

Cultivate

Newsletter of the National Farm Medicine Center

Winter 2010

Our Mission

"To conduct high quality research addressing human health and safety associated with rural and agricultural work, life and environments."

Auction eclipses \$2 million mark

The Auction of Champions raised \$190,000 to benefit the work of the National Farm Medicine Center, and has now surpassed \$2 million since the first Auction was held in 1982. Marshfield-area businesses and a committee of 50 community members produced another successful event. Half the proceeds raised will be dedicated to the Stueland Endowment. The Dr. Dean T. Stueland Endowment Fund was established in 2000 to foster and promote research and outreach/educational programs in emergency medicine, agricultural medicine, and/or alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) medicine.

Tom Tasse of Hewitt Meat Processing, Marshfield, was announced as the 2010-2011 Auction Chair. He follows Al Nystrom, president, M&I Bank Marshfield Group.

 National Farm Medicine Center



Marshfield Clinic[®]
Research Foundation

Passion for child ag safety earns scientist Sebold award

She does not seek the spotlight, but after 14 years of focused, personal dedication to improving farm safety for young children, the spotlight found Barbara Marlenga, Ph.D.

Dr. Marlenga, a research scientist at the National Farm Medicine Center, was presented with the Gwen D. Sebold Research Fellowship, given annually to an outstanding Marshfield Clinic researcher. Raised on a dairy farm in Price County and a former emergency room nurse, Dr. Marlenga understands farm culture's benefits and hazards.

"This is not just her job. This is who she is," said Research Foundation Director Humberto Vidaillet, M.D., one of a dozen colleagues who spoke at the presentation ceremony, November 18, 2009, in the Robert F. Froehle auditorium of the Laird Center, Marshfield.

Dr. Marlenga's research involving Wisconsin youth has included tractor operation on public roads and hearing protection use.

Dr. Marlenga was instrumental in development of the North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks (www.nagcat.org), designed to assist parents in assigning farm tasks to children ages 7-16.

In presenting the award, given in honor of his late sister Gwen who died of cancer, Dewey Sebold said he's reminded each year "that we've got a world-class research organization, with world-class researchers. You should be proud," he told Dr. Marlenga. "You've empowered many thousands of people to live a better life."



Barbara Marlenga, Ph.D., 2009 Sebold Research Fellowship recipient, with Dewey Sebold.

Dr. Marlenga accepted the award, saying, "Enough about me! It's all about the team." Singling out her 12-year-old nephew, Dayne, a surprise speaker at the event, she noted, "He keeps my passion for protecting children alive and well and very personal."

Dr. Marlenga was nominated by her peers at the Clinic and will receive \$5,000 to support her research. Previous NFMC recipients of the award, established in 1987, include: Dean Emanuel, M.D.; Paul Gunderson, Ph.D.; Dean Stueland, M.D., M.P.H.; and Barbara Lee, Ph.D.



Faculty at the fall AgriSafe training at Marshfield Clinic included (from left) course director Steve Kirkhorn, M.D., M.P.H.; Cheryl Skjolaas, Agricultural Safety and Health Specialist, University of Wisconsin; John Shutske, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Extension and Outreach, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin; and Kelley Donham, D.V.M., M.S., Professor and Director, Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, University of Iowa.

A three-day class for rural health professionals was held at Marshfield Clinic in November. The AgriSafe-certified course was the first in Wisconsin to offer a core curriculum in agricultural medicine and health. NFMF Medical Director Steve Kirkhorn, M.D., M.P.H., served as course director. Physicians, nurses and other health professionals from across the state learned about the diagnosis, treatment,

and prevention of agricultural occupational illnesses and injuries. The course provided the basis for a series of articles in the Agri-View newspaper, written by Stratford-based Jane Fyksen. Part II of the course is scheduled for March 18-20, 2010.

PUBLIC HEALTH MICROBIOLOGY

As the world pays more attention to groundwater quality, demand increases for the expertise of NFMF scientist Mark Borchardt, Ph.D. Dr. Borchardt gave 14 invited talks in 2009, including the Dairy Business Association annual conference, Madison, Wisconsin; the Global Conference on Microbial Contaminants in Drinking Water, Singapore; the Wisconsin Water Association annual meeting, Wisconsin Dells; the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, University of Wisconsin, Madison; the EPA Office of Water, Washington, D.C., and the Marshfield Rotary Club.

CHILDHOOD AGRICULTURAL INJURY PREVENTION

It's easier than ever for parents to decide if their children are ready for specific jobs on the farm. The North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT) are now searchable online at www.nagcat.org. Simply type the name of the task in the search box and the most relevant of 62 different guidelines will appear. The most requested guidelines include, "Milking cows," "Farming with an ATV," "Lifting," and Spanish language versions of "Hand harvesting vegetables," and "Driving a tractor." The NAGCAT online search function is the first product of the National Children's Center's Digital Dissemination initiative, one of seven major projects funded by a five-year competitive award from NIOSH. The Digital Dissemination team is creating new Web-based options for current and proposed National Children's Center projects.



The NFMF is working with leading agribusiness and insurance companies to plan a first-of-its-kind conference on issues affecting safety and health of production agriculture workers. "Be Safe, Be Profitable: Protecting Workers in Agriculture," will be held January 27-28, 2010, at the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport - Marriott South. The conference is being co-organized by the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America (ASHCA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). NFMF and Clinic Occupational Health Medical Director Steve Kirkhorn, M.D., M.P.H., will lead an expert panel in a discussion of musculoskeletal disorders and ergonomics in agriculture. NFMF Director Barbara Lee, Ph.D., is administrative director for ASHCA.

VISITORS



Frank Mitloehner, Ph.D., world-recognized expert in air quality and dairy farming (right), pays an informal visit to Gary Ruegsegger, Maple Ridge Dairy, Stratford, this past fall. Dr. Mitloehner is an Associate Professor and Cooperative Extension Specialist at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Mitloehner made headlines in December when he pointed to evidence indicating cows and agriculture receive undue blame for greenhouse gases and global warming.

- Dairy farmers Sue and Robert Volenec, of Loyal, annually host middle-school students from Brickton Montessori School in Chicago, providing a week-long education in farm life. While on a field trip to the NFMF and Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation, the kids also explored the computer Usability Lab in the Biomedical Informatics Research Center.
- Julie Sorensen, Ph.D., a social scientist at the Northeast Center for Agricultural and Occupational Health in Cooperstown, New York, briefed NFMF staff on successful New York efforts to retrofit rollover protective structures on older tractors.
- Kent Anger, Ph.D., president of Northwest Education Training and Assessment, updated NFMF staff on his research examining the effectiveness of computer-based training for agricultural workers, Dr. Anger is also a scientist at Oregon Health and Science University.