

# Farm Families ALIVE & WELL



News from The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health

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## Agricultural Medicine Course June 8-12



The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health will host *Agricultural Medicine: Occupational and Environmental Health for Rural Health Professionals* June 8-12 at the University of Iowa. The course provides the information and skills needed to enable safety and health professionals to anticipate, recognize, and prevent occupational illnesses and injuries among members of the agricultural community. Topics include agricultural injury, transportation hazards, biological risk assessment of zoonotic disease, behavioral and emotional health, ergonomics, cancer among agricultural workers, musculoskeletal disorders, rural medicine practice, and many

other agricultural safety and health topics. In addition to the classroom setting, participants will observe safety and rescue demonstrations at the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS), and tour grain and livestock facilities at Amana Farms, Inc.

An open house and reception will be held Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-6:00 in the atrium of the College of Public Health Building. The reception is open to the public and will feature rural safety and health programs, research posters, and will provide an opportunity to network with colleagues and University of Iowa faculty and staff.



Course brochure and reception information are available at <http://cph.uiowa.edu/gpcah/education/iowa-ag-med-course>.

## Director's Message

by Fred Gerr, MD

As the academic year comes to a close, the Great Plains Center is actively planning several collaborative projects for the summer months. As mentioned above, we begin the summer hosting the Agricultural Medicine Course, a nationally recognized intensive training experience that provides a strong foundation in the principles of agricultural safety and health. The course gives us the opportunity to collaborate with nationally-recognized experts from other Centers within the College of Public Health, such as the Injury Prevention Research Center, Iowa Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, and agricultural safety and health specialists from AgriSafe, Amana Farms, Inc., Easter Seals, Farm Safety For Just Kids, Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa State University, National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS), Proteus, Inc., and the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine. We invite anyone interested in the unique health and safety needs of rural and agricultural communities to attend the course and networking reception.

*Great Plains on the Go* is a new initiative within the Center's outreach program that emphasizes direct contact with agricultural producers. This summer the program will provide outreach opportunities at farm shows throughout the Midwest, putting health and safety information directly into the hands of those who need it most. Get more information at <http://cph.uiowa.edu/gpcab/outreach/gpcab-on-the-go-3>.

Faculty and staff from several Centers at the University of Iowa continue to provide a monthly *Safety Watch* column in Iowa Farmer Today, Illinois Farmer Today, and Missouri Farmer Today. The most recent articles by Center industrial hygienist, Stephanie Leonard, is a timely discussion of hazards resulting from application of anhydrous ammonia [www.iowafarmertoday.com/news/crop/anhydrous-injury-survivors-share-stories/article\\_42711474-de0e-11e4-b5ff-bfc3d0920e11.html](http://www.iowafarmertoday.com/news/crop/anhydrous-injury-survivors-share-stories/article_42711474-de0e-11e4-b5ff-bfc3d0920e11.html) and [www.iowafarmertoday.com/news/crop/what-makes-anhydrous-ammonia-so-dangerous/article\\_3fffca60-de1c-11e4-a0f1-e3647c7cf0ac.html](http://www.iowafarmertoday.com/news/crop/what-makes-anhydrous-ammonia-so-dangerous/article_3fffca60-de1c-11e4-a0f1-e3647c7cf0ac.html).



Fred Gerr, MD

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In 2014 the *GPCAH on the Go* campaign traveled to over a dozen farm shows and county fairs in seven Midwestern states to present information on hearing protection, heat illness, and safe play on the farm. This year *GPCAH on the Go* will travel to the Four State Farm Show, Minnesota Farmfest, Dakotafest, Farm Progress Show, as well as several county fairs. Check the GPCAH website at <http://cph.uiowa.edu/gpcab/outreach> for a list of upcoming events.

◆

**“Injuries and Agriculture: Telling the Story”** is an interactive workshop and networking opportunity for journalists who focus on agriculture. This workshop will address the complex, and sometimes controversial, issues surrounding agricultural injuries and fatalities. Up to ten journalists representing print, broadcast, and electronic media will be awarded a stipend to defray travel expenses; no fee will be charged. **Application deadline is May 15, 2015.**

The workshop is co-hosted by Iowa’s Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) and the Iowa Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation (FACE) Program. Information and application details are available at [i-cash.org](http://i-cash.org) under “Upcoming Events.”

◆

Farm Safety For Just Kids has updated their **Tractor Safety** educational packet. The packet is not intended to replace safety training or certification courses, instead it helps children too young for certification training courses to understand the dangers and ways to prevent injuries. The packet, funded by AGCO, can be used as a reference guide by teachers, students, and volunteers when conducting tractor safety programs and is available at [www.farmsafetyforjustkids.org](http://www.farmsafetyforjustkids.org).

◆

This summer the Iowa Rural Health Association (IRHA) will introduce *Iowa Rural Health Conversations - IRHA Summer Series*. The interactive conversations are scheduled from noon to 1:00 pm on the second Thursday of the month in May, June and July, and will include the following topics:

- *Farm-related childhood injury prevention - Keeping children and youth safe*
- *Rural health policy update - What is new in the nation and Iowa*
- *Environmental health - Focus on water*

Additional information will be posted two weeks before each session at [www.iaruralhealth.org](http://www.iaruralhealth.org).

### Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health

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The Great Plains Center looks forward to partnering with agricultural safety and health professionals, agricultural businesses, and government agencies to provide important/essential agricultural safety and health programs. We continue to expand our online educational materials and fact sheets, and our *Ask a Health & Safety Expert* feature is always available at <http://cph.uiowa.edu/gpcab>.

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around each ear. The Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) assigned to basic earmuffs ranges from around 17 to 30 decibels, and is shown on the package. The higher the number, the more effective at reducing noise exposure.

Earplugs fit fully or partially in the ear canal. Expandable foam earplugs must be rolled into a cylinder shape before insertion in the canal, where they expand to a snug fit. Proper insertion is important to achieve protection from noise. Though they are marketed as “disposable,” foam earplugs can be reused as long as they are clean and still fully compress and expand. The NRR for plugs ranges from around 20 to 33 decibels.

To reduce machinery noise caused by friction or vibration of loose parts, keep machinery and equipment maintained and lubricated. It’s worth the effort to protect whatever hearing you have, and to seek help if you suspect you have a hearing loss. Look for hearing protection at hardware, farm or medical supply stores, or online. More information is available through the Hearing Loss Association of America at [www.hearingloss.org/sites/default/files/docs/NoisePollution\\_Infographic\\_h.pdf](http://www.hearingloss.org/sites/default/files/docs/NoisePollution_Infographic_h.pdf) and at our website <http://cph.uiowa.edu/gpcab/fact-sheets/hearing-loss>.

## Community Supported Agriculture Fair

by Brandi Janssen, PhD



On February 26, the University of Iowa College of Public Health partnered with area non-profit Local Foods Connection (LFC) to host a Community Supported Agriculture Fair. Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) was a co-sponsor and the Great Plains Center provided information about hearing loss.

For the past 11 years, LFC has hosted an event to raise awareness about Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). CSA is an arrangement where consumers pay a farmer in the spring and, in return, receive regular "shares" of produce, eggs, flowers, or meat from the farm. The model provides cash flow to farmers during the spring when they are purchasing seeds and inputs and involves the consumer more deeply in the potential risks and benefits of farming. In bad weather years, shares may be less abundant; in an optimal year, the customer enjoys the extra bounty. The CSA Fair gives interested individuals the opportunity to talk with farmers about how they produce and deliver their food. It not only helps farmers find new customers, it also educates the general public about food production in Iowa.

Local Foods Connection is an Iowa City based organization whose mission is to enhance eastern Iowa's sustainable food system by making it more accessible to families and individuals with limited means. Formed in 1999, LFC provides CSA shares to low income families and helps connect service agencies such as the Crisis Center, local food pantries, and the Iowa City Head Start Program with fresh local foods. In addition, LFC provides educational outreach to clients, helping them learn how to prepare healthy meals using local produce.

This year was the first collaboration between the College of Public Health and Local Foods Connection. The College's emphasis on rural health and community engagement made for an excellent fit with Local Foods Connection. Farmers who attended came from around eastern Iowa and included Grinnell Heritage Farm, Muddy Miss Farm, Oakhill Acres, Echollective Farm, and Kroul Family Farm.

For more information about Local Foods Connection visit [www.localfoodsconnection.com](http://www.localfoodsconnection.com)

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## calendar

May 5-7

### National Farmworkers Health Conference

San Antonio, TX  
<http://meetings.nachc.com>

June 3-5

### World Pork Expo

Des Moines, IA  
[www.worldpork.org](http://www.worldpork.org)

June 8-12

### Agricultural Medicine Training

Iowa City, IA  
<http://cph.uiowa.edu/gpcah/education/iowa-ag-med-course>

June 21-24

### International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health Conference

Normal, IL  
<http://isash.org/2015-isash-conference>

July 14-17

### Agricultural Medicine Training

Omaha, NE  
[www.unmc.edu/publichealth/cscash/education/agromedcourse.html](http://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/cscash/education/agromedcourse.html)

July 26-29

### American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers Annual International Meeting

New Orleans, LA  
[www.asabemeetings.org](http://www.asabemeetings.org)

September 1-3

### Farm Progress Show

Decatur, IL  
[farmprogressshow.com](http://farmprogressshow.com)

September 15-17

### Husker Harvest Days

Wood River, NE  
[huskerharvestdays.com](http://huskerharvestdays.com)

September 20-26

### National Farm Safety and Health Week

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

November 17-18

### Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference (MRASH)

Decorah, IA  
[icash.org](http://icash.org)

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Save the Date November 17-18, 2015

## Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference (MRASH)

Hotel Winneshiek - Decorah, Iowa

Conference details will be available at [i-cash.org](http://i-cash.org)

## Research to Practice

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### Hearing Protection

by Stephanie Leonard, MS and Fred Gerr, MD

The following article is taken from *Hearing protection never too early or too late*, published in Iowa Farmer Today, Illinois Farmer Today, and Missouri Farmer Today, and available at: [www.iowafarmertoday.com/news/safety-watch-hearing-protection-never-too-early-or-too-late/article\\_d914e694-d4bd-11e4-9095-271313a2e75c.html](http://www.iowafarmertoday.com/news/safety-watch-hearing-protection-never-too-early-or-too-late/article_d914e694-d4bd-11e4-9095-271313a2e75c.html)

Farmers work in one of the noisiest occupations, with hearing loss rates second only to construction workers with as many as 70 percent of farmers experiencing hearing loss. Because noise-induced hearing loss often occurs gradually, young farmers may be at particular risk, not recognizing the progressive harmful effects of even short-term exposure to high (loud) sound levels.

Early symptoms may include tinnitus, a ringing or buzzing in the ears after a noise exposure, or a sensation of fullness in the ears. A local physician or an ear, nose and throat doctor can determine if you have a hearing loss. If hearing loss is confirmed, the doctor can refer you to a certified audiologist for a full hearing evaluation. The audiologist will help determine whether hearing aids or assistive devices can improve daily functioning.

Individuals with normal or reduced hearing can safeguard their remaining hearing by wearing protective devices. For hearing protection to be effective, it must be accessible, comfortable and used consistently. Keeping earplug dispensers and earmuffs near high noise areas helps ensure their use. The specific type, brand or model of hearing protection used is less important than consistent use of protection in any activities with sound levels above 85 decibels (dBA), even if the exposure is short-term. How can you tell if your environment exceeds this sound level? A good rule of thumb is if an activity or location requires raising your voice to be heard, you should be wearing hearing protection.

Earmuffs are easy to use, durable and can be stored near noise sources. Earmuffs can be worn with hearing-aid devices since they enclose and protect the entire ear. Care should be taken to make sure a complete seal is made



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