**Weathering Change: Behavioral Health Matters**

Behavioral health in rural communities was highlighted at this year’s Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety Health (MRASH) Forum, with attendees from 10 states and Sweden. Dr. Lorann Stallones, Professor of Epidemiology from Colorado State University, a nationally and internationally recognized expert on occupational and injury epidemiology, opened the conference with her presentation, “Weathering Change: Stress and Behavioral Health.” Dr. Stallones explored the mechanisms of stress and how they may affect physical well-being, as well as neuropsychological symptoms associated with a history of acute pesticide poisoning. Dr. Stallones recommends more research in this area, but in the meantime, she emphasized that farmers should avoid high exposure to organophosphate compounds.

Additional plenary sessions were provided by Fred Kirschenmann, Distinguished Fellow at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, who discussed opportunities

**Facilitating Research to Practice with Community Partners**

by Kelley Donham, MS, DVM, DACVPM

Over the past 20 years, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has made a large investment resulting in a high level of research in agricultural safety and health. Success in research to practice (R2P), defined by NIOSH as “the translation of knowledge, interventions, and technologies into highly effective prevention practices and products which are adopted into the workplace,” has been challenging in the agricultural setting.

The renewal application of the NIOSH-funded Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH) was successful on several of the proposed projects, including one entitled Community Partnerships: Research-to-Practice with Regional Agricultural Health Organizations. This project presents an active process to facilitate translation of research findings into active prevention programs that will directly benefit agricultural producers. To accomplish this, a strategic collaboration between the GPCAH and regional agricultural health and safety organizations (community partners) in the nine-state GPCAH region (Midwest) will be developed.

The purpose of the collaboration is to develop an R2P conduit between research projects generated from the NIOSH Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing Program (intramural and extramural) and other institutions’ funded research, to the farm community. Working with community partners, we will facilitate their ability to develop, translate, and diffuse evidence-based findings, best practices, tools, and approaches directly to the farming population. Community partners have the potential to reach hundreds of farm families and workers through their existing constituent networks. This program will assist the development of sustained

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Iowa’s Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) has named Mike Schouten of Sioux Center, Iowa the 2011 recipient of its Agricultural Safety and Health Hall of Fame Award. Schouten was recognized during the opening session of the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety & Health (MRASH) Forum in Des Moines on November 16, 2011.

Mike Schouten is the Agriculture Stewardship Center Manager at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. He teaches and promotes agricultural safety in the college’s agriculture program, where he leads sessions in which students are taught to safely operate agricultural equipment. Schouten also works with the Northwest Rural Electric Cooperative in the teaching and promotion of electrical safety in an agricultural setting, and has assisted the KMEG television station in Sioux City, Iowa in the development of farm safety public service announcements for the harvest season.

Schouten also serves as the central coordinator for the usage of safety demonstration devices for the Farm Bureau, Iowa State University Extension Service, the community hospital, and Dordt College. He provides training to high school students and FFA and 4-H groups that request to use the equipment for safety demonstration purposes. Schouten also encouraged and helped students build a dust explosion simulator (with partial funding provided by I-CASH) that has been utilized by many groups, including the South Dakota Wheat Growers Association, which used the simulator to train elevator personnel in dust explosion prevention.

I-CASH created the Hall of Fame Award in 2002 as a lifetime achievement award for individuals or organizations that have made significant and lasting contributions to agricultural safety and health in Iowa.

For more information on the Hall of Fame Award, visit the I-CASH website at www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash/programs/Hall-of-Fame/index.html.
for sustaining rural communities in the face of future challenges.
Nancy Hale, Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) IOWA discussed a variety of educational mental health programs. A plenary panel with Mike Rosmann, (Executive Director of AgriWellness, Inc.), Marcie Moran, (Director of Catholic Family Services of Sioux Falls), Roger Hannan, (Executive Director of the Farm Resource Center), and Margaret Van Ginkel, (Coordinator of Iowa State University Extension’s Iowa Concern Hotline), discussed access to behavioral health services in rural communities. Additional topics presented at the Forum were youth safety, pesticide and herbicide safety, ATV safety, and personal protective equipment (PPE). Conference participants also had the opportunity to view agricultural safety and health poster presentations from various organizations.

Other highlights of the conference included recognition of the 2011 I-CASH Hall of Fame Award winner, Mike Schouten. This annual award recognizes individuals or organizations in the public or private sector who have made significant contributions to agricultural safety and health. See full story on page 2.

NIOSH Pesticide Handler Personal Protective Equipment Seminar Series

The NIOSH National Personal Protective Equipment Surveillance and Intervention Program for Pesticide Handlers is hosting national seminars on the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). NIOSH carefully selects seminar topics to facilitate learning and also to stimulate discussions among diverse expert stakeholder partners on complex and important topics. Seminars began in September, and will be held on the third Wednesday in January, March, and May 2012, normally starting at 1PM eastern standard time (EST).

Pre-registration is required at [https://www304.livemeeting.com/lrs/1100003614/PublicEvents.aspx](https://www304.livemeeting.com/lrs/1100003614/PublicEvents.aspx). Registration confirmation will include the meeting connection information and instructions to join the meeting. Upcoming topics include How Pesticide PPE Requirement are Developed on EPA Registered Pesticides (January 18), NIOSH 2012 Personal Protective Technology Stakeholders Meeting: “A Safety Roadmap for Pesticide Handlers: Overcoming Barriers to Optimal Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Use” (March 20), and Reducing the Risk of Heat-Related Illness in Agricultural Workers (May 16).
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collaborations, increase GPCAH interaction in the region, and bring NIOSH and other institutions’ research
into practice at the grassroots level.

The first step to achieving this goal is to develop and implement a translational R2P process merging the
academic resources of the GPCAH with the delivery capabilities of our community-based partners. Our
community partners will then be better prepared to deliver evidence-based preventive programs to their
target populations. The second step is to provide an infrastructure of support to the community partners that
includes an educational program on current agricultural health and safety research, information technology
services, timely consultation with agricultural and occupational health and safety specialists, and a competitive
outreach grant program.

To accomplish these aims, specific activities are planned.

• The *Alive and Well Newsletter* will have a special column on R2P that will provide quick access to new
  applicable research from around the country.
• Quarterly conference calls and webinars will be held, and a compendium of research activities for
  community partners in our region will be developed.
• A new R2P Session at the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Forum will be introduced in
  2012. This session will highlight research around the country applicable to prevention in our region, and
  provide for discussion with community partners.
• A “Hot Line” for consultation with community partners will be provided to answer questions or access
to resources.
• There will be a competitive grant process to assist community partners in designing and implementing
  prevention programs based on research and other evidence-based data.

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For more information on the R2P program, visit the I-CASH website, or contact Aaron Kline at aaron-kline@uiowa.edu or 319/335-4065.