

# 2025

## Year In Review



National

**Farm**Medicine center

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## Mission Statement:

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“With the ultimate goal of improving human health, well-being and safety of rural and agricultural communities, the National Farm Medicine Center acts as a national resource by conducting high-quality research, developing and delivering health and safety information, exploring innovative intervention models, and leading initiatives and networks.”

## Message from the director, Casper Bendixsen, Ph.D.

Welcome to our 2025 National Farm Medicine Center Year in Review! This year has been uniquely challenging, but included tremendous moments of research success and community support. As friends of the center will recall, our primary federal funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) faced elimination. Together, regardless of political leanings, we came together as an institution and as a community to keep the nation’s largest agricultural health and safety program intact. Farmers, farmworker organizations, business leaders, and, ultimately, politicians were reminded of the value that NIOSH programs bring to the agricultural industry. My sincere thanks to those of you who called your representatives and voiced your support, as this was a critical moment in the history of your Farm Medicine Center.

This year’s review is designed to celebrate how our long legacy leads to precision research. A key example, the National Children’s Center for Rural Agricultural Health and Safety, kept the protection of children in agriculture vibrant and center stage. Under the leadership of Andrea Swenson, Ph.D., the Children’s Center published the National Action Plan, an important update to the priorities and best practices by which we believe we can continue to lower child injury and fatality rates in U.S. agriculture. Additionally, the work of preparing fire and EMS to prevent and better respond to ag emergencies effectively doubled. Rural Firefighters Delivering Agriculture Safety and Health is now active in 20 U.S. states, five Canadian provinces, and has trained over 400 rural first responders. The program continues to



redesign itself to new audiences and geographies.

The research portfolio of the center expanded in 2025. Bryan Weichelt, Ph.D., continues to grow projects and initiatives to address rural veterans’ healthcare needs. Veterans are prevalent in the rural and farm community, but their health needs are specific. This work looks to increase awareness of the services to veterans and their families,

bolster mental health and prevent suicide, and ultimately improve the services offered to our military members.

2025 was also a year of succession, with Barbara Lee, Ph.D., transitioning to emeritus scientist after decades of Farm Medicine leadership and service. This was most certainly punctuated when Barbara received the Maynard Coe Professional Achievement Award at the 2025 meetings of the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health. Jeff VanWormer, Ph.D., assumed editor-in-chief duties with the Journal of Agromedicine, bringing new expertise and allowing Matthew Keifer, M.D., former Farm

Medicine director and longtime supporter, more actual time as a retiree.

Lastly, and certainly critically, I would like to thank our donors and the team at the Foundation. A record setting Auction of Champions, raising over \$340,000, buoyed our center and myself during a turbulent year of uncertainty. While the theme was “Champions Yacht Club,” we were very much sailing into new waters at that point in the year. A special thanks to Brad Guse for 10 years as our auction chairman and to Tiffany Halan for spending much of her career dedicated to our center.

## Publications

Peer review is the foundation of scientific activities. The peer-review process subjects an author’s work to the scrutiny of other experts in the field, thus encouraging authors to produce high-quality research that will advance the field. View all publications here: [www.marshfieldresearch.org/nfmc/publications](http://www.marshfieldresearch.org/nfmc/publications).

# Honoring Dr. Barbara Lee

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This year marked a significant milestone for the National Farm Medicine Center and the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety as Barbara Lee, Ph.D., transitioned to the role of emeritus scientist after a remarkable 38-year career. On June 23, colleagues, friends and family gathered for what was affectionately called a “non-retirement” celebration – an event that honored both her legacy and her continued commitment to agricultural health and safety.

Lee’s career is deeply intertwined with the history of Farm Medicine. As the Center’s first full-time employee, what began as a short-term opportunity evolved into a lifelong “build-your-own-future” career. Over nearly four decades, her leadership helped define the mission, credibility and national influence of both Farm Medicine and the Children’s Center. Her work consistently translated lived experience and field observations into data-driven research that has shaped policy, practice and prevention strategies across the United States and beyond.

A nationally- and internationally-recognized leader in childhood agricultural injury prevention, Lee led development of the first national action plan on the issue – an initiative funded through the U.S. Congress – and played a pivotal role in establishing the National Children’s Center in 1997. Early efforts under her guidance included developing

age-appropriate farm work guidelines, contributing to a 56 percent decline in youth farm injury rates from 1998 to 2009 – an achievement recognized by the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report as one of the nation’s Ten Great Public Health Achievements of the decade.

Lee’s influence extends far beyond program leadership. She has authored and co-authored numerous peer-reviewed publications, served in key advisory roles for national initiatives, co-founded the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America and made history as the first woman president of the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health. Her many honors – including international fellowships, lifetime achievement awards and honorary doctorates – reflect a career built on scientific rigor, collaboration and impact.

As emeritus scientist, Lee will remain engaged in research and editorial work, including her role as senior associate editor of the Journal of Agromedicine. Her recent scholarship continues to challenge long-held assumptions, reinforcing that farm injuries are preventable – and never “accidents.”

Lee’s legacy is not only what she built, but how she built it: grounding vision in evidence, mentorship in action and legacy in precision research. And thankfully, her work is far from finished.



## Big ideas, safe solutions: Summit convenes key players in agriculture

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The 2025 North American Agricultural Safety Summit, hosted by the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America (ASHCA), demonstrated how legacy partnerships and targeted investment can drive precision research and meaningful collaboration. Held Oct. 20–22 in San Antonio, Texas, the summit convened researchers, educators, safety professionals and industry partners around the theme: “Big Ideas – Safe Solutions.”

*“The Summit continues to be a catalyst for collaboration – bringing research, industry, and safety professionals together to solve real-world challenges.”*

Central to the summit’s success was a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (CDC/NIOSH) Conference Support Grant. This grant not only helped to make the 2025 summit possible but also strengthened ASHCA’s long-standing mission to solve real-world agricultural safety challenges. By investing in the summit, the grant ensures that decades of agricultural safety knowledge continue to guide precise, focused research agendas. The 2025 summit featured 10 main presentations, five lightning talks, 12 research posters, three award presentations and four exhibitor tables. Attendee feedback reflected the strength of this program design, with an overall conference rating of 8.73 out of 10. Participants rated keynote presentations, speaker expertise and networking opportunities especially high.

*“Facilitating new partnerships was the highest-rated outcome of the Summit.”*

The evaluation process provided actionable insights that will shape future ASHCA conferences and events. Attendees identified opportunities to expand producer participation, increase industry representation, enhance promotion and further balance research with hands-on, practical solutions. These findings are already informing strategic planning, ensuring future summits are responsive, inclusive and grounded in participant needs.



National Farm Medicine Center is a founding member of ASHCA. Farm Medicine Director Casper Bendixsen is a current member of the ASHCA Board.

*“The feedback we receive doesn’t sit on a shelf – it drives how we plan future conferences and activities.”*

Beyond program content, the summit reinforced ASHCA’s enduring legacy as a bridge between research and application. Participants repeatedly emphasized the value of bringing diverse perspectives together to identify emerging risks and co-create solutions that can be implemented across farms of all sizes. This feedback drives planning for future conferences and activities.

*“ASHCA creates space for meaningful conversations that don’t happen anywhere else.”*

With continued support from the CDC/NIOSH Conference Support Grant, ASHCA is well positioned to build on its legacy while advancing precision research that informs policy, strengthens partnerships and improves safety outcomes across agriculture. The 2025 summit served both as a reflection of past achievements and a catalyst for addressing evolving needs of the agricultural workforce.

## RF-DASH expands trainings

The Rural Firefighters Delivering Agriculture Safety and Health (RF-DASH) program, led by the National Farm Medicine Center, marked its ninth year by expanding its reach, sharpening its training model and celebrating the addition of its first-ever full-time firefighter trainer. With continued support from the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH) and CHS Foundation, RF-DASH demonstrated how a legacy of research can lead to practical outcomes and sustained outreach.

Agriculture remains one of the nation's most hazardous occupations. RF-DASH builds on research from the National Farm Medicine Center showing that rural emergency responders are among the most trusted messengers of safety information in farm communities. The program equips firefighters and EMS personnel with tools to advocate for agricultural hazard awareness, emergency pre-planning and farm safety improvements.

In 2025, RF-DASH conducted seven in-person trainings across Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Wisconsin and Maine. The program has provided training in 16 U.S. states and five Canadian provinces, directly reaching more than 250 first responders and many more through peer-to-peer instruction in local fire departments.

The RF-DASH program uses a train-the-trainer approach, so that first responders trained in the program can confidently share it with others. Examples from 2025 include: providing information about RF-DASH at an annual fire school, presentations on farm emergencies to local Farm Bureau chapters, and teaching introductory farm

safety to high school students. One RF-DASH trainer in New York formed a partnership with the Firefighters' Association of the State of New York, resulting in funding for three trainings in 2026.

RF-DASH's online training course, developed with the University of Wisconsin Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR), also went live in November, providing free, on-demand access to firefighters nationwide. By the end of 2025, nearly 30 first responders had completed the online course.

One way the RF-DASH program connects research and practice is through its Community of Practice (CoP), launched in January 2025. The CoP was founded based on findings from interviews with RF-DASH trainers. The CoP consists of monthly meetings of RF-DASH trainers across the continent and is meant to provide a forum for knowledge sharing and community feedback. Direction from CoP meetings shaped the development of the RF-DASH online course as well as the creation of RF-DASH promotional materials.

Looking ahead to 2026, RF-DASH has scheduled trainings in Ohio, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Indiana, as the program focuses on the U.S. grain belt. The program also continues to expand to new regions, with trainings anticipated in Florida, North Carolina and Colorado. As principal investigator Casper Bendixsen, Ph.D., said, "Our legacy of firefighter-driven safety is now fueling precision-focused, community-based research and training that will protect the next generation of rural responders and farmers alike."



## Investing in the next generation of agricultural safety science —

Marshfield Clinic Research Institute continued its long tradition of mentorship and discovery through its Summer Research Internship Program (SRIP), showing how long-standing knowledge can help guide modern agricultural safety research. Hosted by Roger Aby, Ph.D., and Bryan Weichelt, Ph.D., the program welcomed Christopher Sullivan for a 10-week research experience focused on a serious and ongoing issue in agriculture: injuries and deaths caused by farm machinery.

Sullivan's project, "Analysis of Injuries Caused by Machines in Agriculture and Assessment of New Autonomous Agriculture Machines' Impact on Health and Safety," explored how new farming technologies could affect worker safety. Although automation in agriculture is advancing quickly, fully autonomous machines are not yet widely used on farms. One major reason is concern about safety. Agriculture remains one of the most dangerous industries in the United States, and machinery-related injuries continue to be a leading cause of both fatal and non-fatal incidents. While new automated machines may reduce the need for people to perform dangerous tasks, they may also introduce new risks that are not yet well understood.

Working closely with Aby and Weichelt, Sullivan examined injuries caused by agricultural machinery using AgInjuryNews.org and Bureau of Labor Statistics data and assessed how emerging autonomous agricultural machines may impact these injuries.

One important takeaway from the project was that agricultural robotic technologies show real promise for reducing current injury risks. These technologies, however, introduce new and more complex risks. Recognizing the benefits and additional risks is essential to make sure automation improves safety rather than unintentionally creates new hazards.

Mentoring played a key role in the success of this research. Sullivan brought strong skills in public health and data analysis, helping the team look at injury data in new ways. He was particularly effective at identifying gaps in available information, which led to clearer discussions about what is known – and what still needs to be studied – when it comes to automated farm machinery.

While this research is an early step, it helps lay the groundwork for future safety efforts. Plans include more detailed studies of incidents involving automated and semi-automated machines, research to better understand farmers' views on safety, and collaboration with engineers and manufacturers to test safety systems in real-world farming conditions.

Sullivan's work reflects the heart of the summer student program: preparing the next generation of researchers while strengthening agricultural safety research. By building on decades of experience and applying it to today's technologies, this work moves agriculture closer to a safer future for farmers, families and rural communities.



Roger Aby, Ph.D. hosted and mentored Christopher Sullivan.

# Safeguarding the Next Generation: A milestone year for childhood agricultural safety

The National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety added to its legacy with publication of “Safeguarding Children in Agriculture: An Updated National Action Plan.” The document builds upon previous versions from 1996, 2001 and 2012, offering a precise framework of goals and strategies for protecting the health and safety of hundreds of thousands of children living, working and visiting the nation’s 1.9 million agricultural operations.

The first National Action Plan was conceived through a broad, consensus-driven process to identify national priorities for public- and private-sector efforts. Its impact was immediate and lasting: the U.S. Congress appropriated funds to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), earmarking resources for childhood agricultural safety research. Since then, NIOSH and private organizations have used the National Action Plan to guide funding decisions, helping ensure research and outreach remain aligned with national needs.

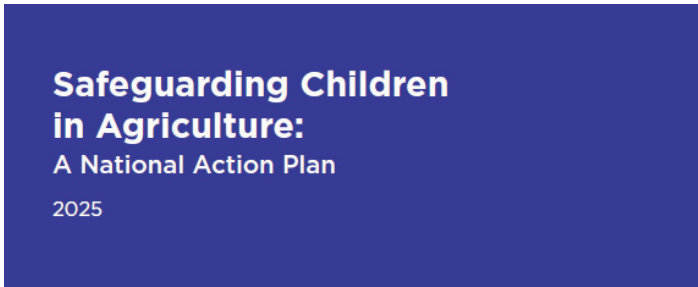
In 2025, the National Children’s Center again led the effort to update the plan, incorporating new data, technologies and perspectives to address the evolving agricultural landscape.

*“The ultimate goal is to ensure safe participation of youth in agriculture,” said Andrea Swenson, Ph.D., director of the National Children’s Center. “Our approach emphasizes local input and strong partnerships, ensuring that solutions are evidence-based and tailored to diverse agricultural communities.”*

The updated plan recognizes both the benefits and hazards of agricultural life. Growing up on farms fosters independence, work ethic and connection to the land, but it also exposes youth to significant risk. Children working in agriculture are seven times more likely to die on the job than their peers in other industries. Each day, about 33 children are seriously injured, and one child dies about every three days. Nearly two-thirds of these injuries involve young bystanders, not workers.

To address these realities, the National Action Plan outlines seven key focus areas: leadership, injury and disease data, public and organizational policy, research, dissemination and implementation, and emerging threats. The plan highlights both persistent dangers – such as tractor-related fatalities – and new concerns, including automation, extreme weather and changing workforce dynamics.

Guided by decades of legacy and renewed through consensus-based research, “Safeguarding Children in Agriculture: An Updated National Action Plan,” provides a framework for the next generation of agricultural safety. As Swenson noted: “Our shared goal is to ensure that the future of agriculture remains both productive and safe – for every child who grows, works and visits farms.”





## Telling the Story Project

The Telling the Story Project website reached 6,610 visitors and 14,544 views across stories, teacher guides, and outreach tools.



## RF-DASH

The Rural Firefighters Delivering Agricultural Safety and Health (RF-DASH) program conducted seven in-person trainings, contributing to a total reach of more than 250 first responders across 16 U.S. states and five Canadian provinces.



## Slow Moving Vehicle Signs in Wisconsin

The National Farm Medicine Center ordered 2,112 slow moving vehicle signs to distribute to farmers across Wisconsin.



# Key Numbers



## **AgInjuryNews.org**

AgInjuryNews.org added 404 new cases from 452 articles, documenting 573 victims.



**l Farm  
e Center**



## **Journal of Agromedicine**

The Journal of Agromedicine published four issues featuring 81 peer-reviewed articles.



**National Children's Center**  
for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety

## **Auction of Champions**

With over 220 attendees, this year's gala raised a record setting \$342,000. The live auction brought in \$136,250, while the Fund-a-Need campaign generated over \$70,000 for the National Children's Center.

## **‘Anchors Up’ for a record-breaking evening: Champions Yacht Club sails to success**

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The 2025 Auction of Champions, “Champions Yacht Club,” reached a high tide of generosity and celebration! Inspired by the effortless elegance of a Hamptons summer, guests enjoyed a seaside-chic evening on Sept. 18 at RiverEdge Golf Course in Marshfield, Wis. – all to support the National Farm Medicine Center and its mission to keep farmers healthy, happy and safe.

With over 220 attendees, this year’s gala raised a record-setting \$342,000. The live auction brought in \$136,250, while the Fund-a-Need campaign generated over \$70,000 for the National Children’s Center – a testament to the commitment of our agricultural community.

A heartfelt “thank you” goes out to Champion Sponsor Miron Construction Co., Inc., and their decade of unwavering support, shining like a lighthouse on the horizon. Gratitude also goes to our Platinum Sponsors – A&B Process Systems, Nasonville Dairy, BMO, Nelson-Jameson Inc., Oxbo and Simplicity Credit Union – and to our many Gold, Silver, Bronze and Sterling sponsors who made this voyage possible.

Finally, we offer a captain’s salute to Brad Guse, who served as Auction Committee Chair for 10 years. Thank you, Brad, for charting a decade of success. Your leadership has been the wind in our sails!

*For more information regarding how to support the important work of the National Farm Medicine Center, please contact Teri Wilczek, Sanford Health Foundation, Marshfield at 715-389-3249 [teri.wilczek@sanfordhealth.org](mailto:teri.wilczek@sanfordhealth.org).*





Brad Guse signs off as the official chairman after 10 years of service to the Auction of Champions.



## CASN GOING STRONG IN 2025

The Childhood Agricultural Safety Network (CASN) strengthened its national reach in 2025 by shifting to quarterly virtual meetings and increasing accessibility for agriculture- and youth-focused professionals. CASN hosted sessions on lawn mower safety, Safeguarding Children in Agriculture: A National Action Plan, and cold-weather safety for youth workers. An in-person meeting in June brought stakeholders together to deepen collaboration, while a new online Lawn Mower Safety Campaign expanded public awareness using youth-friendly and Spanish-language materials. Additionally, CASN leadership authored a peer-reviewed article in the Journal of Agromedicine, advancing data-driven insight into child and youth safety needs on U.S. farms. The article is titled “Accessing Engagement, Needs, and Resources to Promote Child and Youth Safety on the Farm and Ranch” and is available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/1059924X.2025.2517844>. Together, these efforts demonstrate how networks are evolving – equipping communities with tools and research to prevent injury.



## STOP THE BLEED TRAINING

Nearly 25 participants from the National Farm Medicine Center and Marshfield Clinic Research Institute received hands-on Stop the Bleed training. In just one 45-minute training, attendees learned research-informed techniques for controlling life-threatening bleeding before EMS arrives. Because rural response times can be lengthy, community-level preparedness is essential. The center plans to expand this training to local communities in 2026. By blending research, practice and community readiness, Stop the Bleed reinforces how education can save lives – one trained responder at a time. Funding for this project was provided by the Frank and Betty Koller Trust in support of Marshfield Clinic Research Institute led by the Marshfield Clinic Health System Foundation.



## SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING ACROSS WISCONSIN

In December, the National Farm Medicine Center partnered with Marshfield Clinic and the AgriSafe Network to deliver critical suicide prevention training to communities across Wisconsin. Led by AgriSafe Network trainers Linda Emanuel and Tara Haskins, Ph.D., and coordinated by Bryan Weichelt, Ph.D., and Lea Buckridge, the sessions focused on recognizing warning signs, starting supportive conversations, and directing people to appropriate help. With firearms involved in more than half of suicide deaths in 2023, this work underscores the urgent need for prevention, especially in farmer and military veteran communities. Thanks to collaboration with the Marshfield Clinic VetCoor team, trainings were offered free of charge. Additional sessions are planned for 2026 to continue building a culture of awareness and compassion in rural Wisconsin.



## ISASH 2025: A YEAR OF RECOGNITION AND LEADERSHIP

The National Farm Medicine Center and National Children’s Center had a strong presence at the annual International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH) Conference in Portland, Maine, in June. Outreach Specialist Melissa Ploeckelman Brown and Josie Rudolphi, Ph.D., continued their leadership as two of nine board members. The meeting was marked by major honors – Barbara Lee, Ph.D., received the Maynard Coe Award, Bryan Weichelt, Ph.D., was awarded the Research Achievement Award, and a new Jim Williams Early Career Achievement Award honored both Rudolphi, and Florence Becot, Ph.D. A Telling the Story Project poster received a blue ribbon for best outreach poster. With staff presenting research, earning awards and shaping national strategy, ISASH reflects how longstanding expertise continues to advance focused agricultural safety.



## DR. LEE RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This year, the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH) awarded its highest honor – the Maynard Coe Professional Achievement Award – to Barbara Lee, Ph.D., emeritus scientist and first full-time employee of the National Farm Medicine Center. The award recognizes her lifetime contributions to childhood agricultural injury prevention and her leadership in shaping farm safety as a respected professional field. “This is a really special award that needs to be shared with a lot of people,” Lee said, acknowledging peers whose collaboration amplified change. Now transitioning to emeritus status, Lee leaves a legacy that continues through national and global safety advocates trained, mentored or inspired by her work.



## SMV EMBLEM DISTRIBUTION CONTINUES

In partnership with Rural Mutual Insurance, the National Farm Medicine Center continued distributing Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblems throughout Wisconsin. They were shipped to county emergency management teams, sent to youth tractor safety certificate programs, shared at agricultural conferences, and made available at community pickup sites including feed cooperatives. This initiative underscores that sometimes the most powerful safety advances are simple, proven and widely accessible. Each SMV emblem placed is a measurable intervention – reducing risk on rural roadways and extending the legacy of decades of farm-safety advocacy.



## 'FARM INJURIES ARE NOT ACCIDENTS' PROJECT MOVES FORWARD

Farm Injuries Are Not Accidents (FINA) took another step toward shifting culture and language around agricultural incidents. With a refreshed logo and brand identity launched this year, FINA also published a new peer-reviewed study in the Journal of Agromedicine analyzing how U.S. media uses the term “accident” in youth agricultural injury reporting. Findings show youth injuries are significantly more likely to be labeled “accidents,” reducing implied accountability and prevention awareness. Journalists surveyed responded largely favorably to adopting alternative language such as “incident.” This pilot research lays the groundwork for long-term change in public discussion and, ultimately, policy. It reflects the center’s commitment to transforming agricultural safety narratives with precision and evidence-based tools. “Assessing U.S. Media’s Reaction to a Suggested Terminology Shift from ‘Accident’ to ‘Incident’ in News Reports of Childhood Agricultural Injury: A Pilot Study” is available here: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1059924X.2025.2539970>.



## TELLING THE STORY PROJECT – TWO NEW STORIES

The Telling the Story Project continues to preserve powerful narratives that guide prevention. Two stories were published this year: Alexis’ story – a childhood lawn mower injury that redirected her life’s path toward becoming a rural physician – and Eric’s story, a veteran South Dakota veterinarian who survived a traumatic squeeze-chute injury and now advocates for safer protocols. These stories are emotional, personal and deeply educational. They honor lived legacy: tragedies that changed families forever transformed into research-informed lessons that help protect others across the agricultural community. Read more at [www.tellingthestoryproject.org](http://www.tellingthestoryproject.org)



## PARISH TRACTOR PULL SUPPORTS ROPS SAFETY FOR WISCONSIN FARMERS

At the Marshfield Parish Truck & Tractor Pull in July, legacy and lifesaving technology met center stage. Thanks to event proceeds, one Wisconsin farmer received a free rollover protective structure (ROPS) retrofit, selected from on-site registrants. All who registered were also automatically enrolled in the Wisconsin ROPS Rebate Program, which helps farmers acquire and install ROPS that are 99% effective in preventing death when paired with a seat belt. Attendees also visited a Tick Inventory via Citizen Science (TICS) booth, helping expand a statewide tick dataset now exceeding 6,000 samples. Between tractor safety, ice cream dash fundraising and community participation, this annual pull represents the power of local partnerships – families, agriculture and research organizations working together to make farms safer for generations.



## AGRABILITY OF WISCONSIN SUMMIT BRINGS VETERANS & FARMERS TOGETHER

More than a conference, the 2025 AgrAbility of Wisconsin Summit held April 15 at Marshfield Clinic Research Institute created space for connection, resources and shared problem-solving. Supported by partners, including the University of Wisconsin, Rural Mutual Insurance and the Farmer Veteran Coalition, the host committee organized a full program and invited exhibitors such as County Veteran Service Officers to connect with attendees. Farmers and military veterans gathered for a full day of speakers, networking, legal and financial planning guidance, and accessibility resources. Attendees also received Slow-Moving Vehicle (SMV) signs to enhance roadway safety. “What a great opportunity to honor and assist some of our nation’s finest – farmers and military veterans,” said Farm Medicine researcher Bryan Weichelt, Ph.D. The summit reflects our belief that precision research must be grounded in lived experience – and that legacy is built when communities support those who feed and serve the nation.



## JOURNAL OF AGROMEDICINE

The Journal of Agromedicine has been edited since 2004 by scientists and staff of the National Farm Medicine Center. The journal, published quarterly by Taylor & Francis Group, is the world’s leading source of peer-reviewed information about research, practice and policy related to the health and safety of people working in agriculture. Its audience includes rural health care providers, agricultural health and safety practitioners, academic researchers, government agencies, policy makers and others. The journal achieved more than 140,000 article downloads in 2025, its most ever. Its Impact Factor is 1.7.

The editorial core team welcomed two new members near the end of 2025: Jeffrey VanWormer, Ph.D., is succeeding Mathew Keifer, M.D., as editor-in-chief; and Jakob Hanschu, M.A., joins as deputy editor. Rounding out the team is Senior Associate Editor Barbara Lee, Ph.D.; Managing Editor Scott Heiberger, M.S.; and Editorial Specialist Marie Fleisner. The journal relies on an international panel of nearly 40 associate editors to guide papers through peer review and advise on journal strategy. The journal typically publishes one special issue per year on a key topic. The second issue of 2025 was dedicated to safety and health in commercial fishing, aquaculture and seafood processing. For more information on Journal of Agromedicine, visit <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/wagr20>.



# Strengthening farm evaluations through a legacy of child safety research

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Research and outreach focused on childhood agricultural safety is more critical than ever, particularly as farms balance family life, labor needs and evolving workforce standards. Throughout the past year, the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety translated decades of research into practical action by supporting Farm Workforce Development training across the country. Andrea Swenson, Ph.D., director of the National Children’s Center and assistant scientist with Farm Medicine, was joined by Melissa Ploeckelman Brown, outreach specialist, and Cassandra Peltier, health educator, to deliver multiple trainings focused on childhood agricultural safety and health. In total, these sessions reached approximately 150 individuals who will be working with dairy farmers in the United States and Canada.

The training supports Farm Workforce Development goals in several important ways. First, it enhances evaluator effectiveness by integrating child safety considerations into on-farm assessments in a sensitive, constructive manner. Second, it directly promotes child safety by embedding research-based guidance into an established industry program. Finally, it supports continuous farm improvement by helping farms identify gaps in child safety practices and connect with trusted resources.

Each two-hour training included the history and mission of the National Children’s Center, highlighting their long-standing commitment to protect children who live, work

and play on farms. The training equipped farm workforce evaluators with practical tools and resources for discussing child safety with farm owners, parents and employers who hire youth. Presenters shared evidence-based guidance and conversation strategies respecting farm culture while prioritizing child well-being. The sessions concluded with group discussion and hands-on practice using realistic scenarios that trainees might encounter during on-farm evaluations.

One of the most meaningful takeaways voiced by participants was a shift in the perspective that age alone should not determine whether a child or youth is assigned a task. Instead, indicators of physical, cognitive, social and emotional capabilities are more important indicators of readiness. This insight reflects decades of research showing that matching tasks appropriately to development capabilities can significantly reduce injury risk. To continue learning beyond the training, participants were invited to join the Childhood Agricultural Safety Network (CASN), a growing community committed to protecting children in agricultural environments.

This work exemplifies how research leads to informed practices assuring that knowledge built over decades continues to guide today’s workforce development efforts and create safer farms for the next generation.



Andrea Swenson, Ph.D.



Melissa Ploeckelman Brown



Cassandra Peltier

## Funded projects

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### **National Farm Medicine Center:**

- AgInjuryNews.org
- Agricultural Machinery Risks and Autonomous Technology: A Public Health Analysis Using AgInjuryNews Data, Summer Internship Program
- Agriculture Rescue Training (ART)
- Dairy Microbiome (DOME)
- Dean Emanuel Endowment
- Journal of Agromedicine: Practice, Policy, and Research
- Miller Endowment
- Skin Cancer Screening
- Wisconsin Farm Fatalities Report
- Wisconsin Rollover Protection Structure (ROPS) Rebate Program

### **National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety (NCCRAHS):**

- Adoption of Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines: Identifying Motivators and Barriers for Use, Work, Health, and Safety in Youth Who Live on Farms in North-Central Wisconsin
- Assessing the Impact of Traumatic Injury News Articles on Farm Mothers and Educators
- Capabilities and Limitations of Youth Operating Agriculture All-Terrain Vehicles
- Farm Adolescent and Mental Health
- Farm Kid Paradox: Anthropological Inquiry into the Benefits and Risks of Child-Livestock Interaction
- Incorporating Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines into Curriculum of Wisconsin Agricultural Educators
- Linking Childcare to Farm Children Safety
- NCCRAHS Evaluation Core
- NCCRAHS Emerging Issues Program
- NCCRAHS Outreach Core
- Surveillance of Medically Attended Agricultural Injuries in Farm Children

### **Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center:**

- Outreach
- Rural Firefighters Delivering Agricultural Safety and Health (RF-DASH)
- Telling the Story Project

### **Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health:**

- Emerging Issues Program, AgInjuryNews
- Health and Safety Risks among Immigrant Cattle Feedlot Workers in Nebraska and Kansas
- Improving Safety and Health in the Cattle Feed Yard Industry

### **Institute for Clinical and Transactional Research**

- Caregiver Stories: Family Perspectives on How Healthcare Providers May Promote Optimization of Health for Children with Medical Complexity
- Reinvesting in RF-DASH – Evidence-to-Implementation (E2I)

### **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

- Assessment of Rural Veterans Care Coordination at Marshfield Clinic Health System

### **Frank and Betty Koller Trusts**

- Injury Assessment and Development of an Injury Prevention Intervention for the Anabaptist Community
- Rural Veterans' Knowledge and Utilization of Programs and Services, including Healthcare

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