

## GPCAH Receives Hope and Health Award

Vol. 15, Issue 4 - September 2009

AgriWellness, Inc. convened the *Clock is Ticking for Rural America* conference in Sioux Falls, South Dakota August 3 -5, 2009. One of the highlights was the presentation of the Building Hope and Health awards, which recognize contributions to the field of agricultural behavioral health. This year the conference honored the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH). Murray Madsen, associate director of the Center, accepted the award. The GPCAH was established in 1990 as one of the first NIOSH regional agricultural safety and health centers in the United States. Early on the GPCAH recognized the need to integrate behavioral health research, training, and interventions into agricultural health. The GPCAH sponsored the Surgeon General's Conference on agricultural safety and health in 1991, which was the first time behavioral health issues were included in such discussions. Behavioral health also became a focus in the Agricultural Medicine core course at the University of Iowa, and it continues today. Three years ago the NIOSH public hearing at the GPCAH invited comments that contributed to the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) for Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry recommendations for interventions to enhance the psychological well-being of workers. The inclusion of this goal in the NORA document is a landmark that represents how far the field of agricultural behavioral health has come. Conference notes are available at [www.agriwellness.org](http://www.agriwellness.org).



Dr. Michael Rosmann (at left) presenting the Building Hope and Health award to Murray Madsen, Associate Director of the GPCAH.

## Farewell Message

by Wayne T. Sanderson, PhD, CIH

This is my last article for the *Alive and Well Newsletter* as Director of the GPCAH. In January 2010, I will be a professor in the Department of Epidemiology of the University of Kentucky's College of Public Health. The decision to leave the University of Iowa was extremely difficult to make. My wife and I have very much enjoyed being a part of the University of Iowa family and living among the wonderful people of Iowa. Ultimately, the move was based upon our desire to be closer to family.

The time I have served as the Director of the Center has been a time of great personal growth and I will always be grateful for these seven years that I worked with, and learned from, the many people affiliated with the GPCAH. I am very proud of our many accomplishments and would like to highlight a few. I am especially pleased that under Associate Director Murray Madsen's leadership we have truly become a Center, working collaboratively with our regional partners to address health and safety problems facing rural residents. Our collective work on roadway safety, which is being led by Chip Petrea from the University of Illinois, is a

perfect example of our collaborative efforts, and I am eager to see reductions in injuries and fatalities associated with farm equipment on roadways.

Our Center has made great contributions to health and safety research. We are privileged to have a unique prospective cohort study of a rural population. The Keokuk County Rural Health Study which is led by Drs. James Merchant and Ann Stromquist, is the envy of many other institutions and has provided a better understanding of respiratory disease, injuries, and hearing loss associated with farm work and rural lifestyles. Under the leadership of Dr. Kelley Donham, we have also helped to educate the next generation of health and safety professionals who will continue the work to reduce agricultural diseases and injuries.

I consider it one of my greatest honors to have been the Director of the Great Plains Center and I look forward to following its continued success. Although it will be from a distance, I hope to continue to collaborate with the dedicated people of the Great Plains Center.

Dr. Wayne Sanderson directs the GPCAH, housed in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health of the College of Public Health. He can be reached at 319/335-4207 ([wayne-sanderson@uiowa.edu](mailto:wayne-sanderson@uiowa.edu)).

In August, NIOSH held its biennial agricultural safety and health research conference in Cincinnati. The conference brought together researchers from inside and outside of NIOSH to explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration, to learn about current and proposed projects, to interact with other researchers in small group forums, and to hear updates from NIOSH's "Ag, Forestry and Fishing" sector leaders. The GPCAH provided several posters and presentations, and for the first time, three members of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) attended. RAC members Shari Burgus (FS4JK), Charlotte Halverson (NECAS), and Katherine Waters (U of Minnesota) appreciated the opportunity to learn about the work and workings of NIOSH and the Ag Centers. Shari Burgus took what she learned about the "Economics of Prevention" program by the SE Center and was able to share it during a FS4JK workshop in Oklahoma. Charlotte Halverson described it as "a wonderful experience on several levels," not only a great way to put names and faces together but also to see the work accomplished and continuing.



The American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers has named Charles V. Schwab winner of the 2009 NAMIC Engineering Safety Award. The award, sponsored by the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies, honors outstanding engineering contributions to the advancement of agricultural safety engineering in research, design, education, or promotion. The award was presented June 24th at the 2009 ASABE Annual International Meeting, in Reno, Nevada. Schwab was selected for the award in recognition of his outstanding leadership and accomplishments that have influenced agricultural safety and health in Iowa and across the country. Professor and extension safety specialist at Iowa State University (ISU), Schwab is a nationally recognized leader in personal safety issues related to agricultural production, directs ISU Extension's Safe Farm program, and conducts agricultural safety research in the agricultural and biosystems engineering department at ISU.



Iowa Rural Health Association's Listen & Learn Webinar Series topic on September 10th was *NRHA: Update on Federal Legislation & Impact on Rural Health*. Archived sessions are available at [www.iaruralhealth.org](http://www.iaruralhealth.org).



The July 31, 2009 issue of the *CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* features the article *Fatalities Caused by Cattle - Four States, 2003-2008* reported by Wayne Sanderson and Murray Madsen, GPCAH, and the Injury Prevention Research Center. See the full article at [www.cdc.gov/mmwr](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr).

Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health initiated an agricultural medicine training in 1988. The growth of this program was advanced with funding from the GPCAH Building Capacity Project, which aims to establish capacity in other regions to train health providers in agricultural medicine.

*Agricultural Medicine: Occupational and Environmental Health for Rural Health Professionals* was held June 8-12 in Iowa City, IA. Thirty-seven health care professionals attended the training. Participants came from California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Australia, Canada, and Finland. In addition to the didactic training, the participants toured Amana Farms, followed by a barbeque at the farm. The 2010 Iowa Agricultural Medicine training will be held June 7-11, 2010 in Iowa City.

The Illinois Agricultural Medicine course was held in Springfield from August 3-7. Participants attended from Illinois, Missouri, and Washington, DC, and included doctors, nurses, veterinarians and students. In addition to the classroom lectures, the participants toured a large grain handling facility, a fertilizer and chemical plant, a John Deere dealership, and a farm.

Other training opportunities in 2009 include Wisconsin to be held in Marshfield, WI. Session 1 will be held November 12-14, 2009, and Session 2 is scheduled for March 18-20, 2010. North Carolina will hold their Agricultural Medicine training November 30 - December 4, 2009 in Greenville, North Carolina.

For information on any of the training opportunities contact Kay Mohling at 319/335-4219, [kay-mohling@uiowa.edu](mailto:kay-mohling@uiowa.edu), or visit [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash).



**Great Plains  
Center for  
Agricultural  
Health**

100 Oakdale Campus  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, IA 52242-5000

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Published 4/yr  
Kay Mohling, Ed.  
319/335-4219  
fax-319/335-4225  
[kay-mohling@uiowa.edu](mailto:kay-mohling@uiowa.edu)

[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH)

# Ireland's Farm Safety Code of Practice

by Risto Rautiainen, PhD

During August I had the pleasure of visiting Ireland to participate in meetings and to tour local farms. In Ireland all farms are covered under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. Farmers are required to complete a Farm Safety Code of Practice, which involves a self-assessment of risks and a signed safety statement. This program is a partnership between the Agriculture Research Authority (Teagasc) and the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). John McNamara, leader of the Farm Safety Code of Practice program, and Health and Safety Officer with Teagasc, was my host.

To assist farmers in completing the Code of Practice, local Teagasc offices provide training around the country. About 40% of 130,000 Irish farms have completed the Code of Practice, but during my visit there was great debate in the media about the 60% of farmers who have not completed it. Besides this controversial issue, there was also a lot of very positive media coverage on the National Seminar on Farm Safety and Health where I was an invited speaker, and where about 100 farmers received awards for completing their Code of Practice.

The experience of seeing large numbers of farmers making a commitment to their health and safety, and the debate in the media pushing every farmer to think about health and safety, was very refreshing. In many countries, including the United States, we have not seen similar activity in recent years. We have come to accept the status quo that farmers want little regulatory involvement, and research institutions and other educators have limited funding to promote health and safety. We also accept that agriculture is the most hazardous industry in the U.S., with about 30 fatalities per 100,000 workers annually.

In Ireland, the atmosphere appeared entirely different. HSA finds it unacceptable that the fatality rates fluctuate around 10-15 fatalities per 100,000 agricultural workers. The farmers that I talked with seemed very motivated about safety, and found the Code of Practice program beneficial. The Irish experience gives us an interesting example; it may not fit with the U.S. situation as is, but it's clear that the U.S. agricultural fatality rate is higher than it should be and something needs to be done.

On a completely different note, this is my last contribution to the Alive & Well Newsletter as GPCAH Deputy Director. I am leaving the University of Iowa in September to become Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska, College of Public Health in Omaha. After 15 years at GPCAH, I want to express my sincere thanks to all involved in this Center. I will keep in touch, although I will be working in a different capacity, as I continue to collaborate on GPCAH projects in Nebraska.

Dr. Risto Rautiainen can be reached at [rrautiainen@unmc.edu](mailto:rrautiainen@unmc.edu)



John McNamara, Risto Rautiainen, Seamus Crosse (Teagasc Director of Admin. and Corp. Services), and Pat Griffin (Senior HSA Inspector).

## calendar

September 20-26

**National Farm Safety & Health Week**  
[www.nsc.org/necas](http://www.nsc.org/necas)

November 7-11

**American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Exposition**  
Philadelphia, PA  
[www.apha.org/meetings](http://www.apha.org/meetings)

November 11-13

**Canadian Agricultural Safety Association Conference**  
New Brunswick, Canada  
[www.casa-acsa.ca](http://www.casa-acsa.ca)

November 12-14

**Agricultural Medicine Training - Session I**  
Marshfield, WI  
[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash)

November 18-19

**Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety & Health Forum - *Planting the Seed***  
Johnston, IA  
[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash)

November 30- December 4

**Agricultural Medicine Training**  
Greenville, NC  
[www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/agromedicine/index.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/agromedicine/index.cfm)

January 27-28, 2010

**ASHCA-NIOSH Joint Conference - *Be Safe, Be Profitable: Protecting Workers in Agriculture***  
Dallas/Fort Worth, TX  
[www.ashca.com](http://www.ashca.com)

## SAVE THE DATE

**Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Forum  
"Planting the Seed"**

**November 18-19, 2009**

Stoney Creek Inn  
Johnston, Iowa

Check the GPCAH and I-CASH websites for updated information

[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/gpcah](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/gpcah)  
[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash)

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+++++It All Adds Up  
 Farm Equipment (FE) vs. Motor Vehicle (MV) - Crashes on Public Roads, 2008

	CRASHES <sup>1</sup>				INJURIES			DEATHS		
	PDO <sup>2</sup>	Injury	Fatal	Total	FE	MV	Total	FE	MV	Total
<b>Illinois</b> DOT, Division of Traffic Safety, Crash Info Section	190	55	4	249	15	59	74	1	3	4
<b>Iowa</b> DOT, Office of Traffic and Safety	113	83	6	202	30	83	113	4	2	6
<b>Kansas</b> DOT	57	19	2	78	4	29	33	1	1	2
<b>Minnesota</b> DOT	60	36	2	98	9	39	48	0	2	2
<b>Missouri</b> Hwy Patrol Public Info. and Ed. Div.	136	48	2	186	18	48	66	2	0	2
<b>Nebraska</b> Dept. of Roads, Hwy Safety	46	24	1	71	8	26	34	0	1	1
<b>North Dakota</b> DOT, Office of Traffic Safety	13	7	1	21	2	8	10	0	1	1
<b>South Dakota</b> Dept. of Public Safety, Accident Records	14	7	0	21	5	6	11	0	0	0
<b>Wisconsin</b> Bureau of Transportation Safety	103	53	3	159	15	95	110	1	2	3

NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>Data excludes non-collision events, collisions with parked motor vehicles, fixed objects, animals, trains, pedestrians, and various other categories of "first harmful events". **A "fatal" crash may include more than one fatality and an injury crash may involve injuries to more than one person.**

<sup>2</sup>PDO means property damage only.