

## Grain Handling Safety Coalition

by Bob Aherin, PhD, University of Illinois



In an effort to address the rising safety and health risks associated with the handling and storage of grain, the Grain Handling Safety Coalition (GHSC) was formed in 2010. The impetus for forming the coalition was the death of two teenagers in 2009 while working in a large grain bin near Mt. Carroll, IL. Catherine Rylatt, an aunt of one of the two victims, contacted Bob Aherin at the University of Illinois and asked what could be done to address grain safety issues. That led to forming the GHSC, initially with representatives from 14 Midwest organizations, that number has now grown to over 25 organizations. The mission of the coalition is “To prevent and reduce injuries and fatalities across the grain industry spectrum through safety education, prevention and outreach.”

The GHSC received grants from OSHA, the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, and the University of Illinois at Chicago Great Lakes Center for Environmental and Occupational Safety and Health to help develop a community based education program over the past two years. Training modules have been developed that include Grain Handling Safety and Storage, Grain Bin Entry, Entanglement Hazards and Guarding, Fall Protection, and Agricultural Confined Spaces. Each module incorporates a variety of teaching tools, and is designed to be presented in 60-90 minutes. The coalition is also developing a youth module, and all modules will be translated into Spanish. The primary audience for the program is elevator supervisors and workers, as well as farm operators and farm workers.

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## Oh My Aching Back

by Fred Gerr, MD, GPCAH Director

Low back pain is a common and sometimes disabling health problem that affects millions of working age Americans. As a result of groundbreaking research by Great Plains Center ergonomist, Nate Fethke, PhD, we are now learning just how big the problem is among farmers and agricultural workers, as well.

With support from the Great Plains Center, Dr. Fethke has asked over 500 farmers in nine Midwestern states to share their experiences of low back pain (and pain in other regions, such as the neck, shoulder and arm) with him and his colleagues. The results are alarming. Half of the farmers responding to Dr. Fethke’s questionnaire reported experiencing a recent episode of low back pain with sufficient severity to affect their ability to work. Among those who had low back pain, about half of them sought medical care. The farmers in Dr. Fethke’s study are a lot like most farmers – on average, they were 60 years old, four out of five were farm owner operators, and most had been farming for many decades. Oh, and one more thing, most were overweight.

For people with low back pain, and for the health care providers who care for them, low back pain is a hard problem to manage. The good news is that the majority of episodes of low back pain are temporary and don’t lead to more severe back problems. When dealing with mild or moderate back pain, only minor activity limitation is needed. Unless pain is severe, bed rest often makes things worse. On rare occasions, back pain may be the result of serious, but undiscovered illness. If you have low back pain for more than a week or so, get it checked out to be sure nothing more serious is the cause. Also, if you have severe pain, fever, or weakness in the legs, see your health care provider immediately.

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Fred Gerr, MD



The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health offers FREE expert consultation, literature searches, proposal previews, and prompt answers to your agricultural safety and health questions. Call 866/309-0839 or e-mail [Julia-venzke@uiowa.edu](mailto:Julia-venzke@uiowa.edu) with your questions, and visit [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH) for courses, webinars, small grant opportunities and more.



**Agricultural Medicine: Occupational and Environmental Health for Rural Health Professionals** will be held June 10-14 in Iowa City, Iowa, and July 9-12 in Omaha, NE. The training provides information and skills to enable the health care professional to function in the anticipation, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of occupational illnesses and injuries in the rural community. Visit [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ICASH](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ICASH) for the Iowa course, and [www.unmc.edu/publichealth/cscash](http://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/cscash) for information on the Nebraska course.



Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) is seeking proposals for its **2013 Injury Prevention in Agricultural Youth Grants**. Each year I-CASH designates funds for community grants targeted at the prevention of farm-related injury in young people and their families. This year ten grants of \$500 each are available. Visit <http://cph.uiowa.edu/icash/programs/Youth-Ag-Safety-Grants/index.html> for application packets, and contact LaMar Grafft at 319/335-4233 or [lamar-grafft@uiowa.edu](mailto:lamar-grafft@uiowa.edu) for additional information. **Application deadline is March 31, 2013.**



Registration is now open for the **2013 Iowa Governor's Conference on Public Health**, to be held in Ames, IA. This is the single largest annual public health event in Iowa, and will be held April 9-10, 2013. For more information about the conference, visit the Iowa Public Health Association website at [www.iowapha.org](http://www.iowapha.org)

## Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health

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**GREAT PLAINS**  
Center for Agricultural Health

[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH)

To receive this newsletter through the US Mail, notify [kay-mohling@uiowa.edu](mailto:kay-mohling@uiowa.edu)

## Director's Message continued from page 1

Many episodes of back pain can be prevented. Most importantly, don't use your back as if it were a crane, and whenever possible, use mechanical lifting equipment. Most farms have a skid steer loader, end loader, or other mechanical lifting equipment. Let the machine do the heavy work. If you must lift something without mechanical assistance, get help and share the load. Sitting on a bouncing tractor seat can also cause low back pain, so consider seating options designed to reduce vibration when making major equipment purchases. Finally, many of us (myself included) can benefit from the loss of a few pounds. Lowering our body weight to healthy levels and maintaining aerobic fitness also minimizes low back pain.

Be sure to visit [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH/](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/GPCAH/) where you can request a consultation with an expert and learn more about our efforts to protect the health and safety of agricultural workers.

*Dr. Fred Gerr directs the GPCAH, housed in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health of the College of Public Health. He can be reached at 319/335-4212 ([fred-gerr@uiowa.edu](mailto:fred-gerr@uiowa.edu)).*

## FS4JK New Logo



With over a decade under their belt, Farm Safety 4 Just

Kids is getting a makeover. The organization has maintained the same brand since it was founded in 1987. Agriculture, farm safety, and the organization have changed a lot in the past 25 years, so it's only natural for the logo and branding to reflect those changes.

The refreshed branding began January 1 and encompasses a new logo in blue and green, symbolizing rural safety. The new logo and color scheme will be used throughout the website and on resource materials, which will now be available as FREE downloads. The PDFs are available on the website and will include options to download the entire education packet, individual sections, or a single lesson plan or activity.

The process of converting entirely to electronic resources will take time. Printed materials will be available until the supply is exhausted, however materials will not be reprinted in the future. Visit [www.farmsafetyforjustkids.org](http://www.farmsafetyforjustkids.org) to see some exciting new changes!

# Faculty Position in Agricultural Health & Safety

Department of Occupational and Environmental Health,  
The University of Iowa College of Public Health

The University of Iowa, College of Public Health invites applications for a non-tenure track faculty position in Agricultural Health & Safety.

## Department of Occupational and Environmental Health

The Department of Occupational and Environmental Health serves an important role in education, research, and outreach in the State of Iowa and the nation. The Department offers a rich environment for collaborative activities.

## The Position

Applications will be considered at the level of Clinical Assistant Professor or Clinical Associate Professor. The successful applicant will be expected to be an active faculty member in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health; serve in a leadership position of Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health; teach graduate-level courses; and contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of outreach and education programs.

## Required Qualifications

Applicants must demonstrate the following:

- A doctoral degree (e.g., PhD, DVM, MD) in a relevant science or engineering field
- At least three years of experience in the implementation and evaluation of community outreach and education programs targeting populations at risk for agricultural injury or illness
- Potential to lead and advance Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health
- Ability to teach in an academic setting
- Academic focus compatible with the programmatic interests of the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health; Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health; and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health

## To Apply

To apply for this position, please visit <http://jobs.uiowa.edu>, requisition #62159, where you will be asked to submit a curriculum vitae, a statement of research interests, and the names of three professional references. Please address inquiries and nominations to the search committee administrator, Ms. Wendy Walker at [wendy-walker@uiowa.edu](mailto:wendy-walker@uiowa.edu).

*The Department of Occupational and Environmental Health is committed to increasing the diversity of our faculty. The University of Iowa is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer. We strongly encourage women and minorities to apply.*

## Grain Coalition continued from page 1

Coalition trainers are currently available to conduct community wide programs for the target audiences in the Midwest. The program has had one training session for those interested in becoming local instructors, and another instructor training session is planned for April.

Members of the Coalition are developing a low cost methodology for establishing lifeline systems for steel grain bins. A DVD and power point presentation illustrating set up and use of the OSHA approved system should be available by June. A safe work procedure that will allow a worker to be in a grain bin while a sweep auger is operating has also been developed and approved by OSHA. Previously, OSHA had not allowed workers under their jurisdiction to be in a grain bin while a sweep auger was operating, which was causing many problems, particularly for grain elevators.

For more information contact Bob Aberin, Agricultural Safety and Health Program Leader, University of Illinois, [raberin@illinois.edu](mailto:raberin@illinois.edu) or 217/333-9417.



## calendar

March 31

**2013 Injury Prevention in Agricultural Youth Grant deadline**  
<http://cph.uiowa.edu/icash/programs/Youth-Ag-Safety-Grants/index.html>

April 4-5

**North Carolina Agricultural Medicine Training - Session 8**  
Greenville, NC  
[www.ecu.edu/ncagromedicine](http://www.ecu.edu/ncagromedicine)

April 8-11

**2013 AgrAbility National Training Workshop**  
Minneapolis, MN  
<http://workshop.agrability.org/2013/index.html>

April 9-10

**Iowa Governor's Conference on Public Health**  
Ames, IA  
[www.iowapha.org](http://www.iowapha.org)

April 16-19

**Agricultural Medicine Training**  
Middlebury, VT  
[www.cvahec.org](http://www.cvahec.org)

May 7-10

**National Rural Health Association 36th Annual Rural Health Conference**  
Louisville, KY  
[www.ruralhealthweb.org/annual](http://www.ruralhealthweb.org/annual)

June 10-14

**Agricultural Medicine Training**  
Iowa City, IA  
[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash)

June 13-27

**2013 International Society for Agricultural Safety & Health Conference**  
Sandusky, OH  
[www.isash.org](http://www.isash.org)

July 9-12

**Agricultural Medicine Training**  
Omaha, NE  
[www.unmc.edu/publichealth/cscash](http://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/cscash)

July 21-24

**2013 ASABE Annual International Meeting**  
Kansas City, MO  
[www.asabe.org/meetings-events.aspx](http://www.asabe.org/meetings-events.aspx)

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Save the Date - June 10-14, 2013

### **Agricultural Medicine:**

#### *Occupational and Environmental Health for Rural Health Professionals The Core Course*

Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health will host a training program for health care professionals who treat and help prevent occupational illnesses and injuries on the farm.

**Agricultural Medicine: Occupational and Environmental Health for Rural Health Professionals** will be offered June 10-14, 2013 in Iowa City, Iowa.

Topics include:

- Agricultural Respiratory Hazards
- Acute Agricultural Injuries
- Skin Diseases
- Physical Factors Affecting Health in Agriculture
- Behavioral Health Issues
- Musculoskeletal Diseases and Ergonomics
- Health Effects of Pesticides
- Zoonotic Diseases
- Cancer in Agricultural Populations
- Agricultural Health Care Delivery

Physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, veterinarians, health educators, and others with interest in rural and agricultural health care are invited to participate. The training program may be taken for three graduate credit hours from the University of Iowa, College of Public Health, and continuing education credits for physicians and nurses are available.



For additional information contact Kay Mohling at 319/335-4219 or [kay-mohling@uiowa.edu](mailto:kay-mohling@uiowa.edu)