staff also provided an overview of the Center's priorities, current work, and future plans.

Deere staff members continued to be interested in learning more about the causal factors of injuries and illnesses, addressing the problem of tractor overturn deaths, and understanding the risk factors associated with "farm equipment vs. motor vehicle" collisions. Deere, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, and NIOSH are currently collaborating on a project for effective use of hazard pictorials.



Pictured left to right: Murray Madsen, GPCAH Assoc. Director; Mike Gacioc, Deere Staff Engineer; Laurie Zelnio, Director of Product Safety, Env., and Standards for Deere & Co.; Fred Gerr, GPCAH Director; Mara Sovey, Deere Foundation Pres.; and Mike Senneff, retiring Product Safety and Compliance Manager.

Director's Message

by Fred Gerr, MD

The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH), remarkable for its role as one of two founding NIOSH-sponsored Agricultural Health Centers 20 years ago, is now in the last year of its current funding cycle. Center staff and faculty are enthusiastically preparing an application for the next five year competitive funding cycle. This is an opportune time to reflect on the Center's remarkable past and to explore new and innovative ways to address the safety and health needs of farmers, ranchers, farm workers, and their family members in our nine-state, upper-Midwest region.

The extraordinary trajectory of this Center is the result of groundbreaking efforts by agricultural health and safety leaders such as Jim Merchant, MD, PhD, and Kelley Donham, DVM, who have devoted decades of their professional lives to promoting health and safety among agricultural workers. Fortunately, Drs. Merchant and Donham continue to work within the GPCAH.

Looking forward, we will target important agricultural health and safety problems with a set of research, prevention/intervention and education projects. Collaborating on this effort is a distinguished team of public health scientists, including Nate Fethke, PhD (ergonomics and musculoskeletal disorders), Patrick O'Shaughnessy, PhD (respiratory disease prevention), Renee Anthony, PhD (industrial hygiene solutions to respiratory risk), Kelley Donham DVM (education – continuation of Building Capacity), Marizen Ramirez, PhD (rural roadway safety and surveillance), Tara Smith, PhD (infectious diseases), and other co-investigators and mentors. These talented health and safety professionals will bring renewed enthusiasm and scientific rigor to persistent



Fred Gerr, MD

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The *Agricultural Medicine: Occupational and Environmental Health for Rural Health Professionals* course will be held **June 13-17, 2011** in Iowa City, Iowa. Nurses, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, veterinarians, and other interested health care professionals are invited to participate. The training provides information and skills to enable the health care professional to function in the anticipation, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of occupational illnesses and injuries in the farm community. The course may be taken for three graduate credit hours from the U of I College of Public Health, and continuing education credits for physicians and nurses are offered. Contact Kay Mohling at 319/335-4219 or kay-mohling@uiowa.edu for more information.

In conjunction with **National Farm Safety Week**, Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) held a public education event on all-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety September 21st in Hills, IA. The theme for the 2010 National Farm Safety Week was "ATVs: Work Smart. Ride Safe." The I-CASH event informed ATV owners and the public about safe ways to operate ATVs and share rural roads. Free ATV flags with the "Ride Safe" logo were handed out.

Registration is open for the **39th Annual Iowa Governor's Safety & Health Conference** scheduled for November 3 & 4, 2010 in Des Moines, IA. This conference is intended for occupational health nurses, occupational safety & health professionals, industrial hygienists, safety managers, and anyone interested in improving workplace health and safety. For more information visit www.regonline.com/gconference2010.

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agricultural health and safety issues, including ergonomics and musculoskeletal disorders, the application of engineering solutions to respiratory disease prevention, building surveillance capabilities, agricultural infectious diseases, and the need for better awareness of agricultural health risks among doctors and nurses.

This is an invigorating and challenging time for me. It's an opportunity to work with experienced professionals to renew a truly great Center. Although the task is considerable in scope, we will maintain our commitment to the safety and health needs of the nearly one third of U.S. farms and farmers within our region. I welcome your inputs and invite you to call or email me with comments and suggestions now and in the future.

Dr. Fred Gerr directs the GPCAH, housed in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health of the College of Public Health. He can be reached at 319/335-4212 (fred-gerr@uiowa.edu).

More than 435 farmers, ranchers, or farm workers died at work during the previous 3-years in the GPCAH 9-state region (ND, SD, NE, KS, MO, IA, MN, WI, IL), based on press clippings. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) just released their count of agricultural work deaths for 2009, an accumulation of Census of Fatal Occupational Injury (CFOI) numbers from all states. The BLS CFOI sum for "Agriculture" in the GPCAH region over the same 3-year period is 571. Why the difference?

CFOI likely captures more incidents where death occurs while "working" in a motor vehicle. That's hard to capture in news clips, so are delayed deaths.

BLS CFOI may not include some deaths of very young workers that the Farm and Agricultural Injury Monitoring Service (FAIMS) would. Their 2009 data is preliminary and they require information from multiple sources before they count an incident. FAIMS asks clipping service readers to cast a wide net, which should result in more clippings about fatalities for FAIMS than BLS, but that has not been the case. Certainly there are some ag-related death events that don't make the local newspaper.

More important than comparing totals is that so many die working in "Agriculture" in our region, about 30% of the total for the nation! The number of production agriculture deaths according to press clippings for each of the previous three years has remained steady. Over the period, 60% involved tractors or other mobile machines, 9% occurred with grain or feed storage and handling, 5% were caused by livestock, and the remainder were a mixed bunch. Those same categorizations fit equally well for the over 500 press clippings of nonfatal injury events.

Murray Madsen is the Associate Director of the GPCAH, he can be reached at 319/335-4481 (murray-madsen@uiowa.edu).



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Rural Roadway Safety

by Murray Madsen, GPCAH Associate Director

A motor vehicle and a piece of farm equipment collide on a rural road. It's a scene repeated about 1100 times a year in the GPCAH 9-state region. (See "It All Adds Up" on page 4 for 2009 collision data.)

Marizen Ramirez, MPH, PhD, and epidemiology expert for Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Iowa, suggests a closer look at the characteristics of the roadway where collisions occur, individual operator and operating risk factors, and features of vehicles and equipment involved.

Data from across the GPCAH region show one-third of these crashes involve a personal injury, or worse. Three-quarters of all persons injured in these crashes were in the motor vehicle, as were two-thirds of all who died.

It's Preventable!

TIPS FOR



SHARE THE ROAD safely with motorists. Every year about 200 crashes between farm implements and motor vehicles happen on our public roads - IT'S PREVENTABLE!

- ▲ Plan travel to avoid high traffic times, busy roads, bad weather and times before daylight or after dark.
- ▲ Be more obvious to motorists by using visible reflective SMV emblems and lights for any implement operated on public roadways. It's the law!
- ▲ Watch out for passing vehicles when making left turns, especially into fields.
- ▲ Always use hand or turn signals to indicate plans to turn.
- ▲ Install wide mirrors so you can see traffic that is following you.
- ▲ Use reflective marking tape and reflectors on equipment edges.
- ▲ Turn on farm equipment lights.
- ▲ If road and shoulder conditions are safe, pull over temporarily to allow traffic to pass.
- ▲ Minimize equipment width and haul equipment when practical.
- ▲ Have an escort precede or follow you, when practical.
- ▲ Be aware of drowsiness from long hours of work.

<http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ICASH/>



See www.agsafetyandhealthnet.org/FEMV.htm for 2005-2009 Farm Equipment vs. Motor Vehicle Collision data. Murray Madsen can be reached at 319/335-4481 (murray-madsen@uiowa.edu). Dr. Marizen Ramirez can be reached at 319/335-4425 (marizen-ramirez@uiowa.edu).

It's Preventable!

TIPS FOR



SHARE THE ROAD safely with farmers and their equipment. Every year about 200 crashes between farm implements and motor vehicles happen on our public roads - IT'S PREVENTABLE!

SPEED AND CLOSING DISTANCE

- ▲ Always wear seat belts and heed the road speed limit.
- ▲ Reduce speed when you see farm equipment on rural roads.
- ▲ Allow for short closing distances when approaching slow moving vehicles.
- ▲ Brake for orange and red reflective triangles that warn of slow moving vehicles.
- ▲ Slow down on gravel roads, hills, curves and turns.
- ▲ Keep safe distance behind farm equipment so farmers can see you. If you can't see his mirrors, he can't see you.
- ▲ Yield to wide equipment on narrow roads.

PASSING FARM EQUIPMENT

- ▲ Be especially cautious of farm equipment turning left onto driveways or fields. They may first pull right for wide turns.
- ▲ Pass farm equipment only if conditions are safe and no on-coming traffic.
- ▲ Farm equipment operators may pull over on the shoulder of road if safe to do so.
- ▲ Farm equipment operators may move to the center to avoid objects on the road shoulder.
- ▲ Do not pass farm equipment on the yellow line, curves or hills. BE PATIENT.

• Funded with Federal Highway funds •

Be Patient. Be Alert.

SAVE LIVES!

According to Dr. Ramirez, "We do not know whether they were farm family members, but it's likely the 665 who were injured and 46 who died on farm equipment were."

Producers who manage farms, regardless the size of the operation, travel rural roads with their equipment. They and their family members also travel those roads in their motor vehicles, as do members of the spreading urban community and visitors to the countryside. Farm equipment is more often on the road during harvest season. Now would be a good time to review the rules for sharing the road safely, whether you're a motorist or equipment operator.

"It's Preventable!" cards, available from Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, provide tips for sharing the road. Contact Eileen Fisher at 319/335-4224 (eileen-fisher@uiowa.edu) for more information.

calendar

November 3-4
Governor's Safety & Health Conference
Des Moines, IA
www.iowaworkforce.org/labor

November 6-10
American Public Health Association Annual Meeting
Denver, CO
www.apha.org/meetings

November 16-17
Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) Conference
Winnipeg, MB, Canada
www.casa-acsa.ca

November 17-18
Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety & Health Forum: "Cultivating Change"
Iowa City, IA
www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ICASH

November 17-20
20th Annual Midwest Stream Farmworker Health Forum
Austin, TX
www.ncfh.org

January 26-27, 2011
2011 Iowa Pork Congress
Des Moines, IA
www.iowaporkcongress.org

2010
Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety & Health Forum
Cultivating Change

November 17-18
Hotel Vetro/
Sheraton
Iowa City, IA



www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ICASH

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

+++++It All Adds Up Farm Equipment (FE) vs. Motor Vehicle (MV) - Crashes on Public Roads, 2009

This is preliminary data subject to final classification determinations by responsible state authorities.

	CRASHES ¹				INJURIES			DEATHS		
	PDO ²	Injury	Fatal	Total	FE	MV	Total	FE	MV	Total
Illinois DOT, Division of Traffic Safety, Crash Info Section	117	59	5	181	21	69	90	1	4	5
Iowa DOT, Office of Traffic and Safety	122	77	6	205	41	68	109	3	2	5
Kansas DOT	66	22	1	89	11	27	38	0	1	1
Minnesota DOT	95	42	5	142	19	43	62	2	3	5
Missouri MO Hwy Patrol, Traffic Records Div.	96	39	3	138	14	42	56	1	2	3
Nebraska Dept. of Roads, Hwy Safety	47	42	3	92	9	57	66	0	3	3
North Dakota DOT, Office of Traffic Safety	30	16	2	48	6	17	23	0	4	4
South Dakota Dept. of Public Safety, Accident Records	14	9	1	24	4	9	13	0	1	1
Wisconsin Bureau of Transportation Safety	93	60	5	158	16	77	93	1	5	6
TOTALS	680	366	31	1077	141	409	550	8	25	33

¹Data excludes non-crash events, collisions with parked motor vehicles, fixed objects, animals, trains, pedestrians, and various other categories of "first harmful events". **A "fatal" crash may include more than one fatality and an injury crash may involve injuries to more than one person.** ²PDO = Property Damage Only