Healthy Fairs Workshops

Carrie Klumb, MPH - Minnesota Department of Health

There are 97 county fairs in Minnesota and approximately 2.7 million people attend one each year! With half of the Minnesota population attending a fair it's easy to see that county fairs are an important part of Minnesota culture. Fairs are great opportunities for people, especially families with children, to learn about animal agriculture and enjoy spending time with farm animals. However, human-animal interactions also have the potential to spread illness or cause injury.

Each year the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) investigates illnesses in people that have attended county fairs. The MDH wanted to offer a way for those involved with county fairs and petting zoos to get the latest information on how to keep visitors and animals safe and healthy at fairs. In 2013, the MDH was awarded a pilot grant from the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center to develop Healthy Fairs Workshops using the One Health philosophy where human, animal, and environmental health issues are addressed. These workshops were developed in partnership with the Minnesota Board of Animal Health (MBAH). At the workshops, an expert from each area presented best practices and current events, followed by a question and answer period, and a small group scenario problem. Each attendee received a binder containing useful handouts and copies of each presentation.

Healthy Fairs Workshops were held in Rochester, Marshall, St. Cloud, and Bemidji, Minnesota with a total of 126 attendees. For each workshop there was an even mix of fair-related attendees and human and animal health officials. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees commented that the workshops were a, “great idea and glad it finally came together,” and a “great thing to start with county fairs. Great refreshers.”

These workshops brought together groups of people that may not otherwise have a chance to meet in person such as fair officials, petting zoo operators, fair veterinarians, and human and animal health officials. The relationships we built through these workshops proved beneficial for the 2013 fair season. For example, human cases of swine influenza, primarily among swine exhibitors, were being reported nationwide last summer. As a precautionary measure the MDH and MBAH sent informational postcards to 4H families involved in swine projects and to county fair contacts made through the workshops. Building these relationships before an event occurred allowed us to effectively communicate with our fair partners on current events in a timely manner.

The MDH and MBAH would like to continue hosting free, regional Healthy Fairs Workshops because we believe these workshops are highly beneficial. We are encouraged by the turnout at these workshops and look forward to working with fair-related groups in the future. After all, everyone’s goal is the same; to have a safe, fun, and successful fair!
Two leaders in immigrant worker health touched on challenges facing both producers and workers in the Upper Midwest during their keynote address at the National Occupational Research Symposium (NORA), May 1, at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. Xóchitl Castañeda and Marc Schenker, MD, MPH presented “Occupational Health of Immigrant Workers: Reducing the Disparities.” Focusing on the lack of immigrant health visibility and research, they described the demographics and causes of global migration, and the relationship of migration to work.

“The University of Minnesota has many programs that have the potential to include the health of the migrants in their scope of work,” said Castañeda. “I am convinced that this could have a positive impact on public health at a local, national and global level.”

Xóchitl is Director of the Health Initiative of the Americas at the University of California Berkeley. She is a medical anthropologist by training, and was educated in Guatemala and Mexico.

“Often the migratory process involves risks, and many migrants have preexisting health problems that are exacerbated by the socio-economic and political determinants of health, including barriers to access and use of health care services, making them a particularly vulnerable population,” Castañeda said. “Therefore, it is important for service providers, students, researchers, and policy makers to have a better understanding the specific health issues that affect this population.”

Dr. Schenker is Director of the Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety at the University of California. He is also Director of the Davis Center for Occupational and Environmental Health, and the Migration and Health Research Center.


The NORA symposium was co-sponsored by the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH) and Midwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety (MCOHS).

The evolving nature of agriculture production in the Midwest has given way to a steadily growing population of new immigrant workers in the workforce. This trend is also seen in jobs that are closely linked to the agriculture industry, such as food processing. Ensuring the health and well being of this changing workforce requires attention to not only occupational health issues as they pertain to new immigrants, but also the well being of the workers and their families in our communities. This NORA symposium provided an opportunity to consider partnerships needed to address this challenge in the Midwest.

Bruce Alexander
Director, Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center

Summer Institute on Migration and Global Health
June 16-19, 2014
Oakland, California

An international event that offers researchers, faculty, graduate students and professionals working with migrant communities around the world, a unique opportunity to learn about different health issues that affect mobile populations.

LEARN MORE

Upcoming Conferences Featuring UMASH Presenters

ISASH - International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health
June 22-26
Omaha, Nebraska

Cultivating Ag Safety and Health
http://isash.org/2014-isash-confer/

7th International Conference on Safety and Health in Agricultural & Rural Populations (SHARP)
October 19-22
Saskatoon, SK, Canada

Healthy Workplaces • Healthy People
Healthy Communities • Healthy Environments
KEEPCING YOUR FAMILY AND VISITORS SAFE ON THE FARM

Stop Lyme Disease with New Resources from National Farm Medicine Center
An estimated 300,000 Americans are diagnosed with Lyme disease each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ninety-five percent of U.S. Lyme cases are diagnosed in 13 states throughout the Upper Midwest and Northeast.
Get the facts about Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses with a handy new set of printed resources from the National Farm Medicine Center (NFMC).
The new resources are available online at www.marshfieldclinic.org/nfmc/lymedisease

Safe Agritourism
Agritourism – activities that bring visitors to a farm or ranch – is seen more often today than ever before. Most visitors are unfamiliar with the agricultural environment – and the hazards found there. Owners need to ensure the safety and health of all guests visiting their operations.
The National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety has developed a website with interactive “walkthroughs”, operator checklists and hundreds of resources for keeping visitors safe on farms and ranches.
Resources available at www.safeagritourism.com

Fact Sheets
Fact sheets are available from UMASH on a variety of topics related to agricultural safety and health. Topics covered include needlestick prevention, rabies, zoonotic diseases, E. coli O157:H7, influenza and swine contact, and keeping safe at petting zoos and fairs.
Fact sheets can be downloaded from the UMASH website at umash.umn.edu/resources/fact-sheets.html

Creating Safe Play Areas on Farms
Childhood farm injuries and fatalities most often occur while children are playing in an agricultural worksite, or are bystanders to agricultural work. Creating Safe Play Areas on Farms provides the first comprehensive guide for designing and building an outdoor safe play area for children who live on or visit farms.
Learn more at www.marshfieldclinic.org/safeplay

Childhood Agricultural Safety Network - “Keep Kids Away from Tractors” Campaign
Controversial and blunt, the Childhood Agricultural Safety Network’s “Keep Kids Away from Tractors” campaign has rattled traditional thinking. Stating that it is never okay for a child younger than 12 years to be on a tractor, the campaign takes a “tough love” approach. The earliest a child should be on a tractor is when he or she is old enough to take and pass tractor safety educational classes, according to the network. And a child should never be an extra rider.
Riding a tractor with parents, or grandparents, is considered a childhood tradition in many rural areas. During the past year, however, a number of fatal, high-profile incidents underscored the danger of allowing children -- some just toddlers -- to ride on a lap, sit on a fender, or stand on the axle. Some of the fatalities occurred despite cabs. The message may be controversial and blunt, but the lives it saves will be worth it. Remember -- “It’s easier to bury a tradition than a child.”
Resources are available at www.childagsafety.org/TractorCampaign.htm

Ag Safety and Health Spotlight
The UMASH Ag Safety and Health Spotlight features stories and interviews with local farmers and families on farm safety and health topics such as E. coli O157:H7, rabies, and needlestick injuries.
Spotlight articles are available on the UMASH website at www.umash.umn.edu/spotlight
We are developing a new website - WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please take a moment and fill out our online survey. Tell us what you think of our current site, what new features you would like to see, and what information is important to you.

umash.umn.edu/survey.html