

Episode Title: Welcome to Season 3!

Episode Summary: Welcome back to the third season of the FarmSafe podcast. To kick off this season, our Season 3 host, Libby Presnall, chats with center director Renée Anthony. They talk about upcoming projects at the Great Plains Center and what to expect from Season 3.

Episode Quote:

"We're really excited to introduce you to Libby Presnall, the voice of our Season 3. Welcome, Libby."

– Renee Anthony, Center Director

Transcript

00:10 R Anthony

The *FarmSafe* Podcast is brought to you by the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health in the blink of an eye and injury, can change your life and your farm forever. During each episode we share firsthand stories and real-life tips for making safer and healthier decisions while on the farm.

Welcome to season three of the Farm Safe Podcast. I'm Renee Anthony, director of the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health here at the University of Iowa. We're actually one of 12 centers that are funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and NIOSH. And our purpose is to conduct research and provide outreach to protect the health and safety of agricultural workers.

00:50 R Anthony

This Farm Safe Podcast first aired in 2021, when Kate Crawford, then a postdoc working in our center, led both the development of the podcast and brought to us stories and experts for our inaugural season one season 2 episodes were developed by Anna Proctor and Madison Bentley, two of our graduate students who are also studying ag safety and health. We're really excited to introduce you to Libby Presnall, the voice of our season 3. Welcome, Libby.

01:20 E Presnall

Hi, thank you. Thank you. I'm really excited.

01:23 R Anthony

We're glad to have you here. Why don't you introduce yourself to our listeners and tell us a little bit about how you got interested in agricultural safety and health?

01:33 E Presnall

Yeah. So, I grew up in Polk City, IA. It's a little town kind of right in between Des Moines and Ames. I went to a small school where agriculture was pretty popular. I was an FFA member. I actually performed the FFA creed at the National Convention, so I was pretty involved in that. I also come from a farming family and my mom's parents actually have a farm in Ames, and it's actually owned and operated now by my uncle.

They are a row crop farm and they also have a cow calf operation. I've spent a lot of time on a farm, that's for sure. I didn't really do too much of the work. I just kind of rode in the tractors and played with the cows, the cows that you know, I later found out we're going to slaughter. So yeah, that was very upsetting to me at the time. I now understand, you know, way of life.

But I never really thought that I was going to pursue any sort of career in agriculture. When I originally came to the university, as in the University of Iowa as an undergrad, I thought that I would go into the medical field doing something. But I quickly realized, after getting my CNA, that I don't know if I really liked hands on patient care. I took a few classes at the College of Public Health, and I loved it right away. So, I ended up getting my undergrad degree in public health here at the University and I knew that I wanted to get my master's

degree in public health as well. So I took a leap of faith, and I went into occupational and environmental health, I took some safety and health classes, and I was like, this is, this is where I need to be. And you know, going back to my roots a little bit was nice. I can talk to my mom side of the family, especially my uncle more now because we relate on something I know more of the details about farming and what all it entails. And so that was, that was really cool to kind of go back to how I grew up and now I get to serve the agricultural community, and I really love that so.

05:01 R Anthony

Well, thanks for that perspective. You know, I just to tell our listeners, I had you in class and you were a hoot in class, and I could really see you engaged in trying to come up with ways of communicating things that you're learning back out to your client so to speak. So from that, I'm really glad that to have you on board here in the center and look forward to a great season in the farm safe podcast so we're great and thrilled to have you on board working for this season and I've seen your planning board. So I know you've spent a lot of time this summer getting ready. It looks like you are have been collecting stories from farmers and lining up experts to help share these best practices that have successfully reduced injuries on the farm, can you tell us a little bit about what you planned for the upcoming season? Any teasers to keep listeners interested in coming back?

06:00 E Presnall

Yeah. You know, we have some really interesting topics this season. We're diving a little bit into topics like ergonomics, which no, is not just office chairs. It's actually really important to farmers. You know, we have a project going on right now that is looking into whole body vibration from tractors and other equipment like that. So we have a lot of farmers that experience back pain and so these topics related to ergonomics, they're really important for farmers and I think that they'll find it interesting and helpful, hopefully, and then we've got some stuff prepared to dive into emergency preparedness topics, whether that be weather related events and how you can prepare your farm. Or injuries. And if there is an accident or you know where emergency personnel is needed, then we have some tips and some resources for how to prepare your farm for that as well. We're also going to touch a little bit on pesticides again, I know it's a really important topic that farmers want to know more about. So we're going to talk a little bit about things like take home exposures. We'll also talk about some equipment hazards, tractor safety.

We'll look into grain bin safety. That's a big one. We've talked to quite a bit of farmers. We were at the farm progress show, so we got some really interesting stories of just different injuries or close calls even from those farmers and they're really great stories. I mean, obviously not so great because there is either an injury or some negative health outcome.

But they were interesting stories that you know, give people who maybe aren't familiar with farming a new perspective of the occupation and how dangerous it is and they're stories that can really help, hopefully convince other farmers that these things do happen. A lot of times you might say ohh it won't happen to me, but it can. It really can. So, I'm really excited to kind of dive into all of that.

08:55 R Anthony

Well, that's great. Yeah. When we're talking with farmers and talk to them about their willingness to share stories, I think their biggest motivating factor is to prevent somebody else from going through what they've gone through. So I think you've done a great job in kind of touching folks in a way that gets them to share that information so that we can tap into some experts and some other folks that have made great solutions available to folks so that the other people don't have to go through it again, so I'm looking forward to some of these stories and I'm a little nervous and they have to come back on and.

You know, give you some, some other stuff, so sounds great. So, since you're new to the Great Plains and many of our listeners might not know what it is that we even do here, I'm going to turn the questioning over to you. So, I'll let you now do the interviewing. What do you think our listeners would want to know about what we do here at the Great Plains Center? Ask away.

09:59 E Presnall

All right. Well, you kind of talked a little bit about what the center does. Can you give any more detail about that?

10:21 R Anthony

Yeah, in a nutshell, our mission is really to prevent agricultural injury and illness and to improve safety and health among agricultural communities. So not just those that are doing farming, but those that are also on the farm. So the workforce, we know that farming families, there's that fine line of are you family or are you worker. We want to protect everybody on the farm. A hazard is a hazard. And, if we protect one person from it, we're going to protect everyone from it.

The way that we do that is we do both research and outreach. And you mentioned some of the projects that you're familiar with, the whole-body vibration project that doctor Fethke is involved with. We also have a roadway project. We're looking at how can we inform a community and get them involved so that farm operators that are on roadways in our rural communities are not threatened by other people driving cars around them. We've got some great folks both in Iowa and in Indiana that are working on community projects to see what works to get the word out about safe driving around farm vehicles.

11:36 R Anthony

We also have a project where we're going back into swine barns and we're looking at how can we improve the air quality kind of using a one health method where we're making the air cleaner, not just for the workers in there, but also for the pigs.

How can we improve the air quality inside of these buildings, both for dust reduction as well as looking at virus reductions? We've got some treatment units that have been really huge. And then we made our own custom units that included some UV disinfection. And now we're looking at really making these small sizes. So, you can hang them in the ceiling inside of a animal building and treat the air so that everybody is healthier at the other side of the project.

12:30 E Presnall

I will say I did see, uh, you know, prototype. And it was quite cool.

12:38 R Anthony

Yeah, we've got a lot of testing that we're doing in the lab, but we're really bringing in producers and vendors that build equipment and it's a really great project where we're getting a lot of people's input in order to make this technology really adaptable at the end of the time that we're working on it, so hopefully we'll have stuff that will roll out into people's buildings.

And then we also do outreach. The Farm Safe Podcast is just one of many tools that we use to get information that researchers and other folks around the region have developed in order to improve safety and health on the farm. We have education, we have week-long courses that we give. We help others around the country give those courses in our AG Health and safety course. We also write safety watch articles that are picked up by Iowa and Illinois and Missouri Farmer today. So those are funds just to get information out into the press where farmers are reading things. And then we develop materials that people use in education.

So we translated a bunch of research and papers that have been out there, and make posters that people could hang on their walls if they're doing AG education in communities or at extension offices. Those should be all mailed to colleges all over our nine state region.

14:27 E Presnall

And those, if I'm not mistaken, those are available on our website for anyone to view and to download.

14:36 R Anthony

Yeah, it's an 11 by 17. We thought we'd make them a little bit bigger, but get them printed up. They're in color. I will say that my design team, which is Libby did a great job with those.

Then we'll put them on the website, and we'll actually have some tips for how to use these in a classroom. But you can also, if you are a producer, you can just hang them up in your machine shed and share information with those that are exposed to similar hazards on your farm.

15:31 E Presnall

We actually had five new posters that we developed in this year, 2023. Those topics for the posters are gas monitor use, anhydrous ammonia, safe vehicle extraction, respirator seal checks and the cost of injury. So those are some really informative posters that are

beneficial, really for farmers to have and for them to kind of hang up and as just, you know, a reminder, hey, you're wearing a respirator. This make sure you're doing a seal check. This is how you properly do it.

16:16 R Anthony

If you put it at a place where you're going to need the—to be reminded, it's like, oh, yeah, right. I need to do this one step. We're trying to make it easy to make doing it the safe way the easy way. All right. Any other questions about the Great Plains Center?

16:35 E Presnall

Ah, well, in this podcast we want to talk about topics that farmers want to hear about. It's important that you know, we're not just giving information that we think the agricultural community wants to hear. Is there a way for our listeners to either you know, reach out to us, to ask a question about one of the podcast episodes, or to even give suggestions about other topics that they might want to know more about?

17:26 R Anthony

Yeah, great question. We do go out to farm shows and meet with farmers, but I'm responding on emails to things all over the place all the time. We've got a survey that you can take on our page and we also have, if you look at our homepage, there's a contact US button. And so we've got an e-mail that will send the question, and we will find the best person to answer it for you. And we'll also circle back if you want to tell a story and be on the podcast, we'd love to talk to you.

18:23 E Presnall

Yes, yes, definitely reach out. We would love to record your story and get that out there so that people can learn from your experiences.

13:19 R Anthony

Well, Libby it was great talking to you. I'm glad to help you kick off this new season for the Farm Safe podcast. I think people have a better idea of who you are. A little bit more about what the Great Plains Center is. We've also talked about some new ideas of how we're going to closeout each episode. So, I'm going to turn it over to you and say let's give it a try.

13:40 E Presnall

It's our welcome episode, so we'll keep it really simple this week, so I'm going to ask you guys to visit the Great Plains Center Resources page. We'll provide the link below. Go ahead, visit that, check out some of the resources that we have. And if you're feeling really kind, go ahead and contact us and let us know if there is something on that page that you actually used or you found useful, because it's important that we know that people are actually using these. They're helpful. That is my one ask for this episode.

14:16 R Anthony

Listen in on the *FarmSafe* Podcast to join in on the conversation about keeping safe on the farm.

We want to hear from you. Share your stories about health and safety issues on the farm, about injuries that made you change the way you work, or about the ways you keep yourself and others safe on your farm. Also let us know if there's a question you have or topics that you want to hear about on the air. You can visit our website gcch.org or e-mail us.

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Episode Resources

- [Agricultural Health and Safety Posters](#)

Photo

