NECAS Courses Accredited by Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau

The National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) received accreditation from the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau to offer two agricultural rescue courses for volunteer fire departments across Iowa. The two accredited courses are Tractor Rollover Extrication and Combine Extrication. Each six-hour program will teach responders how to quickly and safely remove a victim from a tractor rollover or combine entrapment. Iowa-based fire departments will now be able to get the much needed training and have the cost paid for by the Iowa Volunteer Firefighters’ Training Fund. NECAS will be submitting the curricula to surrounding states for approval in the near future.

NECAS, in partnership with the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau, is developing a Grain Bin and Elevator Fire and Explosion DVD-based curriculum sponsored by Nationwide Agribusiness that will be distributed to fire departments later this year.

NECAS has signed a management agreement with the Dubuque County Firefighters Association to manage the new four-story, propane-fired training tower located just west of Dubuque. Plans are underway to schedule a week of training in the fall for firefighters to participate in Ag Rescue training at NECAS, as well as training at the new training tower.

NECAS is a partnership in safety and health between the National Safety Council and Northeast Iowa Community College serving farmers, agribusiness, and Fire and EMS personnel with hands on training. For more information contact Dan Neenan at 888/844-6322 or neenand@nicc.edu.

Certified Safe Farm – The 10th Anniversary

In 1996, Dr. Susanna Von Essen from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and I met with the President and VP of Mutual of Omaha about the idea of developing a program with insurance companies to reduce injuries and illnesses in agriculture. They were interested in the concept, but told us we would need proof that it would save insurance companies money before there would be widespread interest. The name “Certified Safe Farm” (CSF) came out of that meeting. A proposal was funded by NIOSH, with additional support from the Iowa and National Pork Producers, Pioneer, Monsanto, and Farm Bureau, for the Certified Safe Farm program.

The program was designed with three main components: 1) a clinical occupational health screening, 2) an on-farm safety audit, and 3) an individualized education plan. Nurses from the AgriSafe Network operate the clinical portion of the program. The on-farm auditors are farmers from the local area who have successfully completed a training program by I-CASH staff.

The program was started at the Spencer AgriSafe Clinic and the surrounding counties. Later, projects were initiated in AgriSafe Clinics at Dubuque, Keosauqua, Oskaloosa, Hampton, LeMars, Sioux Center, Ida Grove, Britt, Allison, Grundy Center, and Manchester. Over 600 persons have been involved in the study.

The following results summarize the main findings in the program:

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SAVE THAT DATE

Agricultural Safety and Health Forum
The Changing Face of Agriculture
Biofuels, Food Safety, Alternative Farming
November 14-16, 2007, Omaha, NE

Conference registration information is available at
www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash

1) The farms in the study had 47% less cost in occupational illness
and injury insurance claims compared to control farms. These
cost savings were directly related to the safety score of the farm, the
higher the score, the lower the insurance claims.

2) The farms also had significantly higher usage of respirators for lung
protection during farm work. Because respirator use increased,
there was 50% lower incidence of Organic Dust Toxic Syndrome, an
acute respiratory condition. There was also 25% less incidence of
acute bronchitis.

3) Farmers in the program have made over 1400 documented safety
improvements on their farms. We know from conversations with the
farmers that many other safety changes have been made but were
never documented.

4) Focus groups and surveys have revealed that farmers like the
program and hope it will continue in some form in the future.
There have been many programs to prevent injuries and illnesses in our
farming communities. However, few such programs have shown positive
results. CSF is one of the few that has shown a reduction in illness and a
reduction in costs from these illnesses. We are working hard to draw
insurance industry attention to the success of this program. There is
ample evidence that this program will pay for itself in cost savings, and
provide a rebate to farmers for their compliance with the program. Our
work will continue to focus on taking this research to practice.

The 2007 Agricultural Occupational Health Training was held
June 11-15 in Coralville, Iowa. Thirty health care professionals from
Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Nebraska, New
York, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington,
and Wisconsin 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 2008 training
contact Kay Mohling at 319/335-4219

USDA-CSREES Youth Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation
Mini-Grant - If you are offering a youth safe tractor and machinery
operation training program for 14 and 15 year-olds for employment in
production agriculture under the USDOL Hazardous Occupations
Order for Agriculture, you may be eligible for a USDA CSREES mini-
grant to support your certification program. For more information and
to apply for support funds go to www.ystmomg.psu.edu

AgriWellness, Inc. in Harlan, Iowa is pleased to have been awarded a
Rural Health Network Development Grant from the US Office of
Rural Health Policy. This grant will run for three years beginning May

The Farm Safety 4 Just Kids (FS4JK) office has moved. Their new
address is 11304 Aurora Ave., Urbandale, Iowa 50322. The new phone
number is 515/331-6506, and FAX number is 515/331-2947. The
website and toll free phone number will remain the same:
www.fs4jk.org and 800-423-5437.

Certified Safe Farm, continued from page 1

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Dr. Kelley Donham is the director of Iowa’s Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH), and the Associate Department Head for Agricultural Medicine in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health. He can be reached at 319/335-4190 (kelley-donham@uiowa.edu).
New I-CASH Advisory Council Members

George and Deb Hebl’s Iowa roots run deep. Both are fourth generation farmers who grew up in the Iowa City area. The Hebls have been on their land for 13 years, raising a few beef cattle (mostly for friends and neighbors) and 30 acres of hay. Though they are officially retired, there are plenty of chores each day to keep them busy.

Prior to taking up farming on a full time basis, George and Deb worked at the Veterans Administration Hospital (VA) in Iowa City. Having been in direct health care services has given them each a unique perspective and insight into health and safety issues. Situational awareness and safety consciousness are the issues they see as the biggest health and safety threats facing farmers today.

One of the newest members of the I-CASH Advisory Council, Bill Furlong is a fourth generation Iowan whose family just celebrated their 150th anniversary of farming in Iowa. Bill is the primary operator of 1600 acres of corn, soybeans, hay, and beef cow pasture in Muscatine, Johnson, and Louisa Counties. He lives in Iowa City and commutes to the farm 330 days per year. He cites his father’s attitude and the way he was raised as a major influence on making him more safety conscious. Bill also works off the farm as an attorney, occasionally assisting people with agriculture and real estate questions. He supports the work I-CASH does and says, “I-CASH is a wonderful example of public monies well spent. I believe it’s something the state of Iowa should support.”

For a complete list of I-CASH Board Members visit www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ICASH

I-CASH Spring Meeting

Iowa State University Extension hosted the 2007 I-CASH Spring Meeting on April 27th at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine in Ames, Iowa. Kelley J. Donham, Director of I-CASH, gave a presentation on the “Economic Evaluation of the Certified Safe Farm Intervention Program.” Dr. George Beran, Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Veterinary Microbiology and Preventative Medicine, treated attendees to a history of veterinary medicine at Iowa State and a tour of the R. Allen Packer Heritage Room, a museum of historical veterinary medicine. Dr. Danelle Bickett-Weddle, Associate Director, Center for Food Security and Public Health, gave a presentation on bio-risk management. Brian Adams, College of Veterinary Medicine Facilities Manager, gave an overview of the additions being made to the Veterinary Hospital followed by a tour for all attendees. I-CASH committees also met to review accomplishments and revise action plans for the coming year.
In May, Iowans gathered in Des Moines to pay tribute to the 44 workers who lost their lives from traumatic injuries while they were at work (50% + 5% in chart). The Iowa Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (IA FACE) program captured information about these incidents, and about that many more that occurred to self-employed workers such as farmers. Information about these additional deaths came from press clippings collected in the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health Farm and Agricultural Injury Monitoring System (FAIMS).

The previous issue of Alive & Well showed 25 farm or agricultural fatalities in FAIMS press clippings for Iowa in 2006. They make up nearly a third (27% + 5% in the chart) of the 79 worker deaths recorded in the IA FACE toll of all workers. Nearly three quarters of these 25 farm or agricultural deaths involved a tractor, ATV, or other self-propelled machine. Other machinery, livestock attacks, and other/unknown incidents each added 8% to the death total. The remaining 4% (1 fatality) was an engulfment in a grain storage facility.

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