



PILOT PROJECT 2013-2014

THE ISSUE: Despite high injury rates in agriculture, there appears to be a paucity of information regarding safety and health in the ag media relative to media serving other hazardous industries. This is a lost opportunity. Ag media are important information sources for farmers, farm families and agents of influence (e.g., insurers, advertisers).



Photo: This NIOSH-funded workshop in Kentucky gave journalists new ways of looking at agricultural safety and health.

LAYING A NEW FOUNDATION FOR ENGAGING AGRICULTURAL MEDIA GATEKEEPERS IN COVERING AGRICULTURAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

How can we work with agricultural media gatekeepers to encourage increased safety coverage and provide resources that agricultural media can use to do so more effectively?

APPROACH: The project featured (a) a review of literature about agricultural safety; (b) a comparative content analysis of safety articles published in three high-risk industries – agriculture, mining and transportation; (c) a survey of agricultural journalists; and (d) a survey among university faculty members who teach courses in agricultural journalism and communications.

The goal of this project is to improve the frequency and quality of agricultural safety and health reporting by agricultural media.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Results indicate that agricultural journalists and ag communications teachers value safety, and they desire resources and tools to enhance their communication of safety. A survey of ag journalists identified their safety perceptions related to needs and editorial constraints, thus providing agricultural safety specialists with promising media intervention angles. The literature review identified more than 100 farm safety topics that could be covered, and provided evidence for which topics deserve highest priority. The literature review also revealed successful messaging strategies for reporters and identified special ways in which periodicals have engaged with farm safety beyond news coverage.

The content analysis, believed to be the first of its kind, provided unique perspective on the amount and nature of safety coverage, not only involving agriculture, but also in comparison with media coverage of two other high-risk industries. In summary, efforts to reduce agricultural injuries must include the media.

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umash.umn.edu/projects/2013pilot/media.html

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