Certified Safe Farm and AgriSafe-NC Expand

Through a recent grant, the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission (TTFC) is providing funds to expand and continue the work of the AgriSafe-NC and Certified Safe Farm programs in North Carolina. The expanded support was announced November 4 during the state Extension conference at N.C. State University.

Representing the TTFC were William Upchurch, executive director, and Susan Barnes, commission board member. They presented a $300,000 check for the AgriSafe and Certified Safe Farm expansion to the N.C. Agricultural Foundation, N.C. State University, Cooperative Extension, and partners at the N.C. Agromedicine Institute. Dr. Richard Linton, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), and Dr. Joe Zublena, director of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service, accepted.

“Thanks to the overwhelming support of farmers in our state, we’re here today to announce a grant for the expansion of the AgriSafe and Certified Safe Farm programs in North Carolina,” Barnes said.

She then explained that these programs started as pilot projects in Duplin, Johnston and Sampson counties in 2009 with a three-year Tobacco Trust Fund Commission grant of $500,000. Just as in the pilot program, Extension agents who receive training in agricultural safety, conduct one-on-one safety reviews and provide farmers with tailored recommendations for safety improvements on their farms.

AgriSafe nurses, trained through the N.C. Agromedicine Institute’s Agricultural Medicine course, provide farmers, farm family members, and employees with low-cost, comprehensive occupational health screenings, assistance with personal protective equipment, and health care referrals. A cost-share program is available to participating farmers for priority safety and health improvements.

Among those leading the efforts to establish the AgriSafe Network of North Carolina and the Certified Safe Farm program were Robin Tutor-Marcom, director of the N.C. Agromedicine Institute; Dr. Greg Cope, CALS professor and campus coordinator for agromedicine at N.C. State; and Dr. Ed Jones, then of NC Cooperative Extension. The program was initially offered in the three pilot counties, where Extension agents conducted 120 on-farm safety reviews, as part of the Certified Safe Farm program, and AgriSafe health...
Certified Safe Farm and AgriSafe-NC Expand (continued from page 2)

providers conducted 3800 health screenings in 47 counties, with 500 health referrals.

“AgriSafe and Certified Safe Farm are saving lives, improving health, and lowering costs on North Carolina farms. They are protecting agriculture’s most important asset, our people,” Barnes said. “We are proud that our state, through its strength in Extension and agromedicine, is leading the way in its commitment to health and safety in agriculture. This new funding will allow even more farmers, in more counties, to benefit from these programs.”

The expansion will take the program from the three pilot counties to 18 more counties, including Alexander, Anson, Ashe, Craven, Franklin, Gates, Granville, Hoke, Randolph, Robeson, Rowan, Scotland, Stanly, Union, Vance, Warren, Watauga and Wilson. AgriSafe will be offered throughout the state through a collaboration of local providers and Barbara Gallagher, RN, AgriSafe Nurse Coordinator with AgriSafe of NC, headquartered at the Institute.

Zublena thanked the TTFC for the award and the commission’s confidence in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cooperative Extension, the Institute, and the AgriSafe and Certified Safe Farm project team. Also in attendance at the check presentation were, from Certified Safe Farm, Julia Storm, Tim Britton, Dr. Catherine LePrevost and Dr. Ernest Hodgson; from AgriSafe, Robin Tutor-Marcom and Barbara Gallagher; from the N.C. Agricultural Foundation, Kathy Kennel; and representatives of the 18 expansion counties.

“Our award-winning team of agriculture agents in Duplin, Johnston and Sampson counties and agromedicine partners were successful in adapting this research-based program to North Carolina agriculture,” Zublena said. “We know our expansion counties will build on that success and continue to make a difference for farmers, families and workers in agricultural communities throughout the state.”

Adapted from an article in NCSU CALS’ Perspectives magazine by Terri Leith; photos Becky Kirkland

NC Leaders Working Together for Safety and Health in Agriculture

Thanks to the combined efforts of the Agriculture Commissioner’s staff, including Cliff Sutton, Richard Reich, and Commissioner Steve Troxler himself, and the Institute, Governor Pat McCrory declared Sept. 15-21, 2013 to be Farm Safety and Health Week in North Carolina.

The Governor’s proclamation noted that “farm work often involves hazardous exposures to machinery, chemicals, livestock and workplace environments; and that “some workers are at higher risk than others, including youth, older workers and individuals with limited literacy and language proficiency.”

In keeping with the theme for national farm safety and health week — “Working Together for Safety in Agriculture,” the Governor’s proclamation acknowledged the common mission and important work of the Institute and others, stating: the “North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, North Carolina Agromedicine Institute and North Carolina Cooperative Extension are committed to working collaboratively with other public and private partners, including farms across the state, to promote on-farm health and safety.”

The proclamation also noted that “North Carolina leads the nation in the production of sweet potatoes and tobacco, and is second in production of pork, trout, poultry, eggs and Christmas trees.” NC’s diverse agriculture, which makes up a large part of North Carolina’s economy, means that farm operations are busy year-round, with fall harvest being especially busy.

The N.C. Agromedicine Institute encourages North Carolina farm families to focus on farm health and safety during National Farm Safety and Health Week, Sept. 15-21, but throughout the year as well. The institute’s mission is to develop solutions for agricultural hazards, collaborate on strategies for preventing injury and illness, and work with communities to promote health and safety through its research, education and intervention programs.

In collaboration with its many community and agency partners, North Carolina offers several farm safety programs, including AgriSafe of N.C. and Certified Safe Farm programs, highlighted on page 1 of this issue, whose expansion is funded through an N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission grant of $300,000.

Other N.C. Agromedicine programs include:

• N.C. AgrAbility Partnership: This program assists North Carolina’s agricultural workers, families and communities by facilitating the means to continue farming with a disability and by providing a support network. AgrAbility addresses disabilities such as spinal cord injuries and amputations and conditions, such as arthritis. This four-year project is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

• Risk Mitigation Measures II Project: This project helps educate farmers across the state about new requirements for using soil fumigants and provides assistance with personal protective equipment selection, medical clearance, and fit tests. The project is funded by the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission.

NEED HEALTH INSURANCE?...for you, your family, or employees? Ask us how the Affordable Care Act may be able to help you. Contact the Institute for an appointment:

(272) 744-1008 (main) agromednavigator@ecu.edu
Western Counties Focus on Christmas Tree, Nursery, Landscape Worker Safety

Over 250 participants, including employers, workers, and others attended a Farmworker Safety Day at Cline Church Nursery in Ashe County. Over 190 farmworkers from Ashe, Watauga, Alleghany, and Avery rotated through interactive learning stations. Safety topics included pesticide safety, health & first aid, chainsaw safety, backpack sprayer maintenance, hazardous farm plants and critters, heavy equipment safety, and local laws/customs. Translators were on hand at each station, as a majority of the farmworker participants were Spanish-speakers from the Christmas tree and landscaping industries.

USDA Risk Management Agency, Watauga & Avery Farm Bureau, Carolina Farm Credit, and Southern Ag sponsored the event which was organized by Watauga & Ashe Cooperative Extension and the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute.

Presenters included:
• Katie Gray, a naturalist from Grandfather Mountain,
• Denny Paternak and Jimmy Cox from the NC Highway Patrol,
• Russel Choate from the NC Division of Forest Resources,
• Keith Eller from the Upper Mountain Research Station,
• Emily Dixon and her staff from the High Country Farmworker Health Program,
• Jill Sidebottom & Jeff Owen, conifer specialists from NC Cooperative Extension,
• Cliff Parker, an agriculture liability and crop insurance consultant, and
• Ritchie Gardener from Crop Production Services (CPS).

Bob Littleton, General Manager of Elk River POA, a landscape services company with 17 crew members participating in the event, commented: “The Safety Day was terrific! The set-up at each station being in English and Spanish went over very well. This was good information for all of us. All the presenters did a great job.”

Welcome, LaMar Grafft!
The Institute’s newly hired Associate Director.

QUALITATIVE RESPIRATOR FIT TEST WORKSHOPS!

Learn to Manage your Workplace’s Respirator Fit Program!
3.5 Pesticide Applicator Recertification Credits
Registration Cost: Only $75
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PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED
Visit your County Cooperative Extension web page
Beaufort County: February 5
Franklin County: February 13
Robeson County: March 26

For more dates and locations contact: Barbara Gallagher, RN • NC Agromedicine Institute
gallagherb@ecu.edu • 252.744.1008 OR Toll-free 1-855-247-4723
Have you seen us out and about lately? You should have. The NC Agromedicine Institute had the opportunity this fall to showcase its many programs and projects as exhibitors at both the NC Mountain State Fair in Fletcher and the NC State Fair in Raleigh. Making every effort to be in the public eye and, most importantly where the farmers are, has played a vital role in serving the farmers, fishers and foresters of this state as well as raising awareness of the importance of agricultural safety and health.

This year the NC Department of Agriculture sponsored an Institute booth at the 2013 Mountain State Fair at the Western NC Agricultural Center in Fletcher, near Asheville. For one full week in early September, the Institute, represented by Tami Thompson, Michele Proctor, and Robin Tutor-Marcom, showcased its work to residents in the western region of NC, as well as many visitors from neighboring states. In its 20th year, the western fair had a record-breaking attendance of 191,596 people during its 10-day run.

Additionally, the Institute was represented at the NC State Fair in Raleigh in October. Agromedicine and NC AgrAbility were featured in the Agriculture of Today exhibit, sponsored by the NC Department of Agriculture. NC AgrAbility projects were displayed as highlights of exemplary work of faculty, students, and partnering institutions in the NC State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) section of the exhibit. On display were NCSU Biological & Agricultural Engineering Student Design projects for people farming with disabilities. During the time at the fair, the exhibit was visited by current AgrAbility farmers as well as many interested in becoming AgrAbility farmers or trying some of the design ideas on display.

Being part of events like these help the Institute getting the message out about the importance of agricultural safety and health and the impact Institute programs are having in our state and across the country. The help of our community partners, state agencies, and many friends and volunteers is much appreciated and makes it possible for us to serve the whole state.
Faculty Focus: April Shaeffer

April Shaeffer is a Research Specialist in the NCSU Animal Science Department, and an enthusiastic advocate for agricultural health and safety. In addition to her full-time position at NCSU, she is currently enrolled in the NCSU Agricultural and Extension Education Master’s degree program.

Working with Dr. Matt Poore, April conducts research and extension activities with an emphasis on beef cattle and forages. She manages the national NRCS Pastureland Ecology 1 School, the annual Livestock Agent Training Conference, the Southern Risk Management Education Center project called “Reducing Beef Cattle Production Risks by Enhancing Soil Health, Drought Resilience, and Reduced Inputs Through Thoughtful Grazing Management,” and outreach at regional and state Cattlemen’s Conferences.

Reflecting on her background, April commented: “As a little girl, I always had a love for animals. I was active in FFA and became the second female President of our chapter. I grew up setting burley tobacco with both a tractor and a team of Clydesdales.” April graduated from Berea College in Berea, Kentucky with a B.S. in Agriculture and Natural Resources.

One of April’s most recent innovations is the program she developed specifically for women, called “NC Leadership and Cattle Handling for Women Producers.” Many collaborators serve as instructors in the course, and NCSU faculty member Dr. Jeannette Moore helped April get the idea for the program off the ground. Providing women the skills and confidence needed to run a successful beef cattle operation, the program emphasizes the importance of following the Beef Quality Assurance methods of raising beef cattle and the importance of keeping both the animal and the worker safe at all times.

Schaeffer says: “Many of these ladies inherit a farm because of the death or illness of their father or spouse. These ladies often have an off-farm job, and they are now faced with either learning how to manage a farm or selling the farm.”

The women’s workshop teaches hands-on principles on the safety of working cattle through a handling facility (giving vaccines, ear tagging, and de-worming), truck driving and trailer safety (checking and assessing the truck and trailer, changing a tire, and loading/unloading cattle properly), and operating a tractor safely (operate a PTO and feed hay), in addition to pasture management and the use of temporary fences for strip grazing.

“Backing up a trailer or driving a tractor with an implement can be intimidating, but we provide a non-intimidating atmosphere for learning that gives these farm women the confidence to do the job.”

Schaeffer adds: “Farmers are often in too much of a hurry and need to slow down a little. It is important to make sure that all farm safety aspects are practiced daily so it becomes a habit that can be passed down from generation to generation. I feel that if I can keep someone from getting injured then I have done a good job. If I can give a woman the confidence and education needed to successfully operate a farm without selling out, then I have done a GREAT job.”
Happy New Year from the Agricultural Health Study!

Thanks to our participants for making the Agricultural Health Study one of the most important studies on farming and health in the world!

We are now conducting a survey to update the health status of our study participants. The more people who complete the survey, the more effective the Agricultural Health Study will be in understanding health risks and benefits associated with living and working on a farm.

The survey only takes about 25 minutes to complete, either by filling out our mailed questionnaire, by responding to our telephone survey, or by visiting www.aghealthsurvey.org.

So far, we have only heard from half of our participants, so please complete your survey even if you are no longer farming or are retired. If a study participant in your family is deceased, please let us know and consider completing the survey on his/her behalf. Every piece of information is important.

Questions? Call the Health Follow Up Survey Center at 1-855-443-2692

Visit the survey website at www.aghealthsurvey.org. Thank you for your participation and best wishes for a happy and healthy 2014. — The Agricultural Health Study Team

Institute Bids Fond Farewell and Best Wishes to Al Schreier and Addie Brannin

Al Schreier, who retired in summer 2013, served as Interim Associate Director of the Institute.

Addie Brannin served as Communications Specialist for the Institute.
Farmers in NC depend on pesticides such as fumigants to ensure healthy crops and increased crop yield. In late winter, farmers begin applying fumigant pesticides to the soil. Crops affected include tobacco, strawberries, cotton, peanuts, and sweet potatoes. When applied properly, fumigants are effective at reducing and preventing pest problems.

However, although buffers and other mitigation will prevent many future incidents, fumigants may move off-site into neighboring areas due to accidents, errors and/or unforeseen weather conditions. Drifting fumigants may be at high enough concentrations to adversely affect human and animal health. Agricultural workers and residents who live near farm fields are at risk for drift exposure. First responders are too, and thinking ahead can help.

**EARLY DETECTION:**
- Fumigants are very toxic chemicals that are purposely put out in the environment.
- Find out if fumigants are used in your county.
- Expect the unexpected. Domestic calls from residences in rural areas may involve fumigants.

**APPROPRIATE RESPONSE:**
- Emergency responders are trained to approach all chemical incidents in the same manner.
- As part of the new Soil Fumigant Risk Mitigation measures, the Environmental Protection Agency recommends responders have the most current response information.
- Rural county response workers should review the hazards and precautions about the following fumigants:
  - Chloropicrin
  - Methyl bromide
  - Metam sodium/metam potassium and MITC

Look for a Public Service Announcement soon from the State Fire Marshall’s Office. It will include detailed information about these fumigants.

*Four fire fighters responded to a call from a family of five living in a rural county. Tobacco fields across the street were fumigated the day before and that morning with chloropicrin. The firefighters were all exposed and went to the local emergency department.*
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National Institute of Environmental Health Science/National Institutes of Health
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Personal Protective Technology Program

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