



## Multidisciplinary Network to Address Agriculture Worker Health and Safety Issues

### PROJECT PERSONNEL



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### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

- ▶ Successfully engaged varied stakeholders interested in agricultural safety and health.
- ▶ The project developed the following educational materials:
  - » Posters and fact sheet on dairy stockmanship or low stress animal handling techniques
  - » Several bi-lingual videos on a variety of topics, including agritourism ([youtube.com/umashcenter](https://www.youtube.com/umashcenter))
  - » Posters and fact sheets on needlestick prevention and proper disposal of sharps
- ▶ Developed a user friendly tool for swine and dairy biological products database system for rural healthcare providers and poison control staff.
- ▶ Swine stockmanship educational materials needed for swine producers were evaluated.
- ▶ Vigorously worked on livestock worker health, immigrant worker health, agriculture safety and health education, and agricultural worker compensation data.
- ▶ To show the medical and economic impact of livestock associated injuries, the team worked with the regional insurance industry, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Statistics. The information gathered has been used to evaluate and prioritize emerging issues.
- ▶ In the endeavor to incorporate health and safety matters into the post secondary agricultural curriculum, a review of educational programs in the five-state region has been made in collaboration with AgriSafe Network, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the Southern Minnesota Center of Agriculture.



### PROJECT BACKGROUND

According to the 2017 CDC report, 416 farmers and farm workers died from a work-related injury, resulting in a fatality rate of 20.4 deaths per 100,000 workers and every day, about 100 agricultural workers suffer a lost-work-time injury. In Minnesota, there were about 2,518 agricultural injuries over the past decade costing some \$31.3 million. Hence, having a **well-established network has become an important method for interchanging of ideas and sharing of expertise to solve the problems with greater creativity, resourcefulness and speed.**

#### The Network Project's goals included:

1. Develop a functional multidisciplinary network of diverse stakeholders that would address occupational health and safety issues among livestock workers.
2. Utilize the network as a surveillance mechanism for identifying emerging occupational health and safety issues.
3. Provide a platform to integrate knowledge gained from all UMASH projects to create potential solutions to identified health and safety hazards.

## RESEARCH BRIEF:

# Multidisciplinary Network to Address Agriculture Worker Health and Safety Issues



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND SAFETY?

Farming operations are dangerous and rank among the most hazardous industries, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Contact with animals, machinery, noise and repetitive motion all contribute to injuries, disability and fatalities. Therefore, safety and health are important topic areas in current agricultural education programs.

Although the demand for graduates in the sector is strong, very few programs have courses or materials that focus on maintaining the health and safety of the farm workers. The team clearly underlined the need for incorporating safety and health as part of our educational curricula, targeting educational strategies for the next generation of farmers and workers, and strategizing on ways to improve health and safety in the changing agricultural sectors.



## WHAT'S NEXT? WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS?

- The team indicated that farmworkers, veterinarians, and farm managers are exposed to multiple injury incidences on the farms. These injuries can be lethal or serious that may require medical attention. Accordingly, **continuous comprehensive worker safety and injury prevention trainings are indispensable.**
- When educational programs are designed, it would be worthwhile to **address language barriers, experience, ethnic cultural difference, and level of formal education of workers.**
- There is a vibrant **need for collaborative efforts** to promote agricultural health and safety education from farm owners, agribusiness, health care, agricultural banking, insurance companies, government, and academia.

## IN CONCLUSION...

The Multidisciplinary Network Project sought to provide timely and relevant safety and health information, working with affiliated stakeholders in the agricultural sector. The cross connections and networking with individuals and groups identified a need for communication and collaboration. Agricultural safety and health is bigger than one person or one organization. The Multidisciplinary Network Project offered a template for successful engagement in the changing nature of agriculture operations.

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