The Academy of Agricultural Medicine Instructors

The University of Iowa has conducted educational programs in Agricultural Safety and Health (ASH) since 1974. The Building Capacity in Agricultural Medicine (BC) program was introduced in 2006, with funding assistance from the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, to continue the educational programs and also to assist other locations in conducting sustainable ASH training. Most participants attend the course in their geographic region, requiring current trainers to travel long distances. Even though distance learning components are now a portion of most Agricultural Medicine courses, they can only partially replace the face-to-face expert in the room. Initial training programs in other states were primarily provided by University of Iowa faculty, but trained regional instructors are valuable because they are more familiar with health and safety hazards specific to their region. Subsequent training programs have included a small number of regional trainers developed through “train-the-trainer” activities.

The Academy of Agricultural Medicine Instructors is a new program developed to upgrade the training effort to a certificate education program. It is designed to recognize resource people in ASH that can effectively teach components of the Agricultural Medicine Core Course. Since specific training in agricultural occupational health care is rare, regional health and safety professionals may know a great deal about their specialty area but may have less experience with the specific processes of agriculture, the cultural issues, and prevention activities. The Academy of Agricultural Medicine Instructors is intended to ensure quality, availability, and efficiency of teaching at the various training sites, and will be aimed at a wide variety of health and safety providers. Some of the professionals we hope to recruit include health care providers, safety/extension professionals, and other health or safety professionals. More information on the Academy can be found at www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash/education/academy/index.html

Confined Space Fatalities: An Increasing Reality in Agriculture

by Kelley Donham, MS, DVM, DACVPM

On July 28, 2010, 14 year-old Wyatt Whitehead and Alejandro Pacas age 19, died in a grain engulfment incident in Mt. Carroll, Illinois. This incident headlines the recent rise in the number of grain-related entrapments. Since 1978, over 800 fatal and non-fatal grain entrapment cases have been documented (http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/grainlab/content/pdf/2010GrainEntrapments.pdf). In 2001, there were 18 incidents recorded, and every year following there has been an increase in this number. In 2010, there were 51 grain entrapment incidents reported, and approximately half of those were fatal.

The reasons for this increase have been attributed to many factors, including increased grain production, larger and more grain storage structures on farms and at local elevators, lack of practices to keep grain from going out of condition, lack of monitoring of grain condition in storage, and lack of safe entry practice when entry is necessary.

Confined space hazards on farms include more than large grain bins. A confined space is a space that:
1) is large enough and configured so that a person can enter and perform work;
2) has limited means of entry and exit;
3) is not designed for continuous occupancy.

continued on page 3
I-CASH is now on Facebook!
I-CASH has a new venue for the promotion of agricultural safety and health. The new I-CASH Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/IaCenterAgSafetyHealth. “Like” this page to receive updates in your Facebook news feed. Contact Julia Venzke with questions or suggestions at julia-venzke@uiowa.edu.
I-CASH Hall of Fame Award

Iowa’s Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) seeks nominations for the 2013 Agricultural Safety and Health Hall of Fame Award. This award recognizes individuals or organizations in the public or private sector in Iowa who have made substantial, long-term contributions to the health and safety of Iowa’s agricultural community. Nominees should have contributed in a leadership role to agricultural safety and health issues through promotion and awareness over a considerable length of time. Prevention, education, program evaluation, policy education, policy development, and organizational infrastructure are potential areas for outstanding merit. The entry deadline is August 31, 2013. For more information contact Julia Venzke at julia-venzke@uiowa.edu, or visit the I-CASH website at http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash/programs/Hall-of-Fame/index.html

Confined Spaces continued from page 1

Confined spaces on swine farms can include grain bins, feed bins, and manure pits. The common denominator is that all confined space injuries are preventable. There are specific confined space entry procedures that must be followed to prevent these tragedies:

1. Never enter a confined space (grain bin, feed bin, or manure pit) when working alone.
2. Notify co-workers of a planned entry, and do not enter unless there are at least two trained people, on site, with the ability to rescue the person without having to enter the confined space themselves. Nearly half of the victims of grain entrapment incidents are attempting rescue and are not properly prepared. Proper preparation includes rescue harnesses and ropes attached so the person outside can extract them.
3. Lock out all equipment so it can’t be started with someone inside.
4. Have an accident response plan in place prior to entering bins. Train employees, family members, visiting contractors, and emergency response personnel.

In response to increasing recognition of confined space hazards on farms, this issue was a focus of our Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference held in November 2012. In the short aftermath of all this publicity, on March 14th of this year, a father and son died in a grain bin, at a grain storage facility in Waverly, Iowa. Our work is not done.

For more information on the stories mentioned in the article visit the following websites: www.npr.org/2013/03/26/174828849/fines-slashedin-grain-bin-entrapment-deaths, and www.kwwl.com/story/21643276/2013/03/14/grain-bin-rescue-in-waverly.

For additional information on confined space entry procedures see http://sp.ehs.cornell.edu/osh/occupational-safety/confined-spaces/Documents/Confined%20Spaces%20in%20Agriculture%20Toolbox%20Talk.pdf

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

by Andy Winborn, Program Manager RHSC

The Rural Health and Safety Clinic of Greater Johnson County (RHSC) aims to apply university research, combined with on-the-job experience, and AgriSafe Network and farmer input, to create a culture of safety on farms. The RHSC is an AgriSafe clinic that was born out of a local tragedy. Startup funds were received from a competitive I-CASH grant, with matching dollars from Johnson County. We believe a culture of safety will not happen without first addressing the farmers’ personal safety concerns.

An example is the development of the “E.T.” device (www.news.iastate.edu/news/2013/02/22/tractor-rollover) created by the Iowa State University Industrial Design Department, in response to tractor rollover incidents. This device monitors tractor location and sends out a signal if a rollover occurs. It also visually informs the driver if the tractor is close to tipping. Local farmer feedback on this device led us to recommend incorporating E.T. into updates to a tractor’s roll-over protective structure (ROPS) with the addition of lighting, cell phone charger, and radio features. The added value is important because a farmer may not see the value of ROPS alone, but might highly value seeing clearly and being visible on the roadway at night.

The RHSC is currently expanding into a full service agricultural safety and health center. Over the next 12 months we will be promoting the E.T. device, and other safety products using our new outreach trailer. The Clinic plans to provide equipment and support at farm and rural events, accompanied by our safety message. With the help of the research community we will evaluate this approach, document its effectiveness, and work to improve our methods.

For more information visit the Rural Health and Safety Clinic of Greater Johnson County (RHSC) website at www.ruralhealthandsafety.org
Contact Andy Winborn, RHSC Program Manager at andy@ruralhealthandsafety.org