I-CASH Celebrates 20th Anniversary at MRASH Banquet

Iowa’s Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) marked its 20th anniversary at a November 17th celebration banquet held in conjunction with the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH) forum in Iowa City. The after-dinner program was emceed by David Osterberg, clinical associate professor of occupational and environmental health, and College of Public Health Dean Sue Curry welcomed the 103 attendees to the campus.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Paul Gunderson, director of the Dakota Center for Technology-Optimized Agriculture at Lake Region State College in North Dakota. In his presentation, "Historical Perspective on I-CASH: Where We’ve Been and Where We’re Going," Gunderson reflected on the influence of I-CASH on reducing farm injury and illness.

Other highlights of the evening included recognition of the 2010 I-CASH Hall of Fame Award winners, Shari Burgus and Michael Rosmann. This annual award recognizes individuals or organizations in the public or private sector who have made significant contributions to agricultural safety and health in Iowa.

Shari Burgus is the Education Director at Farm Safety 4 Just Kids (FS4JK), a nonprofit organization that agricultural community in a more geographically representative way, we would need to provide and assist other entities to establish agricultural medicine training in their regions. In 2006, we expanded the I-CASH program with the Building Capacity training grant, as the Education and Translation program of the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health. The program has been quite successful with new programs set to begin this year in North Dakota and Nebraska, as well as recurring courses in Illinois, Wisconsin, Vermont, North Carolina, and even in Australia.

In 2006, Sue Brumby from Hamilton, Victoria, Australia traveled to Iowa to attend the Agricultural Medicine Course. In 2009, her colleague Scott McComb attended the course. This summer their inaugural national conference, Opening the Gates on Farmer Health, introduced the continued on page 3

Building Capacity Down Under
by Kelley Donham, MS, DVM, DACVPM

In 1987 I-CASH initiated a 40-hour training course in agricultural occupational and environmental health primarily aimed at preparing nurses to initiate and serve AgriSafe clinics in Iowa. The program has allowed expansion of AgriSafe in Iowa, building up to 13 clinics scattered across the state today. Over the years the program has gained a regional, national, and international audience. It was evident that if we were ever to supply enough trained providers to serve the
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. Contact Kay Mohling at 319/335-4219 or kay-mohling@uiowa.edu for more information.

The I-CASH website, www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ICASH, has been updated and includes an “Our Services” tab featuring online request forms to consult with an expert, request a literature search, and request a Certified Safe Farm review. The 2010 I-CASH Annual Report is also available on the website.

Director’s Message continued from page 1

brand new National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH)

It is most rewarding to see the energy and professionalism these folks are putting into the effort. With funding from the State of Victoria and an Australian foundation, they have launched an ambitious program of health education and research for the farming population of Australia. We have great opportunities to collaborate with their Centre and are planning future educational opportunities using distance learning.

Collaborative research has already started. We are working with a veterinarian in Australia to publish research on unintended needle sticks among livestock producers. Staff at the NCFH have also teamed up with Dr. Chuck Jennissen, I-CASH Board member, and Dr. Jamie Wallace, former Agricultural Medicine student and current family practice resident, to publish an article in the Journal of Agromedicine.

We feel honored to have some part in the process of expansion of education and service to the health of the farming community nationally and internationally. Making new professional colleagues and friends will hopefully translate into helping to keep farmers worldwide alive and well in agriculture.

Kelley Donham, MS, DVM, DACVPM is the Director of I-CASH, he can be reached at 319/335-4190 (kelley-donham@uiowa.edu).

Be careful on the icy spots around farm
by LaMar Grafft

In 1946, Ed Evers, who was in his 40’s at the time, moved in with my family as a hired hand. Over the years, I learned a lot from this fine gentleman about being careful on the farm. Evers’ sense of balance worsened as he aged, and he was afraid of falling. He made ice grips for his shoes long before they were readily available, and escaped serious falls by using them whenever he was out in our ice-covered barnyard.

As a youngster, I thought it funny that a grown man was afraid of the ice. Having fallen several times since, I’m no longer laughing. Slips and falls are one of the most frequent causes of injury, both on and off the farm, and they’re hard to prevent when ice is everywhere. I guess the easiest way to avoid them is to move south — wait, they’re having a rough winter, too.

When we evaluate farms for safety hazards, one of the things we look for is drainage. Ice and snow builds up in low places first. In the summer, puddles are not such a problem, but in the winter, those icy spots become hazardous. The obvious solution is to fill in low areas, and gently slope the ground away from building entrances. Since it’s impossible to move frozen dirt now, the next best solution is a mixture of sand and salt, or sand and a commercially available ice-melting product. The sand will provide traction, and when it warms just a little, the product will melt the ice. This spring, you can fill in the holes.

Reduce your trips across icy areas, and walk slowly. It only takes an instant to slip and fall, as my sister found out a few winters back; she dislocated her hip. Injuries like that take time to heal, time that you don’t have to spare right now, especially if you have livestock.

LaMar Grafft, MS, Rural Health and Safety Specialist at I-CASH, can be reached at 319/335-4233 (lamar-grafft@uiowa.edu).
Agricultural Youth Injury Prevention Grants

I-CASH is seeking proposals for its 2011 Injury Prevention in Agricultural Youth Grants. Each year I-CASH designates funds for community grants targeted at the prevention of farm-related injury in young people and their families. Application packets will be available at www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash. For more information contact LaMar Grafft at 319/335-4233 or lamar-grafft@uiowa.edu.

Application deadline is February 28, 2011.
Worker Deaths: Production Agriculture, Forestry, and Commercial Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping (AgFFHT) 2003-9

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI)

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*The AgFFHT industry sector began including logging for the first time in 2003

For additional information contact Murray Madsen at 319/335-4481 or e-mail murray-madsen@uiowa.edu