

Cultivate

Newsletter of the National Farm Medicine Center

Summer 2007

Our Mission

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

Save the Date

The Auction of Champions will "Roll out the Red Carpet" for a gala evening on Thursday, September 20, at Best Western Clearwaters Hotel and Convention Center, Marshfield. Up for bid will be golf trips, a group outing to a Badgers game, Packers tickets, jewelry, art, weekend getaways, home decor and much more, including the traditional prime meat packages. For more information, contact Teri Herr-Wilczek at 715-389-3249 or herr-wilczek.teri@mcrf.mfldclin.edu.

Pitching ROPS to Wisconsin farmers part of national initiative

What would it take to convince a farmer to retrofit an old tractor with a life-saving rollover protective structure (ROPS)?

To find out, National Farm Medicine Center (NFMC) staff conducted a series of focus groups in Wisconsin this spring with farmers and farm couples. Tractor-related incidents are by far the leading cause of death and serious injury in agriculture, with rollovers accounting for more than half of such incidents.

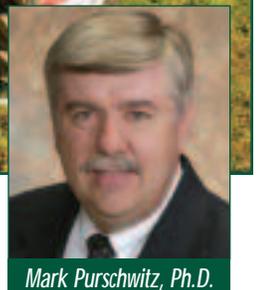
NFMC research engineer Mark Purschwitz, Ph.D., and research associate Tammy Ellis showed photographs of overturned tractors and played a variety of audio public service announcements (PSAs), then recorded participants' feedback regarding PSA effectiveness. They also asked about farmers' preferred information sources.

"We're trying to understand what the farming audience responds to," Dr. Purschwitz said.

Dr. Purschwitz felt he was able to use his experience to put the groups at ease and elicit candid responses. Also, said Purschwitz, most participants knew



Focus groups were shown photos of overturned tractors.



Mark Purschwitz, Ph.D.

each other, which further enhanced the comfort level.

The NFMC held focus groups in Merrill, Edgar and the Buffalo County community of Waumandee. The groups met in local restaurants of their choosing.

The work is part of the National Agricultural Tractor Safety Initiative funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The University of Kentucky spearheads this focus group project. Kentucky researchers developed a total of 16 PSAs that are being shown in focus groups in eight states. Some of the PSAs rely on statistics, while others tap emotion.

Kentucky researchers are analyzing feedback. Besides ROPS, results could aid in reaching farm audiences with safety information on other topics.

Tom Thieding, executive director of media relations for the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, and Sandi Cihlar, dairy producer from Mosinee and member of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, put the NFMC in

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 National Farm Medicine Center.

 MARSHFIELD CLINIC.
Research Foundation

Pitching ROPS to Wisconsin farmers part of national initiative (continued)

touch with local farmers who were able to assemble the groups: Chris and Karen Ellis of Independence; Nina Poch of Athens; and Heidi Duley and her son, Mark Duley, of Merrill.

"They did a lot of work on short notice, for nothing but our thanks," Dr. Purschwitz said. "We're truly grateful."

In the U.S., ROPS protection has been standard on tractors built since 1985, but because so many older tractors remain in use, more than half of the approximately 4.7 million tractors in the U.S. lack ROPS. Approximately 130 people die each year in tractor rollovers. Earlier research by Dr. Purschwitz led to the 1993 landmark NFMC publication, "A Guide to Agricultural Tractor Rollover Protective Structures," which is on the NFMC Web site (<http://marshfieldclinic.org/nfmc>) and is referenced by tractor owners across the nation.

Agromedicine

- A Canadian physician, teacher and researcher known as an international leader in agricultural medicine has been named the 2007 Stueland Scholar. James Dosman, M.D., will speak at Froehle Auditorium on the campus of Marshfield Clinic Marshfield Center at noon on October 31. Dr. Dosman and his team at the Institute of Agricultural Rural and Environmental Health at the University of Saskatchewan have hosted five international symposiums on agricultural health and safety issues since the mid-1980s, drawing participants from dozens of nations. Researchers and scientists from Marshfield have participated from the very first symposium, when Dean Emanuel, M.D.; James Marx, Ph.D.; and Michael Kryda, M.D.; presented papers.
- NFMC Medical Director Steve Kirkhorn, M.D., M.P.H., hosted a University of Minnesota family practice resident on a week-long community medicine rotation in May. Michael Broten, M.D., found the background information on personalized medicine, food safety/zoonotic diseases, and antimicrobial resistance to be especially valuable. Dr. Broten chose Marshfield Clinic after attending lectures given by Dr. Kirkhorn as part of his role as adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota through the UM Family Medicine and Community Health Department.



James Dosman, M.D.

Childhood agricultural safety and health

- Marcy Fitz-Randolph, D.O., M.P.H., has joined the National Children's Center as an Injury Prevention Research Specialist. She received her masters in public health with a focus in ergonomics from the University of Iowa, where she is currently completing her Ph.D. in occupational injury prevention research. Her research interests are in youth worker injury prevention as well as machinery and motor vehicle safety.



Marcy Fitz-Randolph, D.O., M.P.H.

- The National Safety Council has chosen the National Children's Center-led "Keep Kids Away from Tractors" campaign as the theme for its 64th National Farm Safety and Health Week, September 16-22. In other campaign news, country singer Michael Peterson recorded a 30-second video public service announcement at his farm near Nashville, with technical support from NFMC youth safety specialist Regina Fischer. The ad was picked up by RFD-TV and the syndicated AgDay television news program, among other outlets. The ad can be seen with other campaign resources at www.childsafety.org.
- NFMC Director Barbara Lee, Ph.D., has been named to co-chair a new federal council dedicated to safer agricultural workplaces: the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Sector Council on Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. The council is charged with developing a national occupational research agenda, then sparking its implementation through public and private sector partnerships. Dairy producer Ralph Bredl, of Stratford, joins Dr. Lee as the only other Wisconsinite on the council. The NFMC will host the next council meeting in Marshfield, August 1-2.



Michael Peterson

Outreach

- The NFMC made its first appearance at the Marathon County Dairy Breakfast, June 3, at Johnson Creek Dairy, Mosinee. Dr. Kirkhorn and Tammy Ellis staffed an NFMC booth. The breakfast drew an estimated 3,000 people. In Marshfield, NFMC staff continued to volunteer at the annual Dairyfest Mayor's Breakfast as they waited tables at the June 1 event.
- Drs. Lee and Kirkhorn are honored to be serving as Marshfield Clinic co-chairs for the 2007-2008 Marshfield Area United Way campaign.



The Kolodziej family – Kris and Heidi, with children Te'an and Nikki – visit Tammy Ellis at the NFMC booth.

Public health microbiology

- Funds from the Auction of Champions and other donated money are helping to support work in the lab of Steve Foley, Ph.D. One project, under the direction of Aaron Lynne, Ph.D., involves research into the genetic mechanisms that facilitate the spread and persistence of drug-resistant *Salmonella* bacteria. The other project, led by Dr. Foley, is identifying genetic markers in *Escherichia coli*, a pathogen of humans and livestock, that could be used to determine the source of the microorganisms in environments that normally do contain high levels of *E. coli*, such as a well, stream or swimming beach.