

## MRASH Conference Focuses on Safety and Health for Ag's Essential Workers

by Gayle Olson, MS, CHES, I-CASH Assistant to the Director

In 2002, the first Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Forum was held at the Holiday Inn in Little Amana. Two years later, the word "Rural" was added to the title and the theme centered around building partnerships. Twenty years later, we've met in 16 different communities around Iowa and online.



This year's theme "Spotlighting Safety and Health for Ag's Essential Workers: Raising the Cloak of Invisibility" also benefited from many partnerships. Our keynote session was a powerhouse! Speakers Knesha Rose Davison from the AgriSafe Network talked about her research on issues of women in ag, Casper Bendixsen from the National Farm Medicine Center covered his work on the "Farm Kid Paradox", Seth Holmes shared his insight and research on migrant workers in ag, Sean Bear discussed issues related to Native Americans, all very ably facilitated by Athena Ramos from the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health. Drs. Cornelia and Jan Flora used their Community Capitals Framework to illustrate and analyze important cross-cutting findings of our presenters. It brought many new perspectives and implications into our work. These conversations need to continue.

The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health presented a pre-conference workshop on their Ag Safety App and did several interviews for their [FarmSafe Podcast](#). Josie Rudolphi and Diane Rohlman hosted another successful Student Career Session on Wednesday morning.

To commemorate Veterans Day, Linda Emanuel of the AgriSafe Network organized a fantastic panel, expertly facilitated by Shay Foulkes, sharing the risks our veterans face when they farm and resources that are available to assist them. AgriSafe has compiled a useful list of resources on their [webpage](#).

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Abstracts for presentations, roundtables and posters were submitted by people throughout the U.S. summarizing new research and outreach projects underway in agricultural safety and health. From feed yard workers to greenhouse staff, from mental health to machine learning, from natural disasters to Covid – we learned about so many great projects. Each day's session ended with poster presenters giving a 3-5 minute flashtalk about their work. Everyone did a tremendous job!

We all look forward to the day when we can gather together in person. Virtual conferences have their advantages, though. The 2021 MRASH Conference was attended by people from 21 states, Washington, DC, and five countries representing five different continents. Chances are good that not all of them would have driven to Iowa this fall! As we move forward, we will look at ways to meet face-to-face, but also continue to welcome our partners from around the country and around the world.

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## Director's Message

by Brandi Janssen, PhD

Somehow, we've already arrived at December and today's temperature, with windchills in the single digits, proves the point even if I am having a hard time believing the calendar. Despite the continued pandemic, I-CASH has had another productive year. You can read in this issue about some of our most recent accomplishments, including another successful MRASH conference, our 2021 Outstanding Youth Grant Award Winner, and our ongoing ROPS Rebate Program.

In addition to the highlights here, we distributed four seasonal campaigns, focusing on tick-borne illness prevention, bystander safety, preventing hand injuries, and our annual safety calendar to promote year-round safety planning. As extension offices went back to face-to-face programming, we also received numerous requests for additional materials. We provided additional insect repellent wipes and prevention brochures in Tama and Bremer Counties and Polk County requested gloves and calendars to distribute during their pesticide applicator trainings. We are always glad when our seasonal campaign topics resonate with our partners. Please reach out if you are interested in the materials or have a suggestion about a future topic.

Our seasonal campaign series, along with all the rest of our programming, is designed with significant input from our active Advisory Board. Although we haven't been able to meet in person over the course of the pandemic, this statewide group continues to help I-CASH do its best work. Over the past year, a number of members have retired or moved on to other positions: Kristine Schaeffer retired from the ISU Pesticide Safety Program and Department of Entomology, Jeni Lara moved on from IDALS to a new agency, Wayne Humphreys' term ended with the Iowa Corn Growers, Keeley Coppess left IDALS for a new opportunity in private industry, and Kathy Leinenkugel will retire from the Iowa Department of Public Health in January 2022. I am extremely grateful to all of the board members who have invested time and effort in I-CASH. Some, like Kristine and Kathy, have contributed many years of energy and knowledge. Others who were members for only a short time also made significant impacts on our programs. I am hopeful that their time with the I-CASH board was engaging and interesting, and that they can share the perspectives of occupational safety and health in their new roles.

As we move into another new year, I am (again) optimistic that we will get back to more in-person engagement with our board and community partners. I-CASH will be conducting a center-wide evaluation of all of our programs in the spring, with the intent to do some strategic planning in the fall. I am very proud of the new collaborations we have developed, the broad portfolio of prevention resources that we have created, and the impact that we have made over the past several years. I'm looking forward to identifying ways to expand our reach in the future.

Wishing you all a healthy and restful holiday season.

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Brandi Janssen, PhD

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**Agricultural Safety and Health**  
The University of Iowa ■ Iowa State University  
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship  
Iowa Department of Public Health ■ Non-profits for Farm Health

[www.i-cash.org](http://www.i-cash.org)

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## ROPS Rebate Program Update

by Brandi Janssen, PhD

Starting in spring 2020, I-CASH dedicated a limited amount of funds to partner with the National ROPS Rebate Program, based Cooperstown, NY. The program funds about 70% of the cost of retrofitting a tractor with a Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS), a proven strategy to significantly reduce the risk of a fatality in the case of a tractor rollover. Farmers who work with the hotline receive guidance on where to find a ROPS for their tractor and they have the option to self-install, if they wish. When we started in 2020, there were more than 50 Iowa farmers on the waitlist for funding. When funding was offered to them, many had already used their own funds to retrofit, had sold the tractor, or no longer needed the funding for other reasons. Since we began, I-CASH has invested over \$30,000 in 27 counties to retrofit 32 tractors from the original waitlist with this lifesaving technology.



International I466 before and after ROPS installation.



John Deere 3010 Diesel before and after ROPS installation

The farmers who have taken advantage of this funding so far are a diverse group that includes crop, livestock, and produce growers. Sixty-five percent report being part-time farmers and farm sizes range from 20 to 1600 acres. Of the livestock farmers, most report having cattle, along with a couple of goat and sheep farmers; herd sizes range from 2 to 200 head. Most farms have more than one tractor, and two farms have 12. In addition, 15 already have at least one tractor with ROPS, and six of those have previously retrofitted another tractor. Finally, five farmers report having experienced a serious incident on their tractor, and 75% report that they will always use the seatbelt when operating the retrofitted tractor.

In 2022, I-CASH will expand our promotion of the ROPS Rebate Program in Iowa to continue to make farms safer across the state. Older tractors without rollover protection contribute to numerous fatalities every year in Iowa. We are glad to be able to make a proven, lifesaving strategy more accessible to Iowa farmers.

Visit [www.I-CASH.org](http://www.I-CASH.org) for information on I-CASH programs

## AgriSafe Network Launches New Health Hub

by Sarah Dauterive, MLIS, AgriSafe Network Web Technologies Librarian

AgriSafe Network has been well positioned the past twenty years to provide health and safety information to agricultural communities and their families. Recently, AgriSafe launched a new website which integrates its learning management system that includes fact sheets, webinars, and safety information for health professionals with health topics for farmers and ranchers. [The AgriSafe Health Hub](#) is a new space on the AgriSafe website for farmers and ranchers to learn more about how to protect themselves from occupational hazards.

An important new feature of the website is specifically targeted to agricultural producers, [“Health Topics.”](#) Farmers and ranchers are constantly navigating a variety of occupational risks, and this new topic page is their home base for trusted and reliable information on health and safety issues. Finding trusted health information can be difficult, especially when you need information specifically for the occupational hazards associated with farming. This new space serves as a hub for the people working in agriculture to find specific information to their needs, both from AgriSafe and our trusted partners. Additionally, the website includes a [“Learning Opportunities”](#) section which features content produced by AgriSafe for health and safety professionals, and rural healthcare providers.

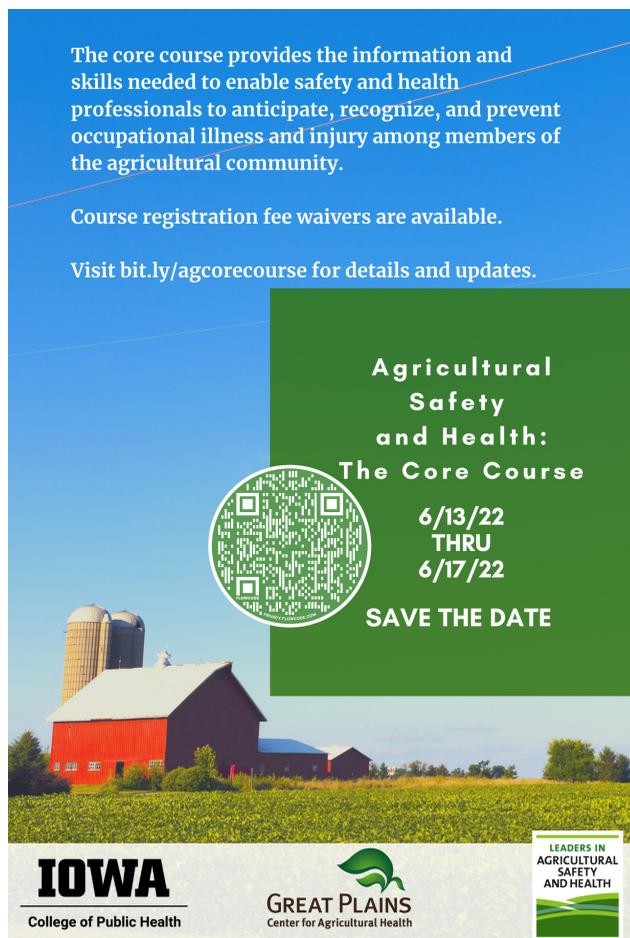
This work is largely credited to the Network of the National Library of Medicine’s [Region 3 Medical Library](#), which funded our investment and integration of agriculture and safety resources. This is important because farmers are at very high risk for fatal and nonfatal injuries.

Visit the Health Hub today and be sure to check out our social media pages on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) at AgriSafe Network. For questions about the AgriSafe Health Hub, please contact Sarah Dauterive, Web Technologies Librarian, at [sdauterive@agrisafe.org](mailto:sdauterive@agrisafe.org).

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Twenty years of MRASH Conferences and still so much to share! The success of the MRASH Conference continues to center on building partnerships. Our planning committee is a testament to the saying “none of us is as smart as all of us.” We couldn’t do MRASH without them! In addition to Ralph Altmaier and Gayle Olson from I-CASH, we send out a huge thanks to Florence Becot from the National Farm Medicine Center, Marsha Cheyney and Jenn Patterson from the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, Ellen Duysen from the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, LaMar Grafft representing the International Society of Agricultural Safety and Health, Charlotte Halverson from the AgriSafe Network, Carol Peterson from the Upper Midwest Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, and Josie Rudolphi from the University of Illinois.

We hope to hold our 2022 MRASH Conference in Cedar Rapids next November, likely in a hybrid format. If you are interested in helping with any aspect of the conference or have questions or comments, please contact Gayle Olson, [gayle-olson@uiowa.edu](mailto:gayle-olson@uiowa.edu).



The core course provides the information and skills needed to enable safety and health professionals to anticipate, recognize, and prevent occupational illness and injury among members of the agricultural community.

Course registration fee waivers are available.

Visit [bit.ly/agcorecourse](http://bit.ly/agcorecourse) for details and updates.

**Agricultural Safety and Health: The Core Course**

6/13/22 THRU 6/17/22

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## Medical Student Writes about Eye Injury Prevention

by Brandi Janssen, PhD

In addition to the agricultural safety and health work that occurs at the UI College of Public Health, the Carver College of Medicine trains most of Iowa's doctors and health care providers. Many of these new physicians will end up working in rural areas and get to know the agricultural community as part of their practice. Some are interested in working with farmers even prior to graduation,

such as Lola Lozano, who contacted I-CASH advisory board member Cheryl Tevis about publishing an article about a farmer's recent eye injury. Cheryl connected Lola with I-CASH and her story, [Farmer, doctor share story of serious injury](#), was published as the October Safety Watch column in *Iowa Farmer Today*. I wanted to learn more about what inspired Lola to write the article, below is our discussion:

*It is important for doctors to understand the specific health conditions and injuries their rural patients face. Understanding their lifestyle and available resources better can help doctors educate patients on proper first aid when injuries do occur.*

Lola Lozano, U of I MSTP

### **Can you describe the program you're in and what you plan to do after graduation?**

*The University of Iowa's Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) trains students to become physician-scientists with dual MD and PhD degrees. In addition to medical school, we spend years learning how to conduct high-quality research and how to translate our scientific findings into improving patients' healthcare. Likewise, the patients we work with guide the laboratory experiments we design so that we can better understand their conditions and develop and deliver potential treatments. I hope to become an eye doctor with a special focus on treating patients who suffer from eye cancer and diseases affecting the retina. My research lab training will aid me in developing treatments for patients that preserve their vision for years to come and keep their cancer from recurring or spreading to other parts of their bodies.*

### **What was it about the eye injury story that inspired you to write the column?**

*At Carver College of Medicine, students are trained not just how to care for patients but how to advocate for their rights to accessible and high-quality healthcare. A course assignment last spring challenged us to find a way to exercise that role. Given my interest in eye health and having learned about the large rural and farming population in Iowa, I wanted to write a public article educating Iowans on the unique eye injuries affecting farmers and offer advice on how to best avoid and manage those injuries. I asked the eye doctors at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics for help, and they enthusiastically invited me to the clinic to interview a patient who is an Iowa farmer that had suffered a work-related injury and was willing to speak with me.*

### **Do you have experience working with farmers? As a future practitioner, what specific health needs do you see among agricultural and rural populations?**

*I grew up in El Paso, Texas on the outskirts of town, across the street from a cotton farm. During my time in high school, I was a member of Future Farmers of America where I took classes learning how to weld and care for livestock. On weekends I taught horse-back riding lessons, led trail rides, and cleaned horses and stalls at a local ranch in exchange for the opportunity to ride at my own leisure and enjoy the serenity of the open land. While the wide expanse of land can be peaceful, in times of crisis it can also mean trouble. As shown by this article, many traumatic accidents occur on the farm that require*

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## I-CASH Outstanding Youth Grant Award

by Brandi Janssen, PhD

Every fall, I-CASH awards the Outstanding Youth Grant Award. Selected from the recipients of our annual Agricultural Youth Grants, the Outstanding Youth Grant Award provides extra recognition to a project that is particularly creative or reaches a wide audience in a new way. This year, the award went to the Carroll Champs 4-H Chapter in Carroll County who helped keep their 4-H members and fair attendees safe during the county fair cattle show by raising awareness of the dangers involved when approaching show cattle. Club members designed a poster display that was presented to the public as well as a nine-minute video entitled [“Approaching Show Cattle Safely.”](#) Four of the



students introduced themselves in the video and then used their own show cattle to point out blind spots and kick zones, demonstrate how to approach cattle safely, and what behaviors will help keep cattle calm during handling. The students emphasized that these skills will help keep both animals and people safe.



Each year I-CASH provides funds for community grants to youth groups aimed at the prevention of farm-related injury. I-CASH Agricultural Youth Grant applications for 2022 are now available on the [I-CASH website](#). Past projects are also highlighted on the website and have included development of agricultural safety materials, construction of farm safety hazard displays, and distribution of safety supplies to farmers during harvest season. Visit [www.i-cash.org](http://www.i-cash.org) for details, **applications are due April 15, 2022.**

*Medical Student Writes about Eye Injury Prevention continued from page 5*

*emergency care. It is important for doctors to understand the specific health conditions and injuries their rural patients face. Understanding their lifestyle and available resources better can help doctors educate patients on proper first aid when injuries do occur.*

### ***Is there anything else you would like to share about the story or working with farmers?***

*I would like to thank all those who made it possible to share this article: the farmer who spent nearly an hour generously sharing his story with me; Dr. Ed Stone; Dr. Ian Han who introduced me to the patient, provided first-aid advice, and assisted in editing; Dr. Brittany Bettendorf who provided support and enthusiasm for my advocacy project; Dr. Charles Jennissen whose lecture on rural medicine inspired me to better understand the health conditions and care needs of rural lowans and who connected me to Cheryl Tevis; Cheryl Tevis and Brandi Janssen who assisted me patiently and generously with editing and publishing.*

## NEWS AND UPDATES

I-CASH Agricultural Youth Grant applications are now available. Each year I-CASH provides funds for community grants to youth groups aimed at the prevention of farm-related injury. In addition, I-CASH awards an Outstanding Youth Grant Award and the winners are invited to present their project at the annual MRASH Conference. Past projects have included distributing safety supplies such as ear plugs and sunscreen, building farm safety hazard displays, and developing agricultural safety materials and presentations. **Applications are due April 15th.** Visit [www.i-cash.org](http://www.i-cash.org) for details.

I-CASH 2022 Farm Safety Calendars are available at ISU Extension and Outreach, and Farm Service Agency county offices. The calendars feature safety and health tips, and showcase Iowa's beautiful farm landscapes. The I-CASH Annual Report is available on the [website](#).



### Agricultural Safety & Health Course scheduled for June 13-17

As the national model of effective agricultural safety and health education, the course provides information and skills needed to enable safety and health professionals to anticipate, recognize, and prevent occupational illnesses and injuries among members of the agricultural community. Expert instruction is provided by experienced faculty and specialists, including board certified physicians, nurses, veterinarians, and certified industrial hygienists. Visit the [course website](#) for details.

### ASHCA Call for Abstracts Extended to January 12

Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America (ASHCA) is seeking abstracts for Lightning Talks and Poster Presentations for their 2022 North American Agricultural Safety Summit, scheduled for March 28-30, 2022, in Las Vegas, NV. Visit the [ASHCA website](#) for details.

## Upcoming Events

January 21-22

**Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Conference**  
Ames, IA

February 1-3

**Iowa Ag Expo**  
Des Moines, IA

March 14-17

**AgrAbility National Training Workshop**  
Madison, WI

March 28-30

**North American Agricultural Safety Summit**  
Las Vegas, NV

April 15

**I-CASH Youth Grant Deadline**

May 3-5

**2022 Public Health Conference of Iowa**  
Hybrid Event / Ames, IA

May 10-13

**National Rural Health Conference**  
Albuquerque, NM

May 23-25

**American Industrial Hygiene Conference & Expo**  
Nashville, TN

June 12-16

**International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH) Conference**  
Fort Collins, CO

June 13-17

**Agricultural Safety and Health: The Core Course**  
Iowa City, IA



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