

Mission

To proactively address ongoing and emerging occupational safety and health issues affecting U.S. agriculture.

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Save the Date!

The first annual meeting of the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America will take place on Thursday, January 29, 2009, in Washington, D.C. Log onto www.ashca.org after September 1, 2008, for registration details. For more information, contact Regina Fisher, ASHCA Administrative Assistant, at 715-221-7270 or fisher.regina@mcrf.mfldclin.edu.

New national council works for safer, healthier agricultural industry



Agriculture is consistently among the most hazardous occupations in the United States. In an average year, 516 workers die while doing farm work and each day about 243 workers suffer lost-time injuries. Agriculture, due to its decentralized nature and diverse structure, lags behind other industries in reducing the toll on its workers with a fatality rate that is eight times that of the all-industry average.

The Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America (ASHCA) is working to close that safety gap. The new Council, driven by farmer/rancher and agribusiness leaders, is the first of its kind in the U.S. to pursue a national strategy to reduce disease, injuries and fatalities in American agriculture.

“What’s encouraging is the combination of people coming together -- farmers and ranchers, organizations that

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New national council works for safer, healthier agricultural industry (from page 1)

represent them, insurance companies, equipment companies -- that all have this common interest and need," said William Nelson, CHS Foundation president and the first elected chair of ASHCA.

"What really impressed me about this group of people, along with their commitment to agricultural safety, is they're coming from exceptional organizations and are extremely dedicated."

ASHCA is building on the success of similar national initiatives in Canada and Australia. California's AgSafe program also served as an important model. (Please see sidebar).

Organizations represented on ASHCA's Board of Directors include many familiar names: AGCO Corp., Agri-Services Agency, American Farm Bureau Federation, Association of Equipment Manufacturers, CropLife Foundation, Farm Employers Labor Service, Workers Compensation Fund-Utah, National Institute for Farm Safety, National Pork Board and Penn State University. Administrative services are provided by the National Farm Medicine Center at Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation.

The Council's mission:

To proactively address ongoing and emerging occupational safety and health issues affecting U.S. agriculture.

Goals for the Council include: Pursue national strategies to reduce agricultural injuries and fatalities, based on reliable data and emerging issues.

Influence research priorities to rapidly identify best management practices for worker safety and health that maximize cost efficiency and sustainability.

Guide the development of effective delivery systems for safety and health through communications involving leaders representing producers, agribusiness, insurance, safety associations and others.

Initial financial support for assessing the feasibility of a Council was provided by the Farm Foundation. As of January 2008, ASHCA

ASHCA Timeline

2006

June - Industry and safety leaders meet in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, to discuss the concept of a national coalition to improve the safety and health conditions of the agricultural work environment.

September - Proposal funded by the Farm Foundation to assess the feasibility of a national coalition.

2007

Feasibility Phase - In-person meetings in Chicago and Salt Lake City focus on potential structure, governance system, bylaws, policies and work plans (funded by the Farm Foundation). The Chair of the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association guides planning based on 13 years' experience.

became a not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) organization funded by members and sponsors.

“I think ASHCA has a chance to do some real good, given the involvement of the producer community,” said Dan Hair, senior vice president of Workers Compensation Fund and vice-chair of ASHCA.

A variety of membership packages are available for individuals and organizations. “Sustaining members” who join during 2008-2009 (\$5,000-plus) will be designated as Charter (Founding) Members. For information, contact the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America (ASHCA), 1000 North Oak Ave., ML1, Marshfield, WI 54449, visit www.ashca.org or phone 715-221-7270.

Canadian model demonstrates value of national ag safety council

ASHCA founders studied other large-scale agricultural safety and health initiatives, including the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA). CASA Chair Glen Blahey attended ASHCA planning meetings and offered guidance based on his organization’s successful track record.

CASA was established in 1993 in response to an identified need for a national farm safety networking and coordinating agency to address problems of illness, injuries and accidental death in farmers, their families and agricultural workers. The founding coalition of CASA included The Centre for Agricultural Medicine, University of Saskatchewan; the Canadian Federation of Agriculture; Farm Safety Association Inc.

(Ontario); and New Holland Canada Ltd.; in addition to representatives from other farm organizations, industry, the research community and preventive agencies. All provincial departments of agriculture named a representative to serve in an advisory capacity.

In California, AgSafe has served a similar facilitation role. AgSafe is a nonprofit education and training organization dedicated to reducing job injuries, illnesses and fatalities in California agriculture.

AgSafe links its members with those who have the information, experience and materials needed to be in compliance with California safety laws and regulations.

2008

July 25 - Feasibility project participants meet at the American Farm Bureau Federation office in Washington, D.C., and endorse establishment of ASHCA.

December 4 - Board of Directors elected; committees and Web site established.

December 26 - Articles of Incorporation filed.

January - Officers elected; committee chairs formulate plans and initiate work.

June - ASHCA introduced at several agricultural conferences by Board Chair William Nelson, CHS Foundation.

ASHCA elects Board of Directors

The Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America elected its first Board of Directors in January 2008:

William Nelson – Chair, CHS Foundation
Dan Hair – Vice-Chair, Workers Compensation Fund-Utah
Marsha Purcell, Secretary-Treasurer,
American Farm Bureau Federation
Walter Armbruster, Farm Foundation
Charles Brundage, AGCO Corporation
George Daniels, Farm Employers Labor Service
Darrin Drollinger, Association of Equipment Manufacturers
Glen Hetzel, National Institute for Farm Safety
Jan Klodowski, Agri-Services Agency
Dennis Murphy, Penn State University
Allan Noe, CropLife Foundation
Liz Wagstrom, National Pork Board

Administration is provided by Barbara Lee and Regina Fisher, National Farm Medicine Center (NFMC).

Upcoming Events

July 26-30, 2008

Agricultural Media Summit,
Tampa, Florida,
<http://www.agmediasummit.com/>.

July 29, 2008

National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health (NIOSH)-National
Occupational Research Agenda
(NORA) Conference, Denver, Colorado,
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/NORA/>.

October 19-23, 2008

Sixth International Symposium:
Public Health and the Agricultural
Rural Ecosystem, Canadian Centre
for Health and Safety in Agriculture,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada,
<http://www.cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca/pharesymposium2008/>.

November 11-13, 2008

Fifth Health and Safety in Western
Agriculture Conference: New Paths,
Cle Elum, Washington, <http://depts.washington.edu/ehce/NWcenter/courses/AGCONF-08.html>.

November 12-14, 2008

National Association of Farm
Broadcasters annual meeting, Kansas
City, Missouri, <http://www.nafb.com/>.

January 29, 2009

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Agricultural Safety and Health
Council of America Holiday Inn-
Capitol in Washington, D.C. Log onto
www.ashca.org after September 1,
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Membership

A variety of membership packages
are available for individuals and
organizations. "Sustaining members"
who join during 2008-2009 (\$5,000-
plus) will be designated as Charter
(Founding) Members. Visit us on the
Web at www.ashca.org or phone
715-221-7270.

Financial Support

Initial support for assessing the
feasibility of a Council was provided
by the Farm Foundation. As of January
2008, ASHCA is a not-for-profit
501(c)(3) organization funded by
members and sponsors.

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Charter Members



CHS FOUNDATION

