
•CULTIVATION•

The Newsletter for The Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education

Editor: Jeffrey L. Levin, M.D., M.S.P.H.

agcenter@uthct.edu



From the Director...

Agricultural Research Centers: Competing for Scarce Resources

This "From the Director" piece was originally written (with the same title) to explain the challenging process of completing a competitive application for a NIOSH Ag Center; however, it seemed more appropriate to redirect our attention to inform our partners of the most current situation driven by the following statement that was released in conjunction with the proposed Presidential budget for 2012.

"The Administration proposes *no funding for the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing Program* (AFF) within the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) because these activities are not central to CDC's Mission and overlap with other Federal efforts. AFF Program activities are more aligned with the mission and activities of similar efforts at the Department of Labor (DOL) and Agriculture (USDA)."

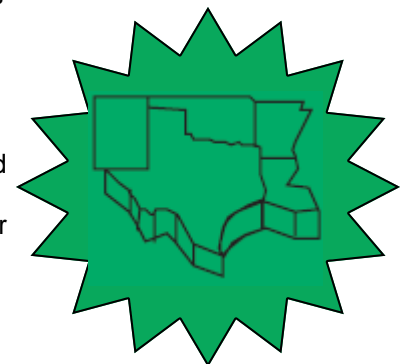
This statement needs further explanation to be complete and accurate. Research and education activities aimed at reducing occupational injury and illness in farming, forestry and fishing are indeed central to CDC's mission to "create the expertise, information, and tools that people and communities need to protect their health – through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats" (CDC 2011). In addition, the Ag Centers serve the unique purpose under NIOSH's mission to "generate *new* knowledge in the field of occupational safety and health and to transfer that knowledge into practice for the betterment of workers" (NIOSH 2011). OSHA (within the DOL), by contrast, sets and enforces occupational health and safety standards. The USDA is better aligned to respond to food safety issues than worker safety issues. However, that agency lacks expertise in medical and public health sciences and no longer funds farm safety specialists. Neither agency is equipped to provide commercial fishing safety education or regulation enforcement.

Agriculture remains one of the most dangerous industries in the nation. Production is diverse and work practices vary according to the season, commodity and geographic region. In 2009, the fatality rate for farmers and farm workers was **38.5 compared with an all worker fatality rate of 3.6**. In addition, agricultural workers are at risk for lung disease, hearing loss, skin diseases and certain cancers associated with chemical use and prolonged sun exposure. Children are also at increased risk of injury and fatality due to living on or near the production site and working in agriculture at a young age. Annually, more than 100 children are killed on U.S. farms.

The Ag Centers have developed countless evidence-based educational tools to respond to specific health and safety needs. From the work of the SW Ag Center, an interactive navigation training CD has been produced in three languages, effectiveness of refresher survival drill instruction has been demonstrated, and US Coast Guard regulations have been changed to require commercial fishing vessel captains to complete navigation training. The SW Center also supported the production of four livestock safety videos aimed at different target audiences, an interactive CD describing first aid on the farm, a curriculum for rural first responders, and a bites and stings tip booklet.

The bottom line is that we are all involved in agriculture, either through production or consumption. Agriculture, forestry and fishing producers significantly impact countless downstream businesses. Costly workplace injuries and illnesses can have devastating effects on the U.S. economy and the Ag Centers represent the predominant federal initiative currently in place to address the health and safety of the industry.

Stay tuned...



Winter 2011

Improving Livestock Management

Temple Grandin, internationally renowned animal scientist, addressed a group of students and faculty during a day-long workshop on livestock management sponsored by LSU School of Veterinary Medicine and the LSU Ag Center. Dr. Grandin urged better livestock management and better communication of agricultural related issues to the broader audience. To read more about Dr. Grandin's visit to LSU visit http://www.lsuagcenter.com/news_archive/2011/january/headline_news/Temple-Grandin-urges-better-livestock-management-more-ag-communication.htm.

The SW Ag Center is furthering both of Dr. Grandin's recommendations in the development of a new video focused on safe livestock handling for youth; especially 4-H youth exhibitors. The video addresses beef cattle, dairy cattle, horses, pigs, goats, and sheep. In addition, Texas Agrilife Extension Livestock Specialist, Ron Gill, Ph.D. speaks to the key differences between exhibition livestock and production livestock. Many youth involved in 4-H seek careers in agricultural production after high school or college and it is important to instill good safety practices in the next generation of producers.

The video will be available by Spring 2011. It will be widely distributed and posted on multiple websites including www.swagcenter.org for easy access and free viewing.



Jodi Sterle, Ph.D.- Extension Swine Specialist speaks about goat handling safety.

Exhibitor, Lauren Hillert, receives safe handling guidance from Beef Cattle Specialist, Jason Cleere, Ph.D.



Teri Antilley, Extension Horse Specialist and Ron Gill, Ph.D., confer on safe horse handling techniques.

Texas Poison Control Centers Focus on Bites & Stings

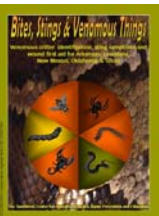
The Poison Control Centers (PCC) across Texas are focusing on Bites and Stings in 2011. Educators are available to conduct outreach programs and give presentations. In addition, they currently produce a free brochure describing prevention and treatment for venomous insects, spiders, and snakes in English and Spanish. Texas residents can order materials from <http://www.poisoncontrol.org/order.cfm>. Other states can order materials by calling toll free 1-800-222-1222. The toll free line will connect you to your local PCC office where you can request more information or speak with an educator.



Nickie.warren@uthct.edu to order. A limited number of tip booklets are available for free. Ask about including your logo and company information on the back cover.

BITES & STINGS TIPS

1. If you get a bite or sting, call your local Poison Center for instructions at 1-800-222-1222. All calls are free and answered by trained nurses or pharmacists.
2. If you are bitten by a venomous snake, call the poison center and head immediately to the nearest emergency room. Do not try to suck out the venom, use ice, or use a tourniquet.
3. If you are bitten or stung by a critter (such as bees, wasps, scorpions, centipedes, fire ants), most times the reaction is just local pain and you can call the Poison Center for instructions. Watch for an allergic reaction such as difficulty breathing or redness (rash or hives) away from the bite site. If these signs are present, go to the nearest emergency room.



The SW Ag Center also produces and distributes a Bites, Stings, and Venomous Things waterproof, pocket tip booklet that addresses sting symptoms and field first aid for Southwest critters. Call 903-877-5621 or email

AFOP Announces “Year of the Farmworker Child”

The [Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs](#) (AFOP) announced they have designated 2011 the “Year of the Farmworker Child.” Starting in January, AFOP will devote twelve months to raising awareness about the hardships faced by migrant farmworker youth. In addition, AFOP and other supporters of the “Year of the Farmworker Child” will seek to increase public knowledge concerning the discriminatory agricultural exemption in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which regulates child labor in the U.S.

“Children in agriculture labor longer and under more hazardous conditions than they are permitted to do in almost any other American industry,” said AFOP Executive Director David Strauss. “In 2011, we will work with our members, other organizations, and communities to help promote a greater understanding of the impact this kind of life has on children’s safety, health and education, as part of our ongoing effort to help today’s farmworker youth create better futures for themselves.”

Agriculture is currently the third-most dangerous industry in the United States, in terms of injuries and fatalities recorded on the job. For children, it is the most dangerous. Boys and girls as young as 12 years old are legally allowed to labor in agriculture for an unlimited amount of hours outside of school, using dangerous farm equipment and working in an environment that continually exposes them to pesticides—conditions deemed illegal in every other industry and that can lead to serious injury or even death. Farmworker youth are also excluded from the “hazardous work” protections imposed in all other industries, allowing children as young as 16 to operate heavy machinery and perform other dangerous functions that are strictly reserved for adults in every employment field except in agriculture.

Migrant farmworker youth working long days in the fields frequently see their educational opportunities curtailed as a result. The migratory nature of farm work means that parts of the school curriculum often have to be repeated or skipped. We have evidence that more than half of these children will not finish high school and fewer still will go on to college, forcing them to continue the cycle of poverty.



Farmworker children in South Texas. Picture provided by Eva Shipp, Ph.D., Co-Investigator for the Migrant Adolescent Health Research Study.

AFOP will begin the “Year of the Farmworker Child” by seeking assistance from supporters to help illuminate the issues raised by the campaign. Among the activities slated to increase awareness is **AFOP’s Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Children’s Essay & Art Contest**, which will begin accepting entries next month. AFOP’s Children in the Fields Campaign will conduct a variety of regional activities in support of the initiative, starting in February at the “From Harvest to Harvard” migrant student conference in Texas. AFOP’s Health and Safety Programs will also be releasing their annual publication focused on the effects of pesticides on children. For additional information on how you can become a supporter of the “Year of the Farmworker Child,” please contact Ayrienne Parks at parks@afop.org.

The [Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs](#) is a non-profit, national federation of 52 non-profit and public agencies that provide training and employment services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for all farmworkers and their families through advocacy, education, and training. For additional comment or an interview, please contact Ayrienne Parks at 202.828-6006 ext. 140 or [Parks\(at\)AFOP\(dot\)org](mailto:Parks(at)AFOP(dot)org)

Contact: Ayrienne Parks
Tel. 202.828.6006 ext. 140
Parks@AFOP.org