



Keeping Producers/Ag Workers and their Families Safe during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center



Overview

- NIOSH Ag Centers – Who are we?
- Challenges for rural communities
- Business continuity
- Mental health resources
- Common questions



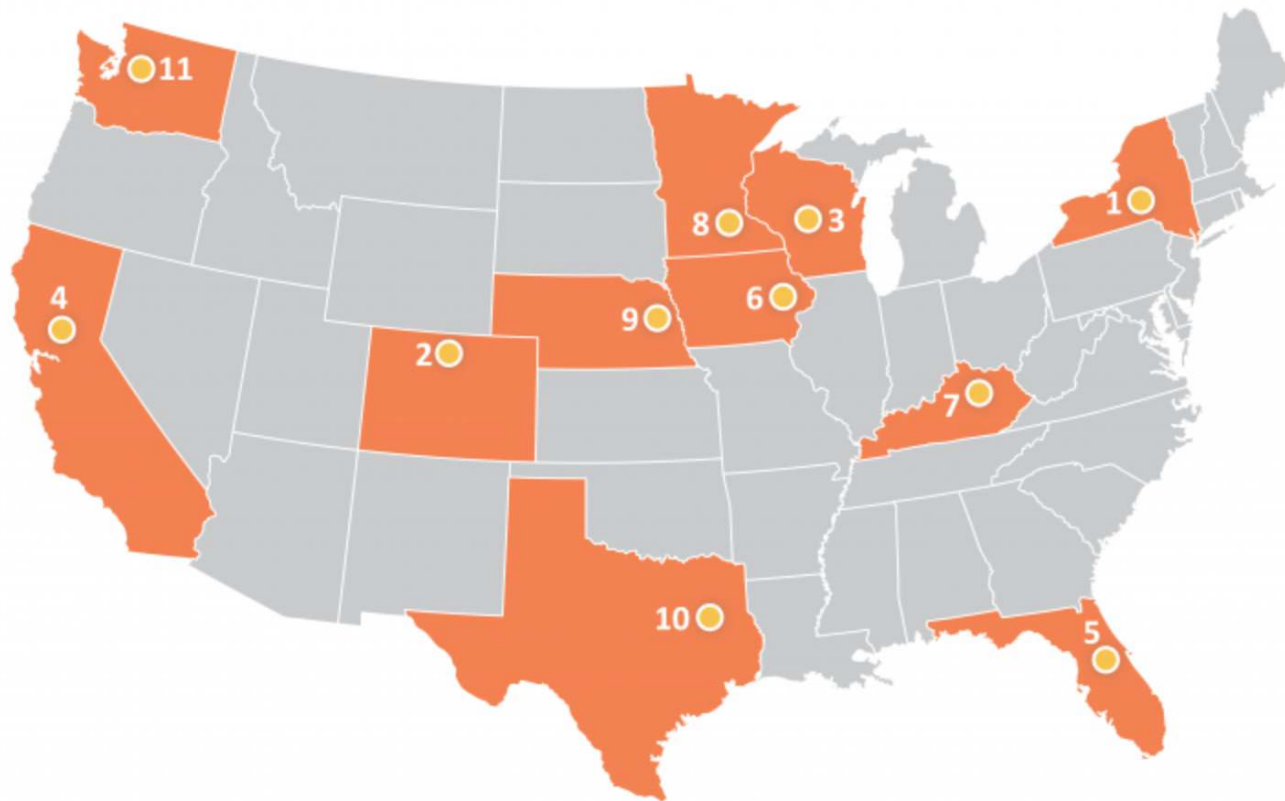
Mission of NIOSH Ag Centers

To minimize burden of occupational disease and injury to agriculture workers and their families

- Research
- Prevention
- Education
- Communication



NIOSH Centers for Agricultural Safety and Health



1. Bassett Healthcare
2. Colorado State University
3. National Farm Medicine Center
4. University of California, Davis
5. University of Florida, Gainesville
6. University of Iowa
7. University of Kentucky
8. University of Minnesota
9. University of Nebraska Medical Center
10. University of Texas Health Science Center, Tyler
11. University of Washington



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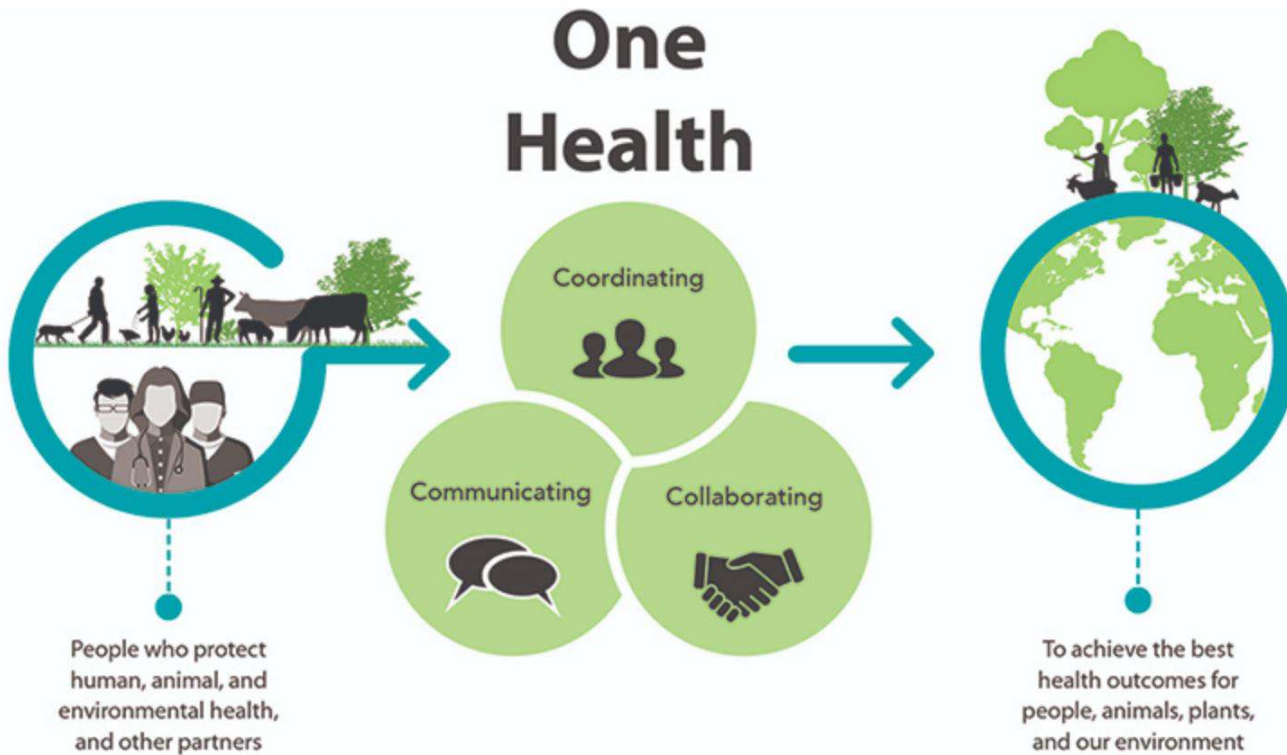


Funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



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The One Health Approach



People who protect human, animal, and environmental health, and other partners

To achieve the best health outcomes for people, animals, plants, and our environment

CS292933-A



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases



THE HEALTH AND SAFETY CHALLENGE FOR OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES



Concerns

- Feeling that they are safe because they are already isolated
- Older rural populations (average age of a farmer is 58 years)
- Limited health care access
- Feeling of invincibility – “I’ll be fine”
- Limited workforce



How do we prepare for the oncoming wave?

- Awareness – it's coming
- Engaging employees
- Setting up a plan
- “Leading well”



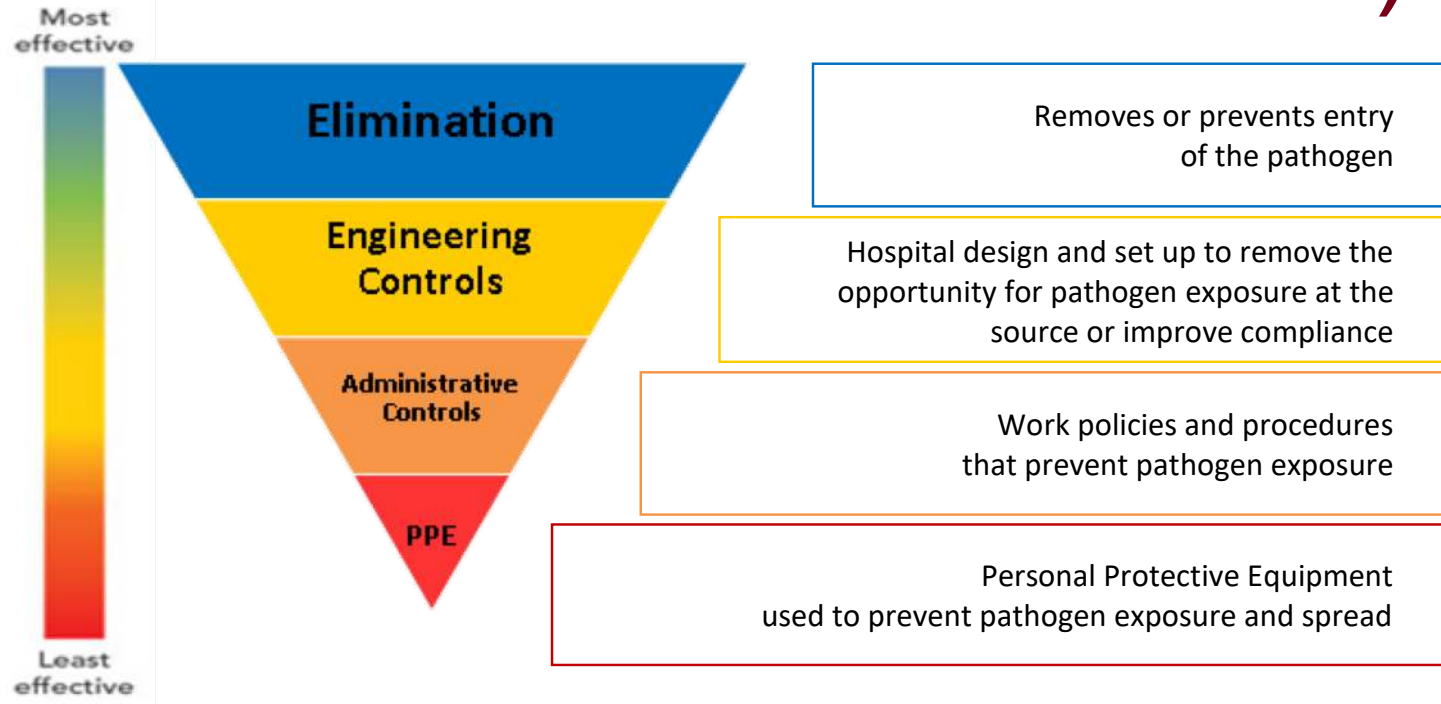
Examples of Recommendations for Employees

- Practice good biosecurity
 - Limit farm access
 - Limit activities to essential activities
- If sick, stay home (even with mild symptoms)
- Wash hands frequently or use hand sanitizer
- Disinfect commonly touched objects (phones, computer keyboards, door knobs)

Swine Disease Eradication Center



Remember PPE (should be our last resort)



Hierarchy of Controls



Social Distancing

What does that look like on a farm?

- Do early morning “huddles” to divide tasks and hear about potential problems (by video conferencing)
- Change work schedules to limit number of people coming in.
- Segregate in individual areas and use cell phones or video conferencing
- Limit number of people taking breaks (maybe just 2 people at a time in small break rooms)



Remember your Neighbors and Friends

- This is a time of high stress and anxiety
- Be aware of signs of stress
- Check on your neighbors
- Encourage regular social interaction and support (local churches, virtual coffee visits)



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF *STRESS*

BEHAVIOR SIGNS

- ✓ Worrying about things you didn't worry about before
- ✓ Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy (hobbies)
- ✓ Poor concentration, confusion; forgetfulness
- ✓ Uncertainty or trouble making decisions
- ✓ Relationship problems
- ✓ Sad mood
- ✓ Feeling anxious
- ✓ Change in personality, irritability
- ✓ Negative thinking
- ✓ Wanting to withdraw from people and activities
- ✓ Increased smoking/drinking

WHAT CAN YOU DO?
See the back of this card for help and suggestions - for you or someone you know!

PHYSICAL SIGNS

- ✓ Poor or disturbed sleep
- ✓ Weight loss or gain
- ✓ Changes in appetite
- ✓ Stomach or gastrointestinal problems
- ✓ Clenching or grinding teeth
- ✓ Chest pain
- ✓ Poor hygiene

National Suicide Prevention Line: 1-800-273-8255
It's free, confidential and open 24/7



Create a Community Responding to Emerging Issues

Who do we engage

- Educators
- Community leaders
- Extension
- Health care providers
- Veterinarians
- Others?



Basic Reminders

- Wash your hands
- Avoid touching your face (hard to do)
- Stay home if you are ill, even if you think it is just a cold
- Practice social distancing



Also, “protect the animals”

- At this point, livestock or other animals have not been shown to transmit this virus...but we want to limit potential transmission to them
- Remember the origin of this virus was likely bats through an intermediate host...and now adapted to people!
- Again, stay home if you are sick (livestock) or avoid contact (pets)



Frequently Asked Questions?

- What if one of our staff becomes ill with COVID-19?
- How long can COVID-19 survive on surfaces?
- What does social distancing look like in the work place?
- Shouldn't we all be wearing N-95 masks?
- What is the role of pets?



Summary Thoughts

- We need to raise the awareness for our rural communities
- Create plans now to support producers, workers, and their families
- Be aware of general prevention practices
- Engage your community



UMASH Resources

- General Information
 - <http://umash.umn.edu/covid-19-resources/>
- Mental Health Resiliency
 - <http://umash.umn.edu/stress/>
- Handwashing
 - <http://umash.umn.edu/agritourism/>





People Can Give Flu to Pigs! Protecting People and Pigs

<http://umash.umn.edu/biosecurity/>



Questions?



HOME

WHO WE ARE

WHAT WE DO

RESOURCES

NEWS & EVENTS

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