

New York Northeast Center for Agricultural Health Fiscal Year 2010

I. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM. This report deals with the Northeast Center's fourth year of the current grant cycle. During this year, the NEC had five active projects-four research, and one prevention.. The NEC principal investigators in the past year came from four different institutions in four states. Projects were led by individuals with varied backgrounds: engineering, occupational medicine, public health, and education.

The NEC funded four Feasibility studies this year as well. These include two research projects, one prevention, and one education projects. These projects are being conducted in four states, through four different institutions. A summary of each of these projects is found later in this report. Notable products from last years Feasibility recipients include two peer reviewed journal articles, and three bilingual (English/Spanish) safety videos.

Our center was pleased to receive Supplemental funding this year, and will be supporting additional feasibility studies, an R2P effort through Penn State University, and a collaborative effort with the other NIOSH Ag Centers involving a website expansion of our Migrant Clinicians Manual to address regional variations. Contracts are being prepared, and work on these projects will begin very soon.

In addition to its NIOSH Agricultural Centers funding, the NEC continues to supplement its research and outreach activities through other federal and state funding. For the second year, Northeast Center staff members received support from a NIOSH R01 award aimed at developing ROPS interventions in Vermont, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire and from the New York State Departments of Health, Labor and Agriculture. This report will not formally address these activities, though it will refer to these projects in an effort to provide a clearer image of NEC activities and resources. Briefly these additional activities include:

NYCAMH Farm Emergency Response Program: The NYCAMH Farm Emergency Response Program is funded by the NYS Department of Health; the goal is to deliver basic training to NY farmers, farm workers and farm family members on how to respond to emergency situations if they were the first person to arrive on the scene. To achieve this goal the program offers bilingual training in first aid, CPR, first response to farm emergencies, fire prevention safety and fire extinguisher use.

Trainings were provided 55 times reaching 371 in 16 New York Counties, in both English and Spanish. Articles were submitted to 5 New York Agribusiness publications. A poster presentation was made at the National Institute for Farm Safety conference in June 2010

NYS Dept. Health C-014359 - The New York State Occupational Health Clinic Network. This activity involves the delivery of clinical consultation and care as well as prevention and education activities for the farm community of New York State.

NYS Dept. of Labor – Hazard Abatement Grant. This activity aims at enhancing training to NY workers in high-risk occupations. In the past year, 391 educational events were held in 42 counties and reached 5076 participants. Trainings included 46 on-farm safety surveys, 270 on-farm trainings, and 75 community events. These trainings are provided in English and Spanish.

NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets – Tractor ROPS rebates have been offered to participating farmers across New York State with legislative funds dispersed through a NEC contract with Ag & Markets. The future of this funding is uncertain at the present time.

Rural Partners Workplace Cardiac Wellness: In the fourth and final year of this worksite-based study of prevention strategies, 104 (target 103) small rural businesses, with a combined workforce of 14,581 employees, have been enrolled with subsequent careful examination of worksite infrastructures for cardiac disease and obesity prevention. Issues such as hypertension screening and management, nutrition, and general wellness promotion were systematically examined with employers. Heart Check post-intervention data gathering was completed. Every worksite enrolled in the program achieved the program objective of making at least one environmental or policy change. In most cases, several changes were made. Based on the Heart Check assessment tool, a total of 159 changes relating to nutrition and 342 changes relating to physical activity were achieved. We are following this activity up with a separate NIOSH R21 project that investigates the rural workplace as a site for effective obesity intervention.

While these activities add considerably to the staff workload, each has enabled the NEC to expand its capabilities and enhance its understanding of the various farm health and rural health challenges in the Northeast region.

A. CENTER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY 2010

1) Maine Blueberry Rake Project: Research to Practice and Overall Impact. It will be recalled that three years ago we completed a four-year community-based project in Maine that resulted in a long-handled adaptation of the traditional blueberry rake. This design was more productive and resulted in fewer musculoskeletal complaints from the harvesters. To assess the success of our R2P efforts, a re-visit to Maine was undertaken last summer. This demonstrated that currently 73% of surveyed workers are using the new long-handled design. Early data on the ergonomic analysis of work postures with the two rakes indicates improved work postures with the long-handled design.

2) Tractor Rollover Protection Social Marketing: We are currently in the fourth year of this effort. There have been over 2100 calls from interested farmers and over 800 tractors have been successfully retrofitted. About 42 others are in process presently. In a survey of roughly 644 participants, farmers identified 58 incidents in the past year in which the new ROPS was felt to have prevented potential injury.

3) Community-based Tobacco Work Intervention: A collaborative effort with U. Conn Occupational Medicine and ConnectiCOSH is underway. A "work team" composed of farm employers and shade tobacco workers has focused upon issues of skin and eye irritation affecting workers. Proper worker hygiene and workplace water availability are two interventions that have been implemented. Several of the employers have redesigned their water stations to assure better access to water, soap and towels. On-site evaluations of these interventions have been carried out by NEC staff on the target farms finding good compliance with water and soap availability and proximity, but some failures to have towels accessible. This season, a low cost paper towel dispenser was designed by NEC staff and implemented at several participating farms.

4) Revised the Draft International Engineering Standard (ASABE/ANSI X607), "Ventilating Manure Storages to Reduce Entry Risks" and balloted the standard twice during 2009-2010. The revised standard was unanimously approved by the standards writing committee in August, 2010 and forwarded, on September 7, 2010, to the EHS-03 Standard Committee of ASABE for approval of the standards development procedures and protocols.

5) Injury Surveillance: NEC's NY farm injury surveillance research has utilized a complex interplay of multiple data sources to far outperform more traditional active and passive methods for agricultural injury surveillance. This has led to a proposed next step of building and testing an

aggressive approach for a comprehensive and highly functional regional (multi-state) surveillance of occupational injury in agriculture.

B. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

States served by center: New York, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, New Hampshire

States with Center Activity for FY 2010: New York, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, New Hampshire