

## Opportunities for on-farm safety resources: Two studies need farmer participation

by Jenn Patterson, MLitt, GPCAH Communications Coordinator

Are you interested in learning about health and safety as it relates to your farming operation? Researchers want to see if the tools they are developing are useful to helping farmers make safety and health decisions on the farm. Farmers have the opportunity to compare their operations to others in a general “safety survey,” and they can participate in a study to help farmers prevent hearing loss. Those who participate in these studies can receive \$50 for completion.

### Farm Safety Survey

Participation in this study will help us understand how to prevent injuries from occurring on your farm. Farmers agreeing to participate in this study will have a team visit their farm and complete a 60-90 minute survey based on observations. The visit is scheduled at a time that works for everyone, between 8 am and 6 pm, any day of the week. After the survey is complete, participants will receive \$50, a copy of the safety checklist, and farm safety tips based on the observations. This is a confidential study, so participant names and farm addresses will not be shared.



Mention "Iowa Farm Safety Study" when you call or email.

## Iowa Farm Safety Study

IOWA FARMERS ARE INVITED TO TALK TO US ABOUT SAFETY ON THEIR FARMS.

CALL US AT 855.204.4693 OR EMAIL ISRC-RESEARCH@UIOWA TO PARTICIPATE.

Flexible schedule | Confidential |  
Single 60-90 min farm visit |  
\$50 compensation

 GREAT PLAINS  
Center for Agricultural Health

Any individual who owns or operates a farm with row crops is invited to participate in this study. Learn more about the Iowa Farm Safety Study at <http://bit.ly/2QPPoE5>.



 College of Public Health

### ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

- CURRENTLY ACTIVE IN FARM PRODUCTION
- AGE 18+
- LIVE IN THE MIDWEST REGION
- ENGLISH SPEAKER
- ACCESS TO INTERNET

### WHY PARTICIPATE?

- \$50 COMPENSATION
- FREE EQUIPMENT/TRAINING
- SHORT TERM RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
- WON'T INTERFERE WITH YOUR WORK.

## HEARSAFE

Email [jacqueline-curnick@uiowa.edu](mailto:jacqueline-curnick@uiowa.edu)  
or call 319.335.4425.

### Noise Study

Another research group is developing a system to monitor and give feedback to train farmers on noise hazards in their workplace. This prototype system consists of a small noise monitor, smart phone, and a laptop, all of which will be deployed to participants with instructions. If you like technology, you might have fun looking at the data and giving feedback on the output generated by the HearSafe system. We are looking for farm workers to try these new devices and give feedback. Contact Jackie Curnick at [Jacqueline-curnick@uiowa.edu](mailto:Jacqueline-curnick@uiowa.edu) for more information or to sign up.

## Director's Message: On-farm Stress, Mental Health and Resiliency

by Renée Anthony PhD, CIH, CSP

Since 2018, agricultural health and safety specialists have been concerned with the impact of the economy on the mental health of farmers, and the GPCAH has been collaborating with experts around the region to identify resources on this topic. Now that the weather challenges—first floods, now drought—are adding another stressor to the Midwestern farmers' plates, we are glad we were proactive about identifying and promoting resources to maintain a mental health support system for our region's farmers. This Director's Message gives updates on our activities and links to resources.



Renée Anthony PhD,  
CIH, CSP

In June-October of 2018, we surveyed farmers in IA, MO, and OH and included questions on current stressors. Respondents identified top farm stressors as financial (45%), climate/weather (22%), and workload and farm management (16%). In a less formal June 2019 survey, national ag safety advocates identified that key farmer stressors across North America were also dominated by finances (37%), again followed by weather (19%) and workload/farm management (13%). With uncertain commodity prices, political pressures, and this season's wild weather, we presume that additional stresses on the farm exceed the norm.

On May 3, with the support of Mike Naig, Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture, the GPCAH and Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) co-sponsored the Rural Mental Health Roundtable for Iowa stakeholders. Partners also included the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), CommUnity Crisis Services, and representatives from producer groups, extension, and mental health service providers. We convened and openly discussed concerns and observations regarding mental health across Iowa.

Producers discussed market volatility, the impact of floods, and price declines as significant on-farm stressors facing farmers this spring. Mental health service providers identified the availability of training suited for communities interested in persuading farmers to get help. These providers recommended two training systems available to Iowans. The **QPR** (question, persuade, refer) is a 2-hour training that gives practical skills to community members to help recognize the warning signs and persuade a person in crisis to seek help. **Mental Health First Aid** is a longer, 8-hour course that provides participants with mental health literacy across a broader range of mental health illnesses and substance abuse, not just suicidal behaviors. The group discussed ways to build these skills in rural communities, particularly providing skills to those who interact with farmers frequently: veterinarians, field experts in producer groups, extension, and co-op sales representatives. The group agreed that a simple first step would be to create and provide a card with signs and symptoms and referral resources, suitable for field agents to carry and hand out to farmers who might be struggling.

As with every meeting on farmer mental health/on-farm stress, the conversation circled back to the question of what to call this topic: Do we frame discussions about "mental health" or "stress" or "behavioral health"? Everyone acknowledged that words carry a lot of weight, and "mental health" often suggests negative connotations. However, the group agreed that whatever words individuals chose to use would be appropriate so long as the conversation was framed to bring people into the discussion **and** if it helps helping farmers deal with current on-farm stressors. At this time, the GPCAH will be couching our discussion in terms of "on-farm stress", which farmers can readily identify with at this time.

Throughout May, we gathered and promoted resources for National Mental Health Awareness month, which are available for all. The GPCAH has compiled [resources](#), and I-CASH has Iowa [resources](#).

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In addition, the GPCAH helped coordinate the national campaign across all NIOSH-funded Ag centers. This campaign was aimed to amplify messages and build a safe space for farmers and rural residents to open up about their stresses and seek support for mental health, as necessary. The GPCAH made 38 Facebook posts that reached 4,282 individuals. The video of Brandi Janssen's, PhD, interview on WHOTV provided resources to help manage mental health challenges and was one of the more engaging posts. Press activities included four articles, including discussions about Diane Rohlman's, PhD, contributions on the Dairy Girl Network's "Let's Talk about Mental Health" webinar. If you *Like* us on [Facebook](#), you can find these links on our page.

On August 6, we provided perspective on current agricultural stressors and mental health concerns in farming communities to staff and

volunteers at CommUnity, formerly the Johnson County Crisis Center. A review of the literature and current farmer surveys were provided to bring to light current agricultural stressors and ways to provide non-judgmental emotional support for members of Midwestern agricultural communities. This session was open to the public to introduce everyone to those who are investing in improved mental health outcomes in rural Iowa. CommUnity staffs many mental health hotlines nationally, including Iowa Concern out of Iowa State University, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress helpline, Teen Line, and Healthy Families (Iowa Department of Public Health). See <https://builtbycommunity.org/services/> for details on what they do. They also provide QPR, mental health first aid, psychological first aid, and applied suicide intervention training to volunteers and community groups across the state. If you have any questions, we can help answer them or connect you to resources even if you do not quite know what you need.

If you have ever thought about volunteering at a crisis center, and you have a history of farm work or farm living, now might be a good time; volunteers receive 90 hours of training prior to working with the public.

Finally, there is an opportunity for you to contribute to the national discussion of mental health for farmers. Alive and Well newsletter readers who have an ongoing interest in contributing to conversations that will set the national health and safety research agenda for agriculture, forestry and fishing on mental health/on-farm stress, can contact us at the Great Plains ([cph-greatplainscenter@uiowa.edu](mailto:cph-greatplainscenter@uiowa.edu)), and we will send your email address to NIOSH to engage you in this conversation. Upcoming meetings will focus on ways to reduce the stigma of mental health and understanding agricultural workers' resiliency (and possible resiliency fatigue). Monthly calls focus on developing a national agenda to identify the burden of this issue and produce ideas for protecting farm workers from the risks associated with on-farm stressors.

With all these events, training opportunities, and resource compilations, it is an important time to be engage in learning more about on-farm stressors and how you can help your friends in need.

## Experiencing distress? Resources are available. Call | Text | Chat

[www.extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern)

Call stress counselors: 800.477.1985

Crisis/Disaster phone: 800.447.1985



[www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline)

Disaster Distress website for people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

**Crisis phone:** 800.985.5990

**Text:** TALKWITHUS to 56746

[www.builtbycommunity.org/services/](http://www.builtbycommunity.org/services/)

Suicide prevention hotline and support groups for coping with suicide loss.

**Crisis phone:** 855.325.4296

**Chat:** IOWACRISISCHAT.ORG

**Text:** 855.325.4296



## Great Plains Center Pilot Grants: Making a Difference

by Jenn Patterson, MLitt, GPCAH Communications Coordinator

One of our Great Plains Center Pilot Grant projects is really taking off! Grant recipient Meg Moynihan, from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and her team are using their GPCAH funding to broadcast [TransFARMation](#), a podcast and radio program focusing on on-farm stressors. The podcasts have reached at least 35,000 listeners and thousands more have heard the radio broadcasts.

“We are tremendously concerned about the mounting levels of stress in agriculture,” said Moynihan. “Our project shares stories of ways farmers experience and cope with financial, emotional, mental, and other stresses. Listeners find out they’re not alone and learn about resources that could help,” she continued.

The Great Plains Center funded five episodes and the investigators have secured funds for even more (Minnesota Corn Growers Association, North Dakota Farmers Union, Prairie St. Johns, and many more organizations are now involved).

Moynihan said radio is a great way to reach farmers “where they are” every day: in the shop, on the tractor, in the truck, and at the dinner table. Her team is, “Overwhelmed by the positive response to the radio and podcast series and Red River Farm Network staff say they have never had such a strong positive response to programming.”

Click [here](#) to listen to the podcast.

“As much as we don’t want to share it, we need to. The stigma of suicide has been to sweep it under the carpet and not talk about it. It is an illness, like cancer, but there is help available.”

Listen to the  
TransFARMation  
Podcast@  
<http://bit.ly/2FFwBqG>



**You are not alone.**

# “Reframe, Refocus, and Rebuild” at the MRASH Conference

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



This year, the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH) Conference will be held in collaboration with the Iowa Rural Health Association (IRHA) fall meeting on November 13-14, 2019 at the Iowa Valley Conference and Event Center, at Iowa Valley Community College in Marshalltown, Iowa. **“Reframe, Refocus, Rebuild”** is the theme for this year’s conference and reflects an emphasis on emergency and disaster response, as well as mental and behavioral health.

The focus on Tuesday morning, November 13 will be emergency and disaster response. Panelists will discuss both the Marshalltown tornado and this year’s flooding in terms of immediate issues, as well as longer term consequences. Speakers will include people who have experience responding (in a variety of ways) to both the Marshalltown tornado and the Iowa/Nebraska flooding. The evening reception will be held in the Orpheum Theater and will feature a wine and local foods reception. Participants will have a chance to learn about a comfort dog program targeting emergency responders, a park that processes storm water runoff, and theater and film-based outreach. Conference attendees may also attend a Farm Bill Meeting that evening sponsored by Iowa State University Extension.



On November 14, presentations will include how to prepare for emergencies and disasters, and a second session on mental/behavioral health resources in rural areas. That afternoon, participants have the option to attend a “Stop the Bleed” workshop or a “QPR” (Question, Persuade, Refer) workshop on suicide prevention.



**Poster abstracts will be accepted until November 1.** There are still opportunities to become a conference exhibitor or sponsor. Exhibits and posters will be viewed by attendees of the MRASH Conference and the Farm Bill meeting. Participants can register for single days or the full conference, and discounts are available for students, farmers, and IRHA members.

Visit [www.i-cash.org/2019-mrash](http://www.i-cash.org/2019-mrash) for poster submission instructions. Sponsor and exhibitor information, conference details, and registration will be posted after September 15.

## NEWS AND UPDATES

Thirty-four participants from 10 states and Canada attended the GPCAH Agricultural Safety and Health Core Course in June. The course brings together participants from a range of backgrounds, and uses case studies, field trips, and hands-on activities to inform attendees about current health and safety hazards and injury and illness prevention. As part of the course, students toured Cinnamon Ridge Dairy Farm in Donahue, IA, and the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety. **The 2020 course is scheduled for June 8-12.** Course information will be available at [www.gpcah.org](http://www.gpcah.org).

### New Private Pesticide Applicator Study Manual

A new Iowa Private Pesticide Applicator Manual (**CS 1**) is available for individuals planning to take the private pesticide applicator exam to become certified or renew their certification as a private pesticide applicator in Iowa. This manual will assist persons in preparing to take the private pesticide applicator exam administered by the [Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship](#). Those who pass the exam are certified as a private applicator for three years. Starting September 1, 2019, private pesticide applicator exams will be based on information covered in the new manual. Prior to September 1 exams will be based on the old manual (PSEP 1). The [new manuals](#) are available at the Iowa State University online store.

## Upcoming Events

September 9-11

### Ag Innovation Showcase

Minneapolis, MN

September 10-12

### Husker Harvest Days

Grand Island, NE

September 15-21

### National Farm Safety and Health Week

September 25-27

### Midwest Stream Forum for Agricultural Worker Health

Denver, CO

October 1-5

### World Dairy Expo

Madison, WI

November 13-14

### Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference / Iowa Rural Health Association Conference

Marshalltown, IA

November 21

### National Rural Health Day

## National Farm Safety & Health Week

The third week of September is National Farm Safety & Health Week (NFSHW). Since 1944, efforts from the National Safety Council and, since 1997, the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) have promoted safety and health on the farm. This year, NFSHW is September 15-21.

The 2019 theme is “Shift Farm Safety into High Gear”. The theme was selected to remind everyone of their responsibility to prioritize safety on the farm and on the rural roadways of America. NECAS has established the following themes throughout the week, hosting webinars at noon on the topics of:

- Tractor Safety & Rural Roadway Safety
- Farmer Health & Opioid/Suicide Prevention
- Safety & Health for Youth in Agriculture
- Confined Spaces in Agriculture
- Safety & Health for Women in Agriculture

Visit <https://www.necasag.org/nationalfarmsafetyandhealthweek/> to register for webinars. The GPCAH will incorporate social media messages on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to provide resources to our followers on topics aligning with the day and weekly theme. Please join us in promoting safe and healthy practices on our farms and ranches as producers enter the harvest season across the U.S. and beyond.

