



Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center

2013 ANNUAL FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

April 17, 2013

The first UMASH Annual Forum, **Making Connections to Improve Worker Safety and Health**, was held on April 17, 2013 at the University of Minnesota's St Paul Campus with approximately forty participants from academia, veterinary medicine, public health, occupational medicine, animal welfare, extension, dairy industry, and government. The goal of the forum was to showcase the work being done by UMASH and engage stakeholders in a dialogue to improve the health and safety of workers and their families in the Upper Midwest region.



UMASH center director, Bruce H. Alexander, Ph.D., welcomed participants and provided an **overview of the center** and its mission. In a series of roundtable discussions, the UMASH investigators engaged participants in dialogue focused on their **projects** and related issues. A number of agricultural safety and health related posters were on display for viewing and discussion throughout the morning.

Forum participants heard presentations from the 2012 **UMASH Pilot Project** awardees. These presentations demonstrated the impact UMASH center can have for the region by stimulating new approaches to existing problems. In its first year the program sponsored projects that developed culturally appropriate training materials for safe use of agricultural chemicals by Hmong farmers, established baseline data for agriculturally related enteric infections in South Dakota, developed a protocol for a study of immune responses to agricultural and non-agricultural exposures in infants, and developed consensus ideas on the needs for building design standards for animal agriculture buildings. These projects brought new investigators and ideas to the center and initiated new activities to improve health and well being of agriculture workers and families.

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OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

As part of the UMASH outreach and engagement mission, UMASH welcomes and encourages interaction with community groups through seminars, meetings, public events, conferences, and presentations to share knowledge, translate that knowledge into action, and receive information and feedback. For more information, contact **Ruth Rasmussen, Outreach and Engagement Coordinator**, at umash@umn.edu or 612-625-8836.



The forum included a screening of a video, *Connecting the Field to the Cloud*, that demonstrated how emerging technology (QR codes) can enhance health and safety in rural and agricultural health settings. This project was funded by the **Midwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety**; a UMASH partner in addressing agricultural worker health and safety in the region.

Feedback from the UMASH project teams confirmed that roundtable discussions were a good way to share information, get feedback, and interact more directly with

forum participants. UMASH will use a similar format in future events as we continue to identify and engage stakeholders.

Forum participants who completed the evaluation survey expressed their support and interest in the work of UMASH; several participants gave input on how they might help UMASH projects or research-to-practice initiatives in the future. Concerns were voiced about shortage of funding as a barrier to promoting agricultural worker safety and health. Although UMASH funding for pilot projects is limited, UMASH can be a resource by providing expertise to researchers developing new proposals. Overall, participants felt they had a voice at the Forum and would recommend future UMASH Forums to others.

**We look forward to hosting similar events in the future.
Watch for announcements on our website and in the
UMASH Connections newsletter.**



UMASH is a collaboration between the **University of Minnesota School of Public Health, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, the National Farm Medicine Center of the Marshfield Clinic** with the **Migrant Clinicians Network**, and the **Minnesota Department of Health**.

One Health in Agricultural Safety and Health



UMASH embraces a **One Health** philosophy that recognizes the connections between **human, animal, and environmental health** when addressing occupational health and safety issues in agriculture.