



News from Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH)

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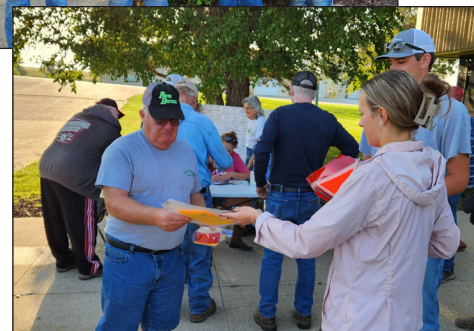
2024 I-CASH Agricultural Youth Grant - Applications now available

by Tabitha Kuehn, BS, I-CASH Outreach Coordinator

Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) is currently accepting applications for the 2024 youth grant program! Every year I-CASH has funds available for small grants given to community youth groups for farm safety-related projects. These grants are phenomenal opportunities for young students to learn about farm safety, bring farm safety to their communities, as well as develop a multitude of life skills.

Past grant recipients have had great experiences, and the grants provide opportunities for learning, personal development, and community connections. Last year in Corning, Southwest Valley FFA provided local farmers with reflective tape and slow-moving vehicle signs for farm equipment at an annual local tractor ride. Ethan James, one of the Southwest Valley FFA members, reflected on the project and said, "The adults were very appreciative of receiving the reflective tape and safety information from our FFA members who were at the tractor ride. They were very grateful and told me multiple times that they could always use the safety materials for their respective farm equipment."

Creative projects are highly encouraged! Iowa's youth continue to impress every year with the innovative ways they find to share farm safety information. Farm safety is a message that needs to be delivered in multiple ways to multiple audiences, and past projects have highlighted various ways that groups have reached the agricultural community, such as meeting farmers in the field, creating posters for county fairs, performing puppet shows for elementary students, and more.

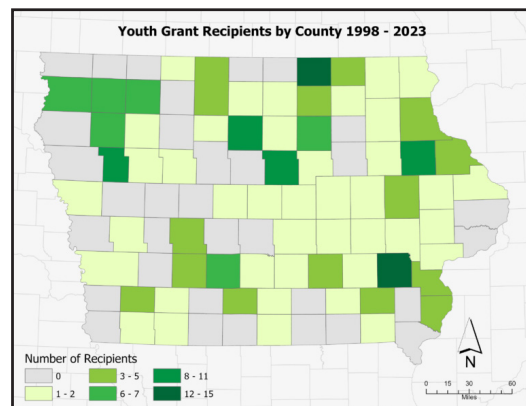


Southwest Valley FFA members provided SMV signs and reflective tape to area farmers.

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Last year, we had a great pool of applicants and awardees, and we are hoping to have another strong group this year! I-CASH would like to eventually have at least one youth grant funded in every Iowa county. Many of the counties that have not been funded yet are because there has never been an application! Agriculture touches every Iowan's life, so we know there is potential for awesome projects in these areas. Check out the map to see where past youth grant projects have taken place. Please consider sharing this grant opportunity with your communities and visit the [website](#) for program details and grant application instructions.



Director's Message

by Rich Gassman, MS

As many of you may know, I-CASH has undergone a change in leadership with Brandi Janssen stepping down as I-CASH Director to lead the newly established NOAA CAP/RISA Team: Central Midwest Climate Opportunities and Learning (CM CO-Learn). We are all grateful to Brandi for her commitment to farm safety and health, and her leadership and dedication to I-CASH over the last ten years. I started as I-CASH Director on February 1st and my goal is to carry on the mission of protecting our agricultural communities and continue the great work that Brandi did. I grew up on a farm in Northeast Iowa and have spent most of my career working in the agricultural safety and health field, so I appreciate the unique challenges that our agricultural populations face.



Rich Gassman, MS

As I write this message, we are experiencing warm temperatures in Eastern Iowa reminding us that the busy spring season is just around the corner. Spring has always been my favorite time of year. It's a time for hope in the anticipation of what is to come, and a time to finish those last-minute preparations to the tillage and planting equipment, making sure everything is just right. It's also a time to review your farm safety plan and equally important to communicate that plan to your family and employees. When a storm is coming and we have ten acres left to plant, we tend to get in a hurry. When this happens, the tendency is to take shortcuts to get things done. A farm safety plan is important because it reminds us to take the time to do things safely, and to communicate with family members where we are working and when we anticipate being done. If we don't return when expected, they will know our location. A little planning now can save you much needed time later.

Spring is also a good time to review your personal protective equipment (PPE) needs. Do you have hearing protection for those inevitable grinding operations when something breaks? Do you have cut resistant gloves to remove those sharp disk blades and disk openers? Do you have proper eye protection available when grinding or mixing chemicals? Take the time early to review your tasks and determine which PPE will be needed now so you have it on hand.

Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health ([I-CASH](#)) is a great resource to help you with your safety plan and to help you determine what PPE is right for you and for the task. Please reach out to us with any questions.

Rich Gassman
I-CASH Director

Rich Gassman directs I-CASH, housed in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health of the College of Public Health. He can be reached at 319/467-0327 (richard-gassman@uiowa.edu).

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IaCenterAgSafetyHealth


I-CASH | Iowa's Center for
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2024 MRASH Conference: Messaging Matters

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



Messaging Matters will be the theme of the 2024 Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference (MRASH) planned for November 2024 in central Iowa. Dates have been narrowed to Thursday and Friday, November 7-8, or Tuesday and Wednesday, November 19-20.

Messaging always matters, whether translating research into practice, reaching out to new audiences, communicating with old friends or discussing policy implications. The keynote morning will consider how to best communicate with various audiences using multiple types of outreach. It will also address ways we can be inclusive in our messages, so we are sure to reach people who may face limiting conditions, such as hearing impairment, language barriers or limited access to traditional or social media. Later this spring and early summer, we will accept poster and presentation abstracts for a wide range of topics to be presented at our poster reception and breakout sessions.

The MRASH conference has been held in some form since 2002 in a variety of locations around Iowa and online. It has varied from a single day forum to a week of online sessions, and has been held in conjunction with other national meetings. During the pandemic years, we went completely virtual; other years we have included tours, workshops, panels and a variety of formats. We try to interface with communities where we meet, sharing our keynote speaker with college students, including service opportunities, engaging with local participants and learning from people and organizations who have faced many types of agricultural safety and health challenges. More details will be posted on the [conference website](#) by April 1.

Where do you get your farm safety information?

by Tabitha Kuehn, BS, I-CASH Outreach Coordinator

I am so glad that you are reading this newsletter and have an interest in agricultural safety and health. [I-CASH](#) and [GPCAH](#) are phenomenal resources, and I encourage you to take full advantage of all the programs and resources we offer!

I also encourage you to share this information with other farmers in your community! At the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health conference in November, a panel of youth and grandparent-aged farmers were asked, “Where do you get your farm safety information?” All of the answers included some variation of family and friends. Those of you who are already subscribed and reading this newsletter are likely involved in agriculture yourself, as well as interact and care about a lot of folks who work in agriculture. Help make sure they have the resources to be safe. Tell them about this newsletter, encourage them to check for safety campaigns at the FSA and ISU Extension and Outreach offices, direct them to our websites, and lead by example! I hope safe farming for all has been, and continues to be, one your 2024 goals - we promise it is one of ours!



Photo Credit: Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health

Upcoming on the FarmSafe Podcast

by Libby Presnall, MPH, GPCAH Research Assistant

The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health's [FarmSafe Podcast](#) will be exploring some new and interesting topics in agricultural safety and health as planting season approaches. Here is what you can expect in the upcoming months for the podcast. In recognition of National Poison Safety Week, which takes place March 18th through the 25th, the FarmSafe Podcast is coming out with a two-part episode series on prevention and response to poison exposures on the farm. In April, the podcast will focus on emergency preparedness and response. Episodes planned for the month of May will celebrate National Mental Health Awareness Month and Electrical Safety Month by dedicating an episode to farmer mental health and well-being and electrical safety on the farm. May will be an exciting time for the FarmSafe Podcast, as it will also be featuring the Millennial Farmer, exploring the topic of the Multi-Generational Perspective in Farming Today. Stay tuned!



Spring Safety Watch topics

by Mandy Archer, BA, GPCAH Outreach Specialist

Don't forget to check out the **Safety Watch** column in *Iowa Farmer Today*. Safety Watch is a collaborative effort between I-CASH and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH), and a new article is released every month. Recent titles include, "Young Iowans work to improve farm safety" and "Falls on any surface can result in costly injury." In April, safety checks that should be done around the home, like radon and well water testing, will be addressed. May is Mental Health Awareness Month, so watch for an article on the mental health impacts of drought on farmers. Other topics coming up include wildfire smoke, fungicides and poisoning, and pesticide drift concerns. A full list of Safety Watch articles is available on the GPCAH [website](#).



Relationships Can Heal: Knowing the Farmer Client

I-CASH is part of the USDA funded North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, based at the University of Illinois. In collaboration with ISU Extension and Outreach Behavioral Health Specialist Dr. David Brown, a new agriculture-focused curriculum for mental health providers called **Relationships Can Heal** has been developed.

This continuing education session provides an overview of agricultural practices in the Midwest so that providers can be more informed about their agricultural clients' work experience. On **April 17th** the training will be held in [Atlantic, Iowa](#) and on **April 24th** the training will be held in [Grinnell, Iowa](#). For more information contact Demi Johnson at (641) 210-8631 or demij@iastate.edu.



NEWS AND UPDATES

Make a difference in your farm community! The 2024 **I-CASH Agricultural Youth Grant application** is now available on the [website](#). Each year I-CASH provides funds for community grants to youth groups aimed at the prevention of farm-related injury. See the story on page 1 for more information. **Applications are due April 1st.**

The Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) provides educational information throughout Iowa on the safe and effective use of pesticides. Visit the PSEP [website](#) for resources and information on **upcoming pesticide applicator continuing education instruction courses**, integrated pest management, worker protection, environmental quality and agricultural health.

The [Carle Center for Rural Health and Farm Safety](#) has a free webinar series ***A Mother's Game Plan for Safety & Health***. This series is designed to create a place for women in agriculture to understand the risks, needed protection and supervision for tasks performed by youth on farms. This project is designed to shift the mindset and behavior of parents and grandparents, leading to safer and healthier lives for farm youth and those who visit and work on farms.

Researchers seek rural participants for online behavioral weight loss program. Researchers at the University of South Carolina and the University of Virginia want to identify the best digital behavioral weight loss program to help individuals living in rural areas lose weight and keep it off. People may be eligible if they are over the age of 18 and live in a non-urban area of the United States. Participants will receive a 6-month online group lifestyle program focused on eating and exercise habits, weekly online intervention modules and other resources. The program is provided at no cost. For more information visit www.ireachstudy.org.

Upcoming Events

March 19
National Ag Day

March 25-28
AgrAbility National Training Workshop
Atlanta, GA

March 26-27
2024 Public Health Conference of Iowa Des Moines, IA

April 1
2024 I-CASH Agricultural Youth Grant
Application deadline

April 14-16
Iowa FFA Leadership Conference
Ames, IA

April 16-18
Midwest Stream Forum for Agricultural Worker Health
Albuquerque, NM

May 7-10
National Rural Health Conference
New Orleans, LA

May 20-22
American Industrial Hygiene Association AIHA Connect
Columbus, OH

June 17-20
International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH) Conference
Portland, OR

July 14-18
National Association of County Agricultural Agents Annual Meeting
Dallas, TX



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