

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
Agricultural Safety
and Health Center
University of Minnesota

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ONE HEALTH IN
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BEING RESPONSIVE: ADDRESSING COVID-19 IN AGRICULTURE

COVID-19 has consumed much of our time, thoughts, and energy. It has also mobilized some incredible people to respond to the myriad of challenges that we face in the midst of this pandemic. I want to highlight three amazing women who are valued partners of UMASH (the Upper Midwest Agriculture Safety and Health Center). They saw a need, developed plans, and rose to the challenge. These women are **Dr. Montse Torremorell**, an Associate Professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine, **Natalie Roy**, the Executive Director of AgriSafe, and **Amy Liebman**, Director of Environmental and Occupational Health at Migrant Clinicians Network.

COVID-19 continues to cause incredible strain on our society. Often in the crisis some members/segments of our society are forgotten, this is especially true for many of our rural communities. Dr. Torremorell recognized the potential impact of COVID-19 on our swine producers, their workers, and the affiliated industries tied to swine production. She mobilized resources warning producers to be prepared and thought about how to protect the workers who provide daily care to pigs and also maintain our food supply chains. Engaging industry leaders, she raised the alarm to prepare for the imminent pandemic through her blogs, Center materials and fact sheets. **View the swine resources.**

Similarly, Natalie Roy and AgriSafe quickly tried to identify ways to reach our rural communities. These communities, though they may feel isolated and protected, are in reality quite vulnerable. The average farmer is 58 years of age, lives in a community often with limited health care access, and few workers to carry out daily tasks. AgriSafe was formed from caring rural nurses who are dedicated to improving the health and safety of farmers and ranchers. They are a trusted resource for our rural communities providing factual and timely information in this rapidly changing pandemic. **View the recorded AgriSafe webinar on COVID-19.**

Our other hero is Amy Liebman, whose passion to support immigrants has driven her career for many years. She saw a population of people to whom pandemic/COVID-19 information was limited, confusing, and irrelevant to their circumstances. Often our migrant farm communities live in crowded conditions with limited healthcare and few educational resources. She and her team mobilized experts and educational materials in Spanish to address their concerns and questions.

View the Spanish resources.

We offer our thanks and gratitude to these women and the many others who are reaching out to our rural communities, dedicated producers, farmers, ranchers and their families.

Jeff Bender, DVM, MS DACVPM
UMASH Director

REGISTER NOW! NORA ONLINE SYMPOSIUM

PRODUCTIVE AGING AND WORK:
CREATING AN AGE-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

THURSDAY, APRIL 30
1:30pm - 3:00pm CST

REGISTER @ umash.umn.edu/2020-nora



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In response to the pandemic, we have compiled a variety of COVID-19 resources including:

- ⇒ AgriSafe COVID-19 Webinars
- ⇒ COVID-19 Q&A
- ⇒ UMN Swine News blog
- ⇒ National and Regional resources

umash.umn.edu/covid-19



Useful COVID-19 resources from our partner **THE NATIONAL FARM MEDICINE CENTER**

Keeping children engaged and safe on the farm during COVID-19

Farming is always challenging, and never more so than now, especially for parents with children living and/or working on the farm. To help parents manage through unprecedented times, the National Children's Center offers this list of resources on topics ranging from appropriate farm tasks for children to fun, virtual adventures.



National Children's Center
for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety

- » **Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines** to help parents and supervisors assign tasks based on worker ability.
- » **Tractors** are the top source of fatal injury for youth. It is important to keep kids away from tractors until they are mature and old enough to operate them safely.
- » **Safe Play** resources for creating safe play areas on farms; includes a child development chart.
- » **Agricultural Safety** is a four-page brochure summarizing the scope of childhood agricultural injury, the top 5 safety strategies and top 5 injury prevention resources.
- » **Home schooling:** Need some fun education resources? Check out these mini-lessons, videos, music and virtual field trips to wonders of the world such as the Galapagos Islands and Yellowstone Park.
- » **Education tools** for incorporating agricultural safety and health into the "virtual" classroom.
- » **Gardening:** Plant the seeds of safety with guidelines for lifting, bending, hand-harvesting, composting and other gardening-related tasks.
- » **Child care considerations:** When looking at child care options, remember that people ages 65 and older, and people of any age with underlying medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes, are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- » **Health insurance** marketplaces vary from state to state, but a search for coverage could start by contacting an insurance agent, or checking your state's health insurance exchange.
- » **AgInjuryNews.org** is an open-access online tool that provides a sobering look at thousands of agricultural injury reports gleaned from news outlets and other sources.

⇒ READ THE FULL PRESS RELEASE AT:

marshfieldresearch.org/nccrahs-news/keeping-children-engaged-and-safe-on-the-farm-during-covid-19

Health insurance options for farm families

Many farm families rely on off-farm jobs for health insurance, and the sudden layoffs and furloughs might mean that farm families are losing their coverage unexpectedly. Others who have not had insurance might be looking to purchase a plan in these uncertain times.

Health insurance marketplaces and eligibility criteria for public coverage vary from one state to another, but a search for coverage could start by contacting an insurance agent, or checking your state's health insurance exchange (www.healthcare.gov).

As of March 26, 11 states have re-opened their health insurance exchange for a special enrollment period. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is also considering opening a special enrollment period.



National Farm
Medicine Center

⇒ READ THE FULL PRESS RELEASE AT:

marshfieldresearch.org/nfmc-news/health-insurance-options-for-farm-families

STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

The COVID-19 pandemic has added a new or another level of stress for many of us. Take time to help yourselves and others by reading the mental health Q&A, watching the *Cultivating Resiliency* webinars and reading more from Sean Brotherson, NDSU Extension Family Science Specialist.

MENTAL HEALTH Q&A



Jeff Bender, UMASH Director, talks about unique challenges farmers face that may affect their mental health, signs someone may be struggling with their mental health and resources available.

[LEARN MORE](#)

CULTIVATING RESILIENCY



Webinars designed to help women in ag cultivate resiliency by focusing on what they can control in these challenging times and connect them with resources and information to help weather stress.

[LEARN MORE](#)

FARM AND RANCH STRESS

NDSU

Dr. Sean Brotherson, Professor and Extension Family Science Specialist at North Dakota State University (NDSU), has developed tools and resources to help deal with farm and ranch stress.

[LEARN MORE](#)

AG HEALTH AND SAFETY SPOTLIGHT: LIVING, WORKING ON FARMS INCREASES RISK OF GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS

New study reveals greater levels of infection in people working with livestock.

Minnesotans who live or work on a farm with livestock and poultry are **8 times more likely** to be diagnosed with a gastrointestinal illness than other Minnesotans, according to recently published findings from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH). The study gathered data from 2012 through 2016 and aimed to understand the frequency and burden of zoonoses (*e.g. germs shared between animals and people*) in agricultural workers, their families, and others exposed to agricultural settings in Minnesota.

“Our study is the first to collect data from ill people in Minnesota in order to develop more accurate estimates of gastrointestinal disease among those who have livestock exposure,”

- Carrie Klumb, UMASH Researcher and Epidemiologist at MDH



Carrie Klumb, MPH
UMASH Researcher and
Epidemiologist, MDH

LEARN MORE AT:

umash.umn.edu/spotlight-living-working-on-farms-increases-risk-of-gastrointestinal-illness

FEATURED RESOURCES



FARM SAFETY CHECK: STOP, THINK, ACT

This is a simple, yet powerful safety tool that encourages everyone on the farm to consider the task or chore at hand, to ask themselves how their own actions could contribute to a safe and productive outcome and stop if it can't be done safely.

The Stop, Think, Act poster is available in two sizes: 8.5x11 or 11x17, in both English and Spanish.

⇒ **DOWNLOAD THE CHECKLIST AND POSTER AT:**
umash.umn.edu/farm-safety-check-stop-think-act



10 WAYS TO TEACH AG HEALTH AND SAFETY ONLINE

Teaching ag health and safety isn't just for the classroom!

As classrooms have been forced to “go online” due to COVID-19, educators have been faced with the challenge of adapting their classroom lessons for distance learning. To assist in this effort, we have adapted our ag educator resources to incorporate suggestions for online learning. In these activities, students will apply critical thinking skills to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the hazards of agricultural work and prevention measures to take.

⇒ **ACCESS THE '10 WAYS' POSTER AND OTHER AG EDUCATOR RESOURCES AT:**
umash.umn.edu/ag-educator-resources



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

CHECKLISTS CAN HELP LOWER FARM FATALITIES

Interview with Melissa Ploeckelman of the National Farm Medicine Center highlighting the UMASH Farm Safety Checklists. The article also features an audio recording of the interview.
Brownfield Ag News. December 26, 2019



Melissa Ploeckelman



WHO AM I IF I AM NOT A FARMER ANYMORE?

Interview with Megan Roberts, Shauna Reitmeier, and Brenda Mack about the stress and mental health challenges farmers face when ending a career in farming. The article also highlighted the Cultivating Resiliency webinars.
Successful Farming. February 12, 2020

UPCOMING EVENTS



Stand Up for Grain Safety Week
 April 13-17

NORA Online Symposium
 Productive Aging and Work:
 Creating an Age-Friendly Workplace
 Thursday, April 30
 1:30pm - 3:00pm CST

Summer Public Health Institute
 May 18 - June 5
 University of Minnesota
 School of Public Health

Learn more and view full event list at:
umash.umn.edu/upcoming-events

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