

Agricultural Safety and Health: The Core Course 2020

by Russ Foushee, PhD, GCAH Center Coordinator

In June the Agricultural Safety and Health Core Course brought individuals together to explore health and safety on the farm. This year had one BIG difference: the summer *Core Course* transitioned from our normal weeklong, in-person event to an interactive virtual classroom format, in response to COVID-19.



Twenty-five students, with varied backgrounds — veterinarians, government employees, nurses, and other professionals — and from twelve states completed the newly formatted virtual class. The instructional team, led by Dr. Diane Rohlman, worked overtime to make these virtual sessions both engaging and meaningful. Topics covered remained the same as in previous courses (industrial hygiene, transportation hazards, animal handling, personal protective equipment use, and worker health care, to name a few). However, presentation methods were varied to maintain student engagement. Instruction used both live and recorded lectures, panel discussions, case studies, podcasts, and videos. The videos included safety and rescue demonstrations and an interactive virtual farm tour. Many of these materials came from our partners, including the Center for Food Security and Public Health, the National Pork Board, the National Educational Center for Agricultural Safety, and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Agricultural Safety and Health Centers, including the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center.

Feedback about the virtual format from this year's course attendees indicated that the online modules were engaging, incredibly helpful, and had more depth and breadth than expected. All participants indicated that they would recommend the course to colleagues. One participant commented, "I was lucky enough to go through seven of these modules last week as a part of the GCAH/Iowa Ag Safety and Health Training. I found them incredibly helpful, especially the livestock handling training." Another student said, "As a health care provider, I received beneficial information regarding the diseases and disorders I see in a rural population. I highly recommend this course for those who practice with the rural community." Other participants said, "Discussions were thoughtful and interesting," the content and delivery was "very interactive," and "the lecture slides and modules had clear definitions and visuals." Overall, students rated the class as 4.95 out of 5, with one student indicating the "comprehensive list of topics and speakers that addressed the most relevant issues in Rural Health and Safety - all were presented well and thoroughly." Another student mentioned, "The speakers were excellent/very passionate - great job of integrating people from different backgrounds."

Did you miss this year's Core Course? Do you have a need to use curriculum in your upcoming courses? The good news is that many of these online modules are now available for you to take yourself

continued on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

- Agricultural Safety and Health: Core Course 2020
- Directors Message
- COVID-19 Prevention on the Farm: Q&A Video Series about Cloth Face Coverings
- MRASH Conference: Rising to New Challenges
- News and Updates
- National Farm Safety and Health Week

Director's Message

by Renée Anthony PhD, CIH, CSP

As our growing season winds down and we prepare for harvest, the challenges of the COVID pandemic persist throughout our region and across the US. At this time, we have no vaccine, and we wait to learn whether those who have been exposed are immune from further infection. Our best public health response remains the time-tested, low-technology approaches to prevent the spread of the virus: maintain distance between yourself and others who do not share your household; stay at home when you feel sick, particularly with [symptoms](#) associated with COVID; wash your hands and frequently disinfect commonly touched surfaces (like door knobs, light switches, and shared tabletops); and wear a face covering when in public to prevent giving and receiving the COVID virus.



Renée Anthony PhD,
CIH, CSP

As Dr. Janssen summarized in the last *Alive and Well* issue, investigators throughout our Center and the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa continue to collaborate with researchers and businesses throughout the state and country to understand the transmission of COVID and develop tools to prevent its spread in light of global limited access to respiratory protection. While cloth face coverings are inconsistent in their ability to protect the wearer from inhaling the virus when near an infected person, their use, when combined with distancing and hand-washing, has shown to reduce community spread. Reducing community spread is critical to not only protect those in our communities who are most vulnerable to COVID but also to ensure the safe reopening of businesses and to allow schools to return to a semblance of normalcy.

The Great Plains team has teamed up with the other national agricultural, forestry and fishing (AgFF) health and safety centers to recommend best practices for preventing the spread of COVID to farm workers and employers, guiding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop prevention guidance relevant to agricultural environments. These [guidelines](#), vetted and approved by numerous agencies including the USDA and OSHA, were finalized on June 11. The CDC ensured their technical rigor, which makes them a bit dense to read and understand. Throughout the summer, AgFF centers have developed graphics, videos, FAQs, and other resources to help farmers and farmworkers understand and apply these recommendations on the farm.

Our Center focused on developing tools to help explain how to select, use, and maintain cloth face coverings, providing both written and video information. These have been generic enough to be used to explain these concepts to schools, public agencies, and private citizens over the past month. We have compiled these and other resources on our [website](#) to answer common questions from across our region.

At the same time, our center is still working on projects to address persistent hazards on the farm – reducing hazards on rural roadways, improving the air quality in livestock production to protect both workers and animals, and to understand and reduce traumatic injuries on the farm. We also have experts reaching out to identify methods to improve the mental health of our rural farmers and their families and provide ongoing health and safety educational resources around the region to minimize health hazards. While COVID has required urgent responses, we are still working on ways to protect the total health of our region's farm workers and families.

If you have questions on COVID or other health and safety concerns on the farm, please send us an email at cph-greatplainscenter@uiowa.edu.

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Center for Agricultural Health

COVID-19 Prevention on the Farm: Q&A Video Series about Cloth Face Coverings

by Kate Crawford, PhD, MS



As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the world continues to learn more about the virus and how it spreads. At GPCAH, we are tracking this information to provide updates and useful resources to help you better understand how to protect yourself, your family, and your community.

In the June issue of *Alive and Well*, we shared our [COVID-19 resource website](#) and asked you to share your questions with us at cph-greatplainscenter@uiowa.edu. We received many inquiries about cloth face coverings. Since using cloth or disposable face

coverings are new to rural and agricultural communities, people have a lot of practical questions. We have made some how-to documents, but are also answering your questions in a [new video series](#).

Why should you wear a face covering?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend people wear cloth face coverings when they are in public places or around people who are not in their immediate household. Some states, counties, and cities now require people to wear face coverings in public as well. We have learned that wearing face coverings is a critical step in reducing the spread of COVID-19: Because the virus can be spread by people who are infected but do not know it, either because they have a mild case with no symptoms (asymptomatic) or they have not yet developed symptoms (pre-symptomatic). Infected people can infect others just by talking -- cloth face coverings work as a barrier to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets and smaller particles that contain the virus. In our first video, Renée Anthony and I discuss the purpose of cloth face coverings and their place on the farm.



Can cloth face coverings make me sick?

This question is a hot topic on social media and local news. Dr. Fred Gerr is a physician with decades of experience evaluating individual's health risks from wearing much more burdensome respiratory protection, so we invited him to help us explore the questions on health risks these face coverings might pose. In our second video, Dr. Gerr answers your questions to help you better understand how we know that wearing cloth face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID is safe.

What type of face covering should I wear?

What should I buy? What fabric is best? Do I need a nose clip? How can I tell if my face covering fits correctly? Our third video explores these questions and more so you can learn about the features to help you decide how to select the best face covering for you.

What's the best way to wear these coverings?

A face covering will not be fully effective unless it fits well and is maintained correctly, so we also made four videos to demonstrate how to put on and take off different types of face coverings: with one tie, two ties, elastic bands, and ear straps. These also cover hand hygiene and storage/laundry questions.



We invite you to watch all of these videos and send us your questions at cph-greatplainscenter@uiowa.edu. While you are on the page, check out our updated COVID-19 FAQ and posters. We continue to share information via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), so we encourage you to follow us and join in the conversation.

“Rising to New Challenges” at the MRASH Conference

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



Each year, the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH) Conference brings together people from many different perspectives – health care providers, students, researchers, farmers, ag business people, policy makers and more – all who are interested in agricultural safety and health. This year’s “Rising to New Challenges” theme also describes our 2020 program planning process. And our planning team is up to the task!

Instead of a two-day hybrid conference, the MRASH Conference will be fully online. Sessions will be live-streamed each morning from Tuesday, November 17 through Friday, November 20. In addition, pre-recorded presentations, interactive learning sessions, poster displays and sponsor exhibits will be accessible online. The planning team has a few surprises up their sleeves to make our online conference fun and engaging!

The keynote session on November 17 will feature Dr. Ali Khan, Dean of the College of Public Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and former Director of the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He will explore emerging zoonotic diseases affecting those who work in agriculture. Dr. Khan is respected worldwide for his work on emerging infectious diseases, bioterrorism and global health security. His keynote address will be followed by a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Matthew Nonnenmann from the University of Iowa.



Dr. Ali Khan, Dean of the College of Public Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Abstracts for posters will continue to be accepted on the website through October 1. Conference details will be posted on the [conference website](#). Look for registration information in mid-September. Registration cost will be \$50 for the week with discount codes for free registrations for students and “essential workers” including farmers, teachers and healthcare workers.

Ag Safety and Health Course continued from page 1

or incorporate into educational activities for your workers or students – at no cost! PowerPoint formatted slides on 19 topics are available at <https://gpcah.public-health.uiowa.edu/asheducation/iowa-core-curriculum/>. If you want to access the interactive modules, visit <https://agsafetyhealth.training-source.org/>. Once you register, you can take any of the 8 online agricultural health modules, with both pre- and post-test questions to assess changes in knowledge. These modules each take 45-60 minutes to complete and were designed by experts for those interested in understanding risk factors and protecting the safety and health of rural and agricultural communities. These online modules were designed to be useful for a broad audience, including health care providers, public health practitioners, veterinarians, and safety and health personnel. Participants receive a certificate upon module completion. The Core Course will be offered again at the University of Iowa June 14-18, 2021 or reach out to one of our [partner sites](#).

If you are interested in delivering the *Core Course* at your location or would like to participate in a future course, please contact Kay Mohling at kay-mohling@uiowa.edu.

A graphic with a background image of a rural landscape with fields and barns under a blue sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

Save the Date
**Agricultural Safety and Health:
The Core Course**
June 14-18, 2021
Course details at gpcah.org

LEADERS IN
AGRICULTURAL
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NEWS AND UPDATES

COVID-19 and the Hierarchy of Controls

GPCAH has created a short animation that explores some of the things we can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19 based on the hierarchy of controls. It explains what the hierarchy is, examines the four levels of control (elimination, engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal equipment), and emphasizes a combination of corresponding strategies that can effectively protect individuals and our communities from hazards like COVID-19. View the video at <https://youtu.be/FyBMpdaEaD4>.

Respirator Fit Testing

In spring of 2020, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach pesticide educators identified a need for respirator fit testing services in central and western Iowa. In August, Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) partnered with Carolyn Sheridan of the Ag Health and Safety Alliance to train public health staff members in Calhoun, Hardin, Hamilton, O'Brien, Poweshiek, Sioux, and Warren Counties. I-CASH provided fit test kits and training free of charge. A second training for county public health personnel is scheduled for October 2020. Contact Brandi Janssen at brandi-janssen@uiowa.edu for details.

National Farm Safety and Health Week September 20-26

The theme for National Farm Safety and Health Week 2020 is *Every Farmer Counts*. Along with the theme for the week, the daily topics of focus are listed below:



- Monday - Tractor Safety & Rural Roadway Safety
- Tuesday - Overall Farmer Health
- Wednesday - Safety & Health for Youth in Agriculture
- Thursday - Emergency Preparedness in Agriculture
- Friday - Safety & Health for Women in Agriculture

Visit www.necasag.org for more information and resources related to the campaign.

Upcoming Events

September 15-17

Husker Harvest Days - Virtual Event

September 20-26

National Farm Safety and Health Week

September 28 - October 1

National Association of County Agricultural Agents Annual Meeting and Conference - Virtual Event

October 24-28

American Public Health Association Meeting and Expo - Virtual Event

November 6-7

Women, Food, and Agriculture Network Annual Conference - Virtual Event

November 17-20

Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference - Virtual Event

November 19

National Rural Health Day

December 8-10

Nebraska Ag Expo
Lincoln, NE



Iowa Spanish Helpline

515-344-3936

LINEA.DE.AYUDA.IA@GMAIL.COM

<https://www.facebook.com/LineadeAyudaIowa>

Call us for help in Spanish, we provide confidential assistance to:

- Fill out forms
- Read correspondence
- Connect you to local, state or federal resources
- Provide advocacy
- Answer any type of questions

Note: We do not provide financial aid, we provide information about the agencies that provide the aid.

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