



News from Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) Volume 29, Issue 4- September 2023

Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference Celebrates Youth on November 8–9

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

This year the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH) Conference is **Celebrating Youth on the Farm** November 8-9 at the historic Hotel Julien Dubuque in Dubuque, Iowa. And we will have young voices to help us celebrate!



Holly Schmitt, Iowa FFA State President

We are thrilled that Holly Schmitt, current FFA State President, and former FFA State Secretary and State 4-H Council member, will be our keynote speaker on Wednesday, November 8th.

Holly grew up on her family's dairy farm near St. Lucas, Iowa, raises her own flock of ducks, and shows horses. She is a sophomore at Iowa State University double majoring in agricultural education and event management. Following Holly's presentation, we will have a conversation between two panels. The first panel will include young people representing different types of farming to discuss what excites them about agriculture, as well as their concerns. The second panel will include grandparents who will share how they became involved in agriculture, hopes for their farming grandchildren, and some of the significant changes they have experienced in their lifetime. After the panels, conference attendees will choose among roundtable discussions and presentations scheduled during four breakout sessions.

More than 30 presenters from around the Midwest submitted abstracts about their research and outreach projects. On Wednesday evening the poster reception will be held at the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, a short walk from the Hotel Julien Dubuque. We are still accepting poster and display abstracts until October 1st, visit the [conference website](#) for details.

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On Thursday November 9th, the morning sessions will focus on public policy, including how research and best practices become integrated into public policy. Attendees will have an opportunity to network together around common topics and interests. We will recognize the 2023 I-CASH Outstanding Agricultural Youth Grant and reflect on 25 years of I-CASH funded youth projects in Iowa. Following lunch, we will make a short drive to the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) in Peosta, Iowa, for a workshop on emergency preparedness.

Conference registration will be available by September 15th on the [conference website](#). Cost for the two-day conference is \$175 with a discounted rate of \$100 for students and active farmers. There will be no single day registration or online attendance for the 2023 conference. Hotel reservations should be made directly with the Hotel Julien Dubuque at (800) 798-7098 or (563) 556-4200 (conference rate is \$119 + taxes & fees). Sponsor and exhibitor information is also available on the [conference website](#).

Director's Message

by Brandi Janssen, PhD

The goldenrod is blooming and I saw the first signs of harvest on a recent drive to central Iowa; I think that means fall has arrived.

This year, I-CASH staff have been focusing on a center-wide evaluation so we can better understand the impacts of our many programs. We worked with the University of Iowa's Center for Evaluation and Assessment to interview our advisory board members, organizational partners, seasonal campaign and youth grant recipients, and MRASH planners. If you participated in this process, thank you for your input!



Brandi Janssen, PhD

We were glad to learn that I-CASH's partners value our educational resources as being high quality and relevant to the farm community. Several participants also commented on the depth of expertise and commitment of our staff. Seasonal Campaign recipients regularly use the materials in other programming that their offices provide, such as pesticide trainings and ag update meetings. They also described how they learn from the materials and share them with their personal networks. The youth grant program was commended for providing a real-world experience for young people who might otherwise only learn about farm safety and health in the classroom. Across all programs, participants described I-CASH as a leader in agricultural safety and health and an organization that brings together collaborators from diverse backgrounds to improve safety and health.

We also received many excellent recommendations to build our programming even further. We will spend the upcoming year implementing many of the suggestions we received, including providing more outreach to our youth grant recipients and developing curricula that can be included with seasonal campaigns and then delivered by our partners at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (ISUEO) and Farm Service Administration (FSA). We'll continue to ensure that our materials are beneficial for the many audiences in the agricultural community and add expertise to our advisory board.

In addition to our evaluation, you'll read about several other I-CASH projects in this newsletter. MRASH is just around the corner, and we are looking forward to seeing the final reports from our ten youth grant projects this year. I also had the pleasure of visiting Slovenia this summer to talk about I-CASH programs and start to develop new partnerships abroad. You can read more about that visit on page 4.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy harvest season!

Brandi Janssen
I-CASH Director

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I-CASH Ag Youth Grant Update

by Tabitha Kuehn, BS, I-CASH Outreach Coordinator

I-CASH awarded agricultural youth grants to 10 FFA chapters and 4-H clubs across the state this year. Many of these projects will take place during harvest season, but a few awesome projects got rolling this summer.



Central Community FFA students delivered sun safety resources to over 40 farmers.

In July, Central Community FFA members brainstormed safety project ideas and landed on the topic of UV protection. The committee of students leading the project chose this topic because of the many hot and humid days that Iowa experiences, causing farmers to be exposed to intense ultraviolet radiation. The students decided to provide farmers in their rural community with resources to help them be more sun safe, and on Monday, June 17th, the students went to multiple farms and brought their idea to life. As farmers harvested hay or worked on miscellaneous projects, the students visited them to deliver lunch, sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, sponsorship recognition cards, and an informational flyer they created on UV safety. These items were gathered by utilizing grant funds and working with local partners to secure in-kind resources. Students selected these items because they wanted to provide farmers with protective items that they could keep handy in their equipment or vehicles, hopefully making them more likely to utilize preventive measures against UV rays.

Over the course of the day, Central Community FFA students reached over forty farmers and had great conversations about the importance of protecting your skin from the sun, with a few farmers even sharing their personal experiences with melanoma. “As their FFA advisor, it was most rewarding to watch them approach the farmer, explain their project, expand on the importance of protection of the farmer from ultraviolet radiation, give them protection items, and thank them for working hard to feed their community each day. The skills the members learned from writing the grant, brainstorming ideas, making a plan, executing the project, and reflecting are so valuable,” said FFA Advisor Meghan Bond.



Central Community FFA members provided area farmers with UV protection resources.



Southwest Valley FFA members handed out SMV signs and reflective tape at the Adams County 4-H Tractor Ride.

Southwest Valley FFA has also begun their agricultural youth grant project. Students handed out Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) signs and reflective tape at the Adams County 4-H Foundation Annual Tractor Ride on Saturday, August 19th. At this event, 150 feet of reflective tape and over ten SMV signs were provided to farmers in attendance. The students will continue to distribute SMV signs and reflective tape at a farm safety presentation the chapter is hosting at their local opera house in September. Southwest Valley students were motivated to do this project because they wanted to reduce rural roadway accidents and increase the visibility of farm equipment in their community. The students are enjoying the opportunity to interact with local farmers, and the farmers are grateful to receive free safety items!

The success of these early projects is setting the tone for an exciting harvest season when more for the agricultural youth grants projects will take place!

Visit www.i-cash.org for information on the I-CASH Youth Grant Program.

I-CASH Partners with Sociomedical Institute in Slovenia

by Brandi Janssen, PhD, I-CASH Director

I-CASH expanded its reach beyond Iowa through a bilateral partnership with Dr. Duška Knežević Hočvar, senior research associate at the Sociomedical Institute ZRC SAZU in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Dr. Knežević Hočvar received grant funding to visit the US and work with I-CASH from September through December 2022 to understand current programs related to mental and behavioral health in farming. While she was here, Dr. Knežević Hočvar also visited the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, the National Farm Medicine Center, and the Upper Midwest Center for Agricultural Safety and Health. She met with I-CASH advisory board members and extension partners in order to draft proposals for culturally relevant mental and behavioral support for farmers in Slovenia.

In June 2023, I traveled to Slovenia to meet with staff at the Sociomedical Institute ZRC SAZU with funding from a University of Iowa College of Public Health Global Travel Grant. Duška was an outstanding host! I gave two lectures to Slovenian researchers, policy makers, farm associations, and farmers. One focused on my research with Iowa farmers and the other described current policies and programs in the US that support farmer mental health. I was also lucky to visit several farms in the Alps along the northern border of Slovenia. The lowland areas of Slovenia grow a number of crops, including mixed produce, hops, and corn. In the highlands, there are mostly dairy and livestock farms. Some of these farms practice a traditional seasonal migration, with the herd in the lowlands during the winter and in highland pastures, called planinas, in the warmer summer months. Many farms produce their own cured salamis and cheeses which, I can assure you, were excellent!



Brandi Janssen lectures at the Sociomedical Institute ZRC SAZU in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Virtual Reality Farm Tours!!

by Kayla Faust, PhD, GPCAH Research Assistant

We are working on creating educational materials to show how we farm in the Midwest – and how we do it safely. We have been working with farmers to capture short 360-degree videos that show off how they work on the farm and wanted to invite others to help show what farming (and safe farming) looks like.

We are developing educational materials to show people what real farming looks and sounds like, and to demonstrate the hard work that goes into making their food. Custom materials for K-12 students will help show hazards to youth. We will also incorporate videos into student curriculum at the community college level all the way through medical students, to illustrate farming and its risks when handling cattle, operating heavy farm equipment, loading and unloading grain, fixing equipment, and other tasks farmers routinely complete.

To include your farm, let us know what processes you want to share. The outreach staff from the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH) will visit your farm and take 360 videos and pictures that we can use to show others how you have managed hazards on the farm. Videos will incorporate virtual reality experiences to help immerse students into farming operations to help them understand your operations.

No one works harder than a farmer and we want to capture these labors on film for the next generation. If you're interested in having your farm participate in this opportunity, please contact Kayla Faust at (319) 350-8175 or kayla-faust@uiowa.edu.

Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH) Summer Events

by Marsha Cheyney, MPH, GPCAH Evaluation and Outreach Coordinator

Ag Safety Days, National Education Center for Ag Safety (NECAS) - Peosta, IA (June 8, July 6)

GPCAH outreach staff presented to over 250 students (elementary, high school) and adults on heat illness prevention and sun safety at the Progress Ag Safety Days hosted at NECAS this summer. We adapted an exercise about “sun-smart animals” to present the basic concepts of sun safety and guide the discussion. We found that although the youth were familiar with most of the basic concepts (use sunscreen, wear hat/sunglasses/sun safe clothing, avoid the sun during peak hours, take breaks to cool down), they were less confident about the specific details, like when to apply/reapply sunscreen and what type of hat is most protective. Youth seemed to enjoy the animal-based curriculum, and even the adults said they learned something!



Marsha Cheyney, GPCAH Outreach and Evaluation Coordinator, discussing gas monitors with FFA members attending the Minnesota Farmfest.

Minnesota Farmfest - Redwood Falls, MN (Aug 1-3)

GPCAH outreach was an exhibitor in the UMASH Safety Pavilion at the Minnesota Farmfest. We took our experiential gas monitor display this year, which includes a variety of different models of wearable gas monitors, information on the features of each, and a bump test demonstration. Farmfest attendees were able to wear the monitors to decide which they preferred and walk through the steps of the bump test to experience what maintenance for the monitors entailed. On the last day of the show, a group of approximately 40 commercial manure applicators completed their annual training by visiting our booth for a question-and-answer session on wearable gas monitors.

National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) Annual Meeting - Des Moines, IA (Aug 13-15)

GPCAH outreach staff were thrilled to return as an exhibitor at the NACAA annual meeting this year after a long break due to COVID. We talked to extension educators from across the country about the array of educational products we’ve developed, ranging from our Agricultural Safety and Health Core Course to the 5-minute audio microlearning lessons (with companion print materials) that make up our new Ag Health 101 course. We polled attendees about which educational opportunities would be useful in their specific specialties and regions and found that while all of the options were valued, multi-media/print materials, the FarmSafe podcast, and the new Ag Health 101 class were most appealing due to their flexibility and number of topics covered. We also introduced the Farmer/Rancher registry to this audience and answered questions about how the registry would be used and how farmers could get involved.



GPCAH Outreach Specialist Mandy Archer conducts an EARfit test at the Farm Progress Show.

Farm Progress Show - Decatur, IL (Aug 29-31)

GPCAH was once again an exhibitor in the Farm Progress Show Health & Safety tent. We shared information with hundreds of farmers and their family members about hearing loss prevention and how to select hearing protection. We then used our EARfit system to measure the actual protection provided (vs lab values) by the earplugs-of-choice for individuals who stopped at our booth. Outreach staff also introduced the Farmer/Rancher Registry to show attendees, and recorded stories to be featured on upcoming episodes of the FarmSafe Podcast.

NEWS AND UPDATES

National Farm and Safety Week - September 17-23



The week is dedicated to raising awareness about the hazards of working in agriculture. This year's theme is "No One Can Take Your Place." Each day of the week will have its own focus, daily themes are listed below.

- Monday, September 18 - Equipment and Rural Roadway Safety
- Tuesday, September 19 - Health and Wellness
- Wednesday, September 20 - Priority Populations
- Thursday, September 21 - Confined Spaces
- Friday, September 22 - Brain Health

Visit www.necasag.org for more information.



Relationships Can Heal: Knowing the Farmer Client is a training program for mental health providers on the culture, occupation, and well-being of farm and ranch producers. Providers will be able to provide culturally informed therapeutic relationships to improve patient/client outcomes. Upcoming programs are scheduled for October 5th in [Independence, IA](#) and for October 12th in [Ames, IA](#). Pre-registration is required.



The GPCAH recently added two more training topics to their list of [Core Course online modules](#). **Musculoskeletal Disorders Among Agricultural Workers** provides an overview of common musculoskeletal disorders, hazards, and work practices that increase risk, and prevention strategies. The **Off-Road Vehicle Hazards (ORV)** training module describes how ORVs are used in agriculture, hazards that arise with use, and recommendations to reduce risk. The training topics originated from the Agricultural Safety and Health Core Course curriculum. Additional GPCAH training modules available on [Training Source](#) include Biological Risk Management; Hazards Associated with Livestock Handling; Illness & Injury Prevention among Animal Caretakers; Occupational Diseases of the Lung in Ag Settings; Occupational Skin Disorders in Agriculture; Overview: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing; PPE for Agricultural Health; Physical Agents for Agricultural Health; and Transportation Hazards in Agriculture. These training modules are provided at no cost and a certificate of completion is available.

Upcoming Events

September 17-23

National Farm Safety and Health Week

October 1-6

World Dairy Expo

Madison, WI

October 5

Relationships Can Heal training

Independence, IA

October 6-8

Ozark Fall Farmfest

Springfield, MO

October 7-9

Women, Food, and Ag Network Conference

Ames, IA

October 12

Relationships Can Heal training

Ames, IA

October 18

Iowa Rural Health Association Annual Conference

Marshalltown, IA

November 1-4

National FFA Convention & Expo

Indianapolis, IN

November 8-9

Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference (MRASH)

Dubuque, IA

November 12-15

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting & Expo

Atlanta, GA

November 16

National Rural Health Day



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