



News from Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) Volume 31, Issue 2 March 2025

I-CASH Youth Grants - Applications Now Open!

by Tabitha Kuehn, BS, I-CASH Outreach Coordinator

Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) is happy to announce that applications are now open for the [2025 Youth Grant Program](#)! Each year, I-CASH provides small grants to youth organizations throughout Iowa to fund farm safety-related projects. This is a fantastic opportunity for young people to gain hands-on experience, raise awareness about farm safety, and develop important life skills—all while positively impacting their communities.

Over the past 26 years, these grants have led to some incredible projects, and we're excited to see even more innovative and meaningful ideas this year. From safety materials and educational campaigns to interactive events, past recipients have found creative ways to share the farm safety message. This program encourages bold thinking, and we're eager to see what the next generation of ag leaders will create! Projects can take many different forms—whether it's connecting with farmers in the field, designing attention-grabbing posters for county fairs, or providing age-appropriate safety gear to elementary students. The possibilities are endless when youth are encouraged to think creatively!

I-CASH is committed to growing this program and eventually fund at least one youth grant in every county across Iowa. Many counties remain untapped, and we need your help!

If you're from an area that hasn't received a grant yet, now's your chance to make a difference. Agriculture is at the heart of Iowa, and we believe there are countless projects just waiting to come to life.

So, don't wait! Share this opportunity with your community and head over to the [I-CASH website](#) for all the details on how to apply. Let's work together to make farm safety fun and impactful!

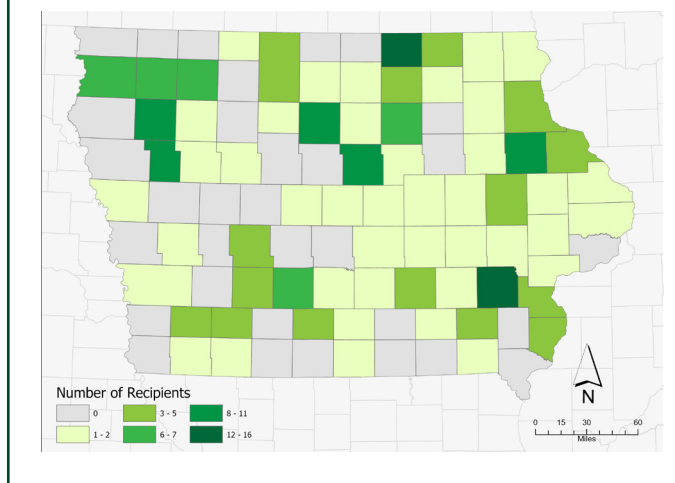


In 2024, the Louisa County Ag Safety Day provided hands-on ag safety education for all 5th grade students in the county.

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Youth Grant Recipients by County 1998-2024



Director's Message

by Rich Gassman, MS

Another winter is behind us and the warm weather of spring is just around the corner. The land is shedding its winter coat and will soon be bursting with life. Spring has always been my favorite season; it's a season filled with hope, and an anticipation of what is to come. New calves are being born, chicks are running around the farmyard, and crops are being put into the fertile soil.

Spring is a time when we put all of our planning into action, and it's also a good time to review your farm safety plan, or if you don't have one, to create one. Having a safety plan allows you to be prepared in the event of an emergency and can help bring you piece of mind. It is equally important that you communicate your safety plan to all family members and employees.



Rich Gassman, MS

I-CASH had a busy fall and winter season. In October we presented two more "Relationships Can Heal" training sessions, one in Dubuque and one in Fort Dodge. Both sessions were well attended and the reviews that we received back from the participants were very positive. On April 17 the training will be held at the Woodbury County ISU Extension Office in Sioux City, and on April 24 we will be presenting the program at the Polk County ISU Extension Office in Altoona. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

In November I-CASH hosted the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH) Conference in Ames, Iowa with the theme "Messaging Matters." We had a great turnout and are already planning for the [2025 MRASH Conference](#), see page 3 for more information. In December I-CASH exhibited at the Integrated Crop Management Conference hosted by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. This conference gave us an opportunity to connect with the ag retail community.

In January we participated in the Midwest Ag Safety Leadership Conference in Omaha, Nebraska. Hosted by the Cooperative Safety Directors of the Midwest, this conference was another great opportunity to connect with ag supply retailers. I-CASH was an exhibitor at the Practical Farmers of Iowa Conference in Des Moines, a very well attended conference that provided an opportunity to share information with several producers. In February we attended the Rural Health Summit hosted by the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa. This was a great networking event, allowing us to visit with other Centers at the University.

As we head into the busy spring season, remember that I-CASH is a great resource to help with your safety plan and to help you determine what PPE is right for you and for the task. Our seasonal campaign materials are all on the [I-CASH website](#) and you can contact 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



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Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Iowa Department of Public Health ■ Non-profits for Farm Health

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2025 MRASH Conference will be held in Amana, IA - November 12-14, 2025

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



Mark your calendars for the 2025 Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH) Conference! We will be gathering on November 12-14, 2025, at the [Hotel Millwright](#) in main Amana, Iowa. The theme for our keynote session is “Cultivating Connections: Health, Safety & Wellness in Agriculture.” The conference will begin with an optional pre-conference workshop on gas monitoring sponsored by the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health. The MRASH Conference will take place all day on Thursday, November 13 and end with lunch on Friday, November 14. Our [conference website](#) contains only basic information now, but will be updated as more details become available. We hope to be able to announce our keynote speaker soon!

Keeping farm families and their workers safe and healthy takes many partners working together to solve sometimes complex health issues. Besides safety concerns, problems can include zoonotic diseases, emerging infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, and changing ecosystems. Our keynote session will dig into this more deeply with a keynote speaker and panel representing multiple perspectives. By popular demand, the first afternoon will feature our mini table workshops where conference participants can choose up to four topics to build their skills in 20-minute sessions. The poster reception will take place that evening. The final day will feature breakout sessions and end with our awards luncheon.

A general timeline is that abstracts will be accepted for breakout session presentations and roundtables from April 25 – August 1. Poster abstracts will be accepted from April 25 – October 15. Last year’s abstracts were some of the strongest ever, both in quality and quantity. We are looking forward to hearing from you about the wide range of research and outreach projects across the spectrum of agricultural safety and health. Conference registration will begin in early September.

The Amana Colonies is one of Iowa’s premier attractions with a great deal of fascinating history, fun shopping, and delicious food and drink. Our conference hotel is the former Amana Woolen Mills and still has a functioning mill operating on the main floor. With so many interesting things to see and do, why not plan to come early or stay longer? For more information about Amana Colonies, check out the [visitors’ website](#).

Hope to see you in November!



The 2025 Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference (MRASH) will be held November 12-14 at the Hotel Millwright in Amana, Iowa.

Call for Pilot Grant Applications

by Kim McMichael, GPCAH Center Coordinator

The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH) funds pilot projects up to \$30,000 (direct costs including: salary, materials, equipment, etc.) intended to promote innovative outreach and research efforts to prevent agricultural injury and illness in our Midwest Region.

The pilot program supports both community-based organizations and academic researchers. Previous topics include respiratory protection training to prevent COVID-19, suicide prevention training within Iowa's agricultural community, and how working conditions impact worker immune function and respiratory health.

Encouraged proposal topics include:

- Falls prevention
- Equipment/Tool safety
- Chemical safety
- Work-related stress and mental health
- Any topic of relevance to the GPCAH mission: to prevent agricultural injury and illness and improve safety and health among agricultural communities.

Applications are due by 5 p.m. on June 6, 2025.

Visit: <https://bit.ly/2024GPCAHpg> to learn more about Pilot Grants and read the RFP.



The poster features the GPCAH logo at the top left, a cornfield under a blue sky, and a yellow diamond-shaped sign with a megaphone icon. The text reads: 'CALL FOR PILOT GRANT APPLICATIONS', 'Promoting innovative outreach & research to prevent agricultural injury and illness.', and 'Important Dates: Project Concepts for Community applications due: April 1, 2025. Final applications (Academic & Community) due: June 6, 2025.' A green button at the bottom right contains the URL 'bit.ly/2024GPCAHpg'.

2024 Pilot Grant Recipient

Abstract author Kaisen Lin, PhD, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Michigan State University

Abstract

Exposure to antibiotic resistant genes (ARGs) can lead to the development of resistance to antibiotics. Little is known about the emission of airborne ARGs from agricultural activities such as manure spreading and hauling. This study aims to identify and quantify airborne ARGs emission from these activities by collecting air and manure samples from two university farms and analyze for ARGs concentrations. The specific aims are (1) to characterize the seasonal pattern of airborne ARGs on university farms; (2) to identify and quantify the emission of airborne ARGs from agricultural activities; and (3) to explore potential approaches to reduce airborne ARGs release by elucidating the associations between ARGs in air and manure samples. This study seeks to provide critical insights into the mechanisms of ARG dissemination in agricultural environments and offer practical solutions to mitigate the associated public health risks. The anticipated outcomes will contribute to the scientific understanding of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) spread and support policy development and implementation of effective control measures.



Kaisen Lin, PhD

Farm Succession Planning

by Tabitha Kuehn, BS, I-CASH Outreach Coordinator

Farm succession often strains family relationships, a reality I've seen among my own relatives and heard about from friends. Disagreements over who inherits the family farm and its future can lead to tension and estrangement.

The transfer of a farm involves both financial and emotional stress, which can ripple throughout the entire family. Planning for farm succession ahead of time can help protect everyone's mental health. A common issue in farm succession is the lack of a family member willing to take over the farm. The older generation often wants to keep the farm within the family, while younger generations may prefer selling or renting the land. These differing visions can lead to emotional and financial conflict, impacting family relationships.



Photo: Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health

Even when someone is ready to take over, problems can still arise. For instance, a farmer who wanted to pass his land to his nephew at a "family price" to continue the farm's legacy caused tensions when other relatives felt left out and upset by the decision. They believed they should have had the opportunity to sell the land outside of the family at a higher price. This situation highlights the importance of clear communication about succession plans well in advance to avoid surprises. Stress can also arise when one generation is ready for the next step, but another generation is not. Aging farmers may delay retirement, causing frustration for those waiting for their turn. Shifting responsibilities and decision-making power should be discussed openly to avoid unnecessary stress.

Farm succession should be a team effort, with early communication and a clear vision to reduce potential issues. It's also crucial to set priorities, whether the goal is to sell the land or keep it within the family. Ensuring that everyone is on the same page can help preserve the farm's legacy.

Consulting experts like accountants, attorneys, and bankers can provide valuable advice during farm succession planning. Iowa State University's Extension and Outreach also offers resources and webinars to support farmers in this process. For those feeling overwhelmed, seeking professional counseling can be beneficial. The [Iowa Concern](#) program provides 24/7 support, and Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health offers [agricultural training to mental health providers](#) across the state so they can be better equipped to understand farmers' struggles.

Farm succession may never be easy, but early planning and communication can significantly ease the process and reduce stress for everyone involved.

JOURNALIST WORKSHOP

Farming the Message: How Media Can Cultivate Ag Safety Awareness

This half day story-generating workshop is designed to help journalists cover complex safety and injury issues related to Midwestern agricultural production.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9

FROM 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
IOWA CITY, IA

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

- First-hand stories about farm fatalities and injuries
- Roundtable discussions with ag community members
- Live demonstrations from safety & health professionals
- Optional tour of agricultural facilities



Save the Date

Ag Health Academy Learning Community



Join us for the launch of the [Ag Health Academy](#) on April 16, 2025. This learning community provides advanced training on health and safety hazards and prevention in agriculture, building on basics covered in [Ag Health 101](#) and the [Intermediate Ag Health](#) courses, or in other 40-hour Ag Safety & Health Core Courses offered around the country. The 90-minute virtual meetings are scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month at 12:00 pm (CT). Each session consists of 60-minutes of presentation followed by 30 minutes of question-and-answer discussions with the presenters and audience. **This program is available at no cost.**

Upcoming Courses

- **Roadway Hazards – April 16, 2025**

Presenters: Cara Hamann, Associate Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Iowa; Jonathan Davis, Assistant Professor in Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Iowa.

- **Dementia and Farmers – May 21, 2025**

Presenters: Kanika Arora, Associate Professor at the University of Iowa’s Department of Health Management and Policy in the College of Public Health and Julie Bobitt, Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Department of Medicine, both involved in a NIOSH-funded project that is developing and testing tools to improve [Farm Safety for Rural Families Coping with Dementia](#).

Visit the Ag Health Academy [website](#) for a full list of topics and schedule.

Academy members will enroll for 12-months of courses. To introduce this new program, membership in the Academy is **not** required to register for the first two courses, “[Roadway Hazards](#)” and “[Dementia and Farmers](#).” Click on each course name to register.

[Click here](#) for more information and application instructions to be a member of the Ag Health Academy. Each session will be archived and available for on-demand viewing the week following the presentation. **These archived presentations are only available for registered Ag Health Academy members.**

Please email cph-greatplainscenter@uiowa.edu with questions.

I-CASH Spring Seasonal Campaign - Whole Body Vibration

I-CASH Seasonal Campaigns are distributed quarterly through Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (ISUEO) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. The spring campaign focuses on Whole Body Vibration (WBV), which occurs when the shaking motion of a vehicle is transferred to the operator. I-CASH partnered with the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health to provide their WBV information card for this campaign. Since maintenance of equipment and keeping tires properly inflated is one prevention strategy, I-CASH is also providing tire pressure gauges as part of the campaign. Visit your county ISUEO or FSA office to pick up information on WBV and a tire pressure gauge. All Seasonal Campaign information is available on the [I-CASH website](#).



NEWS AND UPDATES



Save the Date

Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference - November 12-14, 2025
Amana, Iowa

The 2025 Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH) Conference will be held November 12-14, 2025, at the [Hotel Millwright](#) in Amana, Iowa with the theme "Cultivating Connections: Health, Safety & Wellness in Agriculture." An optional pre-conference workshop on gas monitoring sponsored by the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health will take place on November 12. Visit the [conference website](#) for details.

2025 I-CASH Ag Youth Grant applications are now available on the [website](#). Each year I-CASH provides funds for small grants to community youth groups for farm safety-related projects. In addition, I-CASH awards an Outstanding Youth Grant Award and winners are invited to present their project at the MRASH Conference. **Applications are due April 4th.**

Relationships Can Heal: Knowing the Farmer Client training sessions will be offered in Sioux City on April 17 and in Altoona on April 24. This continuing education [program](#) provides an overview of agricultural practices in the Midwest so that providers can be more informed about their agricultural clients' work experience. For more information contact Demi Johnson at (641) 210-8631 or demij@iastate.edu.

Agricultural Producers Needed

Matison Howard, graduate student at the University of Iowa studying agricultural safety and health, is recruiting Midwest agricultural producers to participate in an interview about how they prepare for emergencies on their operation. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes and participants will receive \$50 for their time. Contact Madison Howard at matison-bentley@uiowa.edu or call (606) 694-0722 for more information and questions.

Upcoming Events

April 1-2
Public Health Conference of Iowa - 100 Years of Impact: Reflecting On Our Past to Shape Our Future
Des Moines, IA

April 13-15
Iowa FFA Leadership Conference
Ames, IA

May 19-21
AIHA Connect Conference and Expo
Kansas City, MO

May 20-23
National Rural Health Association (NRHA) Annual Rural Health Conference
Atlanta, GA

May 28-30
National Center for Farmworker Health: Agricultural Worker Health Spring Symposium
Grand Rapids, MI

June 23-26
International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH) Conference
Portland, ME

July 8-11
Agricultural Health and Safety Course for Medical and Safety Professionals
Omaha, NE

July 9
Journalism Workshop - Farming the Message: How Media Can Cultivate Ag Safety Awareness
Iowa City, IA

November 12-14
Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH) Conference
Amana, IA



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