

# The UMASH Connection Farms and People

A newsletter of the Upper Midwest  
Agricultural Safety and Health Center

umash.umn.edu

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Upper Midwest  
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ONE HEALTH IN  
AGRICULTURAL  
SAFETY AND HEALTH



## UMASH - A YEAR IN REVIEW



Jeff Bender, DVM, MS, DACVPM

This summer four tragic grain bin deaths occurred in Minnesota; an example of an ongoing, existing challenge in agriculture. In addition, we have the ongoing, emerging issue of mental health needs of farmers and families during this challenging season of trade barriers, flooding, and planting/harvesting woes. The Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH) provides a unique and complementary approach (*i.e.* a **One Health approach**) to address these existing and emerging occupational health and safety issues in agriculture.

As we reflect on our past year accomplishments, our six **funded research projects** continue to move forward and provide key information to support our farm families and workers. Please see our **annual report** on these highlighted projects. Also, to be responsive to our stakeholders and constituents we heard the call to support mental health efforts in our rural communities. To understand, support, and respond to this need, we needed a collective “village.” This was provided by many of you. *Thanks!*

This effort was synergized with our **2018 Annual Forum “Building Resilient Agriculture Communities”**. From this forum, we were able to provide “partner” funds to support three outreach and educational efforts: 1) **“Cultivating Resiliency for Women in Agriculture”**; 2) educating college students through a program called **“Stress and Mental Health Conversations with Gear Up for Ag Health and Safety”**; and 3) supporting a project **“Using Stories and Education to Build Resilient Agricultural Communities”**. Lastly, we worked with many of you, our partners, to co-sponsor and create an engaging exhibit at **Minnesota Farmfest**. My special thanks to all of our staff who helped support these efforts.

*Looking forward to another engaging and productive year!*

Jeff Bender, DVM, MS DACVPM  
UMASH Director



## CHANGING TIMES

This fall, our director, **Dr. Bruce Alexander**, accepted a new position at **Colorado State University**. Dr. Jeff Bender, current co-director, will serve as the new director of UMASH.

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## YOU CAN SUPPORT UMASH WITH YOUR YEAR-END GIVING

Your support will expand our outreach so we can listen and respond to the agricultural community by:

- ⇒ identifying critical and emerging issues in agricultural occupational safety and health,
- ⇒ responding through research discovery and outreach, and
- ⇒ supporting students to learn through this process.

**DONATE NOW**

<http://c-fund.us/n58>

**SAVE THE DATE**  
ASAP WEEK  
MARCH 1-7, 2020



**AG SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM WEEK**  
March 1-7, 2020

# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

NAMI Minnesota and UMASH are partnering to provide suicide prevention classes to farming communities.



- ⇒ NAMI is currently seeking groups or organizations that would like to collaborate to host a suicide prevention class.
- ⇒ Personal stories of farmers or farm families of living with a mental illness or being a suicide loss survivor.

### DOWNLOAD A FLYER

If you are interested in hosting a suicide prevention workshop, or contributing a personal story, email [wellness@namimn.org](mailto:wellness@namimn.org)

Cultivating Resiliency for Women in Agriculture Webinars and Coffee Chats

LIVE and RECORDED



The purpose of these webinars is to help women in agriculture cultivate resiliency by focusing on what they can control in these challenging times and connect them with resources and information to help weather stress.

View a list of upcoming live, interactive webinars, or watch recordings of past webinars online at: [umash.umn.edu/cultivating-resiliency](http://umash.umn.edu/cultivating-resiliency)

## FACES OF UMASH

### MEET ANA CONTRERAS SMITH



Hello!

My name is Ana Contreras Smith.

I joined the UMASH team in July as the Dairy Safety Trainer for the **Promoting Safety and Worker Health for Immigrant Dairy Workers** program.

I have been working in agricultural industry mostly with dairy producers since graduating from the University of Minnesota. When I first started working in the industry I quickly realized that there was a big communication and training gap when it came to the Spanish-speaking employees. Quickly my career changed focusing on helping provide on farm training to employees of dairy farms. Knowing that working in agriculture possess many risks I am looking forward on continuing to provide on farm training focusing on Health and Safety for Immigrant workers.

As Dairy Safety Trainer, I will be providing the on farm trainings using that bilingual training curriculum called Seguridad en las Lecherías: Immigrant Dairy Worker Health and Safety. The curriculum consist of five modules focusing on some of the major Health and Safety concerns on farm. For example: working with Cattle, Machinery and Chemicals.

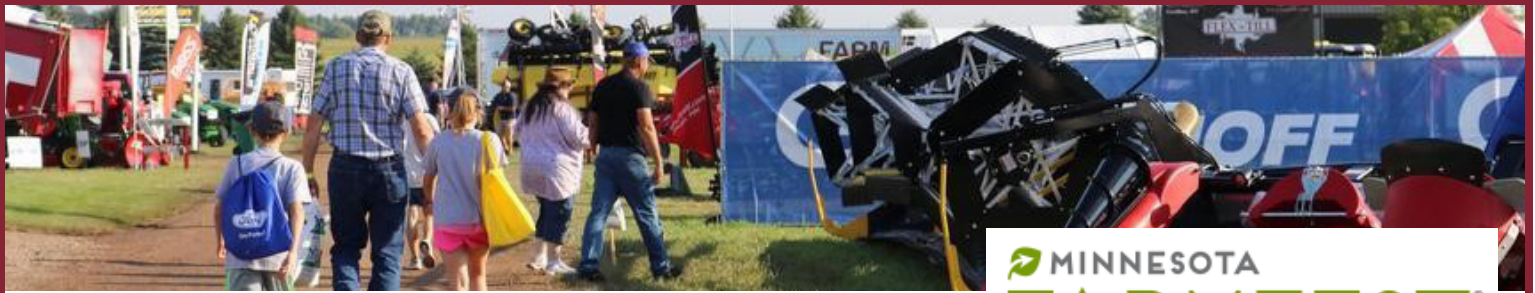


Watch a project highlight video at [umash.umn.edu/worker-health](http://umash.umn.edu/worker-health)

⇒ LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT AT: [umash.umn.edu/worker-health](http://umash.umn.edu/worker-health)



# UMASH BRINGS HEALTH AND SAFETY TO FARMFEST



MINNESOTA  
**FARMFEST**

*A new Wellness and Safety Pavilion brought health, safety and wellness resources and activities to attendees at Minnesota Farmfest, August 6-8, 2019.*

Co-sponsored by Farm Bureau Financial Services and UMASH, the area featured live safety demonstrations, free health screenings, and a large health and safety exhibitor tent (25+ organizations) with resources on a variety of topics and hands-on educational activities for attendees of all ages. Over 900 people watched the safety/rescue demonstrations, 189 people received basic health screening, 50 people were screened for skin cancer, 200 people visited the Rali Code 3 drug awareness education trailer, and 1,200 opioid awareness packets were distributed. Exhibitors reported conversing with over 7,000 show attendees and distributing over 20,000 resources, fliers and giveaway items. Traffic was steady throughout the three days. Visitors thanked us for bringing a focus on health, safety and wellness to the event.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE  
ACTIVITIES AND EXHIBITORS:  
[umash.umn.edu/farmfest](http://umash.umn.edu/farmfest)

## FEATURED RESOURCES

### SPOTLIGHT: Manure Safety Toolkit

This toolkit provides farmers and their family members, manure haulers, and agricultural workers with specific resources to have on hand during manure agitation and land application.

READ THE SPOTLIGHT STORY AT:

[umash.umn.edu/spotlight-manure-safety-toolkit](http://umash.umn.edu/spotlight-manure-safety-toolkit)



### FARM SAFETY CHECK: Grain Bin Safety

The UMASH Farm Safety Check is a quick monthly review to identify and fix potential hazards before they cause harm to your family and employees - and your bottom line. Each Farm Safety Check focuses on a different topic, offering checklists and tips to help identify hazards, and resources to remedy any problems.

CHECK OUT THE LATEST FARM SAFETY CHECK ON GRAIN BIN SAFETY AT:

[umash.umn.edu/farm-safety-check-grain-handling-safety](http://umash.umn.edu/farm-safety-check-grain-handling-safety)

## FARM SAFETY CHECK



### UMASH FEATURED RESOURCES

We offer FREE resources on a variety of agricultural health and safety topics on our website. Resources include flyers, posters, videos, fact sheets, links, and more!



ACCESS FREE RESOURCES AT:

[umash.umn.edu/featured-resources](http://umash.umn.edu/featured-resources)

### FEATURED PARTNER RESOURCE

#### DELIVERING CHILD CARE IN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

This NEW resource from the National Children's Center and Migrant Clinicians Network can help ensure children of workers are kept safely away from dangers on the farm.



LEARN MORE AT:

[umash.umn.edu/spotlight-roadmap](http://umash.umn.edu/spotlight-roadmap)

## CHANGING TIMES

*“Change is the only constant in life”. - Heraclitus*

UMASH began in 2011 as a new Center of Excellence in Agricultural Disease and Injury Research, Education, and Prevention funded by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). We have grown over the past 8 years and with that growth comes change.

This fall our director, **Dr. Bruce Alexander**, accepted a new position at **Colorado State University**. Although he is leaving the University of Minnesota and his position as center director, he will continue his work with UMASH projects and programs in applying research and education. In fact, Colorado State University is home to the High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health & Safety, who is a partner center with UMASH in providing research, education and resources to the agriculture community.

Dr. Jeff Bender, our current co-director, will serve as the new director of UMASH - a natural transition for him and for all of us at UMASH as we have worked alongside both Jeff and Bruce over the years on projects, programs, and outreach all in an effort to keep farmers and families safe and healthy.

*Best wishes to Bruce Alexander and UMASH moving forward with new changes awaiting all of us.*



Bruce Alexander, PhD  
Former UMASH Director

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND AWARDS

### **Megan Schossow Featured in FarmProgress**

#### **Rescue from grain bin sets farmer on right course**

UMASH Outreach Coordinator, Megan Schossow, was recently featured in an article on grain bin safety published in FarmProgress. In the article, Megan discussed the issue of grain bin incidents, and how they are preventable with proper safety precautions. The article also highlighted the UMASH Farm Safety Check, a tool to identify and fix potential hazards before they cause harm to your family and employees. [READ THE ARTICLE](#)



### **UMASH Director Jeff Bender Named Public Health Veterinarian of the Year**

The American Association of Food Safety and Public Health Veterinarians designated UMASH Director Jeff Bender as Public Health Veterinarian of the Year. This annual award identifies veterinarians serving as public health professionals who have made large strides in the field of public health. The award was presented during the 2019 American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) convention in Washington D.C. [LEARN MORE](#)



### **NFMC Director Cap Bendixsen and Rural Firefighters Delivering Agricultural Safety and Health (RF-DASH) Program Featured on WMTV (Madison, WI)**

#### **Program trains first responders to respond to farm accidents**

The Rural Firefighters Delivering Agricultural Safety and Health (RF-DASH) program was recently featured in a news story by WMTV nbc15 in Madison, Wisconsin. The story highlighted the work of RF-DASH in training firefighters in farm safety, and included quotes from Dr. Casper “Cap” Bendixsen, Director of the National Farm Medicine Center (NFMC). [READ THE ARTICLE](#)



# UMASH IN THE FIELD

## Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference (MRASH)

Outreach Coordinator Megan Schossow attended the MRASH conference November 13-14. In addition to connecting with other ag centers and collaborators, the conference connected UMASH to Iowa Extension, Iowa Rural Health Association staff, and was a great outlet to share resources.



*Carolyn Sheridan, Ag Health and Safety Alliance; Megan Schossow, Outreach Coordinator, at MRASH.*

## UMASH Goes to a Presidential Farmers Market

UMASH staff participated in an enhanced farmers market highlighting health and wellness organizations at the University of Minnesota to welcome President Joan Gabel and honor her inauguration week. Several UMASH staff attended, including: Bruce Alexander, Jeff Bender, Diane Kampa, Megan Schossow, and Maria Bertrand.



*UMASH Director Bruce Alexander speaks with University of Minnesota President Joan Gabel*

## National Association of Farm Broadcaster's Convention

Scott Heiberger and Melissa Ploeckelman of the National Farm Medicine Center traveled to Kansas City in November to take part in the National Association of Farm Broadcaster's Convention. They made connections with 16 radio and television ag media outlets, sharing information on ag health and safety topics, conducting interviews, and discussing future collaborations.



*Scott Heiberger of the National Farm Medicine Center at the National Association of Farm Broadcaster's Convention*

## The National FFA Convention; Us and 69,944 of our Friends

Melissa Ploeckelman and Kyle Koshalek attended the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis in October. They exhibited in the Ag Health and Safety area put on by the SAY (Safety in Agriculture for Youth) Clearinghouse and Career Safe. Students answered a survey on safety training and played safety Jeopardy. They interacted with about 1,200 students, advisors and guests in three days!



**ANSWER:**  
*A fun, interactive game with important ag health and safety information!*

**QUESTION:**  
*What is Safety Jeopardy?*

## Cottonwood County 4H

Megan Schossow participated in the Cottonwood County 4H Fall Field Days at the U of MN Southwest Research and Outreach Center. Nearly 600 fourth graders from 12 school districts participated. Megan demonstrated animal safety with the help of our new teaching tool, an inflatable cow named Opal.



⇒ READ ABOUT THESE AND OTHER UMASH OUTREACH IN THE FIELD AT:  
[umash.umn.edu/umash-in-the-field](http://umash.umn.edu/umash-in-the-field)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Minnesota Organic Conference**  
January 9-10  
St Cloud, MN

**Women in Ag Network Conference**  
February 4  
Willmar, MN

**Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America (ASHCA)**  
March 19-20  
Las Vegas, NV

**Central Plains Dairy Expo**  
March 24-26  
Sioux Falls, SD

Learn more and view full event list at:  
[umash.umn.edu/upcoming-events](http://umash.umn.edu/upcoming-events)

## GET CONNECTED



Let's get social! Stay connected with UMASH on social media.



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