NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Awards Grant for AgriSafe-NC & Certified Safe Farm

Due to the grassroots success of the AgriSafe-NC project among eastern North Carolina farmers, the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission awarded a 2-year, $500,000 grant to expand AgriSafe-NC and to establish another component: the Certified Safe Farm program.

NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission funding will allow the AgriSafe-NC program and the staff of Tri-County Community Health Council to continue offering farmers health screenings and assistance with personal protective equipment (PPE) selection and fit. In addition, the funding will support development of the Certified Safe Farm program for North Carolina agriculture.

Robin Tutor, Interim Director of the NC Agromedicine Institute says: “One of the best features of the AgriSafe-NC program is that services are offered at locations and times convenient to very busy and hard-working farmers, family members and employees.”

AgriSafe-NC services are offered at Tri-County’s Carolina Oaks Family Health Center in Johnston County, on farms, at community sites and at outreach events. Health insurance is not required, and most services are provided at minimal or no cost. North Carolina soybean growers Craig and Wade Sawyer of Cherry Hill Farms in Camden were ‘tired of coughing and hacking’ whenever they harvested beans or moved them in and out of the bin. They have experienced first-hand how AgriSafe-NC can help.

Bryant Spivey, County Extension Director in Johnston County, has praise for the program: “The AgriSafe program has been a great partner for NC Cooperative Extension in Johnston County. The staff has participated with our farmer workshops and has assisted with delivery of educational programs to improve farmer safety. They have also developed relationships with individual farmers and have assisted them privately with personal matters related to their health and safety.”

Certified Safe Farm is a new component of the program. AgriSafe-NC and Certified Safe Farm staff will work together as a team in Johnston, Sampson and Duplin Counties to offer farmers a full complement of health and safety services to reduce the risk of work-related illness and injury. Dr. Greg Cope, Agromedicine Coordinator for NC State University says: “This is the kind of program that we have envisioned all along for Agromedicine in North Carolina. We are excited to see it take shape at the community level.”

Extension agents in Johnston, Sampson and Duplin counties will
AgriSafe Provider Course Comes to North Carolina

A major activity of the AgriSafe-Certified Safe Farm-NC project funded by the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission will be to offer Agricultural Medicine: Occupational & Environmental Health for Rural Health Professionals. This week-long course will be held November 30-December 4, 2009 in Greenville, NC.

Taught by experts from the University of Iowa, as well as faculty and partners of the NC Agromedicine Institute familiar with North Carolina agriculture, the course will address diagnosis, treatment and prevention of agricultural health conditions through a multi-disciplinary approach. The course is required for nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians and physician assistants interested in becoming an AgriSafe provider. In addition, the course offers many other health and safety professionals, including veterinarians, health educators, and Extension agents, essential knowledge in the health and safety issues of agriculture.

“Right now, there is little if any agricultural occupational safety and health preparation for nurses, doctors, and allied health professionals in North Carolina.” said Robin Tutor, Interim Director of the NC Agromedicine Institute. “We are excited to be collaborating with Dr. Kelley Donham of the University of Iowa, a recognized expert in agricultural medicine and trail-blazer in studying agricultural health problems and developing practical health and safety solutions.”

Course topics include acute agricultural injuries, behavioral health issues, agricultural skin diseases, respiratory diseases, pesticide illness and toxicology, cancer among farmers, zoonotic diseases, musculoskeletal conditions and ergonomics, noise-induced hearing loss, services for farmers with disabilities, illness and injury prevention, and use of personal protective equipment.

Graduate credit is available for students in related degree programs through NC State University. Continuing medical and nursing education credit is pending. For more information, call 800-767-9111 or visit www.cpe.ecu.edu.

NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Awards Grant for AgriSafe-NC & Certified Safe Farm (continued from page 1)

receive special training in conducting on-farm safety reviews—a new service of the AgriSafe-NC and Certified Safe Farm program. During on-farm safety reviews, recommendations for safety improvements will be discussed with each farmer, allowing time for one-on-one education.

An advisory group of farmers and other stakeholders will provide guidance as this Iowa-based program is adapted to North Carolina’s unique and diverse agriculture. Participation in the program is completely voluntary and designed to help farmers identify and reduce workplace hazards.

Ed Emory, Director of the Duplin County Extension Center says: “Farmers want to ensure the safety of their workers and family members on the farm. I think they will welcome this program and be eager to participate.”

Based on a successful program developed in Iowa, AgriSafe and Certified Safe Farm combine health and safety components proven to result in lower health claims costs and safer, healthier farmers. Agricultural health and safety experts from Iowa are assisting in the development of the program in North Carolina. A long-term goal of the project is to develop insurance discounts for farms who successfully participate in the AgriSafe-NC and Certified Safe Farm program. In addition, project staff will work with agribusiness and other groups to develop a cost-sharing fund to help offset the costs of making high-priority safety improvements on farms.

The AgriSafe-NC and Certified Safe Farm grant was awarded to NC State University’s NC Agricultural Foundation. Project Principal Investigators are Dr. Greg Cope, Associate Professor and Campus Coordinator for Agromedicine at NC State University and Ms. Robin Tutor, Interim Director of the NC Agromedicine Institute. Partners include Tri-County Community Health Council and the NC Cooperative Extension Centers of Johnston, Duplin and Sampson Counties.

Save the Date...
The Health & Safety of Fishermen: More than research to ECU’s Dr. Lena Carawan

Dr. Lena Carawan of ECU’s School of Social Work is no stranger to the health and safety issues of fishermen: she is from a fishing family and has devoted her research to talking directly with fishermen to learn more about their needs, including health insurance.

Based on her previous work, as well as her summer of 2008 joint work with Dr. Michael Behm, Dr. Carawan’s findings suggests that 20 percent or fewer fish boat owners have health insurance. The percentage is likely less for crew members.

“In a qualitative study (2003–2004) that I did, only two fishing captains out of ten had health insurance. And then if you look at the boat crew, not the [boat] owners…, it’s significantly less. I would say that virtually none of them have health insurance unless they are covered by a spouse through their work,” she said.

That is the case for Lee and Madge Williams of Swan Quarter, NC. They own and operate Hobo Seafood, an independent fishing operation in Hyde County that includes a fleet of fishing boats that fish, shrimp, or scallop depending on their permits.

“The kids and I have health insurance, but Lee isn’t covered,” said Madge. “I have insurance through my former employer, although we pay for it ourselves now. It’s hard to cover just myself and our kids.”

Dr. Carawan envisions many areas where the NC Agromedicine Institute can increase its involvement with the coastal fishing community in coming years, especially with educating the public about the fishing industry and the quality of local seafood.

NC Named First AgriSafe Network State Affiliate

After a successful first year, AgriSafe of North Carolina has become the first state affiliate of the AgriSafe Network, a national non-profit with a network of health providers in 16 states. AgriSafe providers are nurses and other health providers specially trained to screen farmers for health conditions related to farming, including respiratory illness, hearing loss and skin cancer. They also provide services such as respirator selection and fit testing and offer supplies at low cost, so that farmers can take the protective measures necessary to feel good and stay healthy and safe while they work. In North Carolina, AgriSupply and National Welders/AirGas have offered safety supplies at discounts to participating farmers.

The AgriSafe program was founded in Iowa in 1987 and has become a national model for safeguarding farmers and their families. AgriSafe-NC was made possible initially with an award of $100,000 for one year from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. Additional short-term funding was provided by the Rural Economic Development Center and the North Carolina Agricultural Consortium. The NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission has recently provided two years of expansion funds for AgriSafe-NC and its compliment program Certified Safe Farm.
CALENDAR

http://napacsew.consolidatedsafety.com/.

August 13, 2009: National Farmworker Health Day,


August 18, 2009: NC Agromedicine Institute Board of Partners meeting, NC State University, Toxicology Bldg, Raleigh, NC; 12 noon-2 pm.

August 20, 2009: Application deadline: National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, mini-grants of up to $20,000 for pilot projects,
http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/nccrahs/

September 9, 2009: Deadline for poster abstract submission: ASHCA/NIOSH Joint Conference, Be Safe, Be Profitable, Protecting Workers in Agriculture,


October 13-16, 2009: 17th International Congress in Agricultural Medicine and Rural Health, From Theory to Practice: Occupational Health and Safety for Rural Populations; co-organized by the International Association of Agricultural Medicine and Rural Health (IAAMRH) and the Scientific Committee on Rural Health of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH), Cartagena de India, DT, Colombia, www.ruralhealth-colombia.com

November 30 –December 4, 2009: Agricultural Medicine: Occupational and Environmental Health for Rural Health Professionals, an AgriSafe certified training in 2 sessions, co-sponsored by the NC Agromedicine Institute and the University of Iowa/I-CASH, Greenville, NC, http://www.ecu.edu/cpe/.


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NC Agromedicine Institute
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