



# IRSHC Safety Harvest

Spring 2003

## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Indiana Rural Safety and Health Council is continually active in the effort to prevent farm-related injuries and fatalities. However, IRSHC also is involved in helping those affected by such incidents. One way is by supporting two scholarships available for students at Purdue University.

The Willsey Scholarship honors F.R. Willsey, longtime Purdue Extension Safety Specialist, and is intended to assist Purdue students who have lost a par-

ent due to a farm-related injury. This scholarship was started in 2000 by IRSHC and Mrs F. R. (Helen) Willsey. So far, it has had three recipients.

Also available is the Van Holton/BNG Scholarship assisting students with disabilities pursuing a career in agriculture. This scholarship was started in 2000 to honor the contributions of Herbert Van Holton to the Breaking New Ground (BNG) resource center. It has had two recipients.

Anyone interested in finding out more about these scholarships or wanting to apply should contact IRSHC at 765-494-5013. Contributions to these scholarships are always welcomed and appreciated.

### MANURE-RELATED FATALITY RESEARCH AT PURDUE

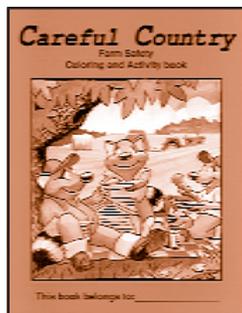
This past year was particularly bad for persons working in and around manure storage-related facilities. There were at least 10 documented deaths across the U.S. related to the entry of or working in and around these facilities. These numbers do not reflect any "near misses" or injuries as a result of exposure.

As a part of a recent NIOSH grant, Randy Beaver, a graduate student at Purdue University, is accumulating data and summarizing these types of incidents to develop practical solutions and recommendations for preventing future incidents. He has been conducting on-site investigations to identify possible causes.

If you know of anyone that has had a "close call", or worse, with manure gases or confined spaces related to manure, please call Randy at (765) 446-5031 or contact him via fax at (765) 449-0230 or email him at [rbeaver@unityhc.com](mailto:rbeaver@unityhc.com).

## SALES OF COLORING BOOKS CONTINUE STRONG

Sales of IRSHC's *Careful Country* and *Weeds in Our Garden* coloring books continue strong. Both coloring books are designed to promote child safety around the farm.

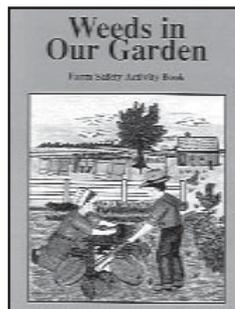


The books contain 8 1/2 x 11 cartoon-type drawings of farm-related activities that include a message about safety. Children can learn about hazards around the farm while having fun coloring.

The "Weeds in Our Garden" activity book was prepared especially with the

Amish community in mind. The publication addresses child safety in a Biblical context for use in Amish or Old Order communities.

Each book also has other safety-related activities, such as safety puzzles and word games. The coloring books can also be colored online by visiting [farmsafety.org](http://farmsafety.org). To order, contact (765) 494-5013 or write to the IRSHC at ABE Building, 225 S. University St., Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907.



### IRSHC UPCOMING EVENTS

April 29-May 1, 2003  
June 22-26, 2003  
August 12, 2003  
August 19, 2003

The Hoosier Safety Council's 17th Annual Conference  
2003 NIFS Annual Summer Meeting  
Anhydrous Ammonia Training  
Anhydrous Ammonia Training

Cumberland Place Exhibition Center, W. Lafayette, IN  
Hilton Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada  
Hendricks County Fairgrounds, Danville, IL  
Whitley County 4-H Center, Columbia City, IN

# TEN MANURE GAS-RELATED DEATHS IN 2002

In 2002, more than 10 deaths known to be associated with manure handling and storage facilities were recorded. These deaths, along with many more unrecorded cases or “near-misses,” have re-defined the need for better education, safety, and precautions for this underestimated problem. Although the hazards associated with gases released from decaying manure have been known for more than thirty years, their tragic effects are frequently not taken seriously by the individual farm worker.

Manure gas-related incidents occur when farm workers enter or attempt to enter a pit or storage facility. If the gases are present in sufficient concentration, the worker will lose consciousness and can collapse into the pit. Rarely are these persons rescued in time to survive. In some cases, the res-

cuer can become a second victim. Preliminary research has revealed that many of these types of incidents create multiple deaths of rescuers, farm workers, family members, and friends, all occurring in single events.

Farm operators, haulers, storage facility operators, and farm families need to become more aware of the hazards created by manure gases. These problems are most common in dairy and swine operations. Research has also shown that the majority of these deaths occur during summer months, although deaths have occurred in nearly every month of the year in warmer climates. Another sobering characteristic identified in case study research is that the amount of manure in the pit does not seem to matter – deaths have occurred in pits containing as little as four inches of manure.

Several solutions to the problem of manure gases are possible. Following the Confined Space Guidelines as outlined in OSHA regulations (USA) will provide for safe entry when entering a hazardous space, such as a manure pit. Technological advances enable farmers to purchase cost-effective gas detection badges or other types of monitoring devices to warn wearers of the build up of gases. These newer, easy-to-read monitoring devices can be worn by the worker or placed near the pit to check possible toxicity levels.

When it comes to being safe around manure handling and storage facilities, the message is clear – do not enter unless you have taken adequate precautions to protect yourself and others.

## PURDUE TO OFFER A NEW COURSE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION OPERATIONS

A new course to be offered at Purdue will focus on emergency preparedness for agricultural operations. It will be an Agricultural Systems Management class and will be offered next fall. It will be designed for students interested in agricultural production to assist them in becoming better equipped to prepare for, respond to and recover from agricultural disasters and emergencies. The



primary focus will be on strategies for minimizing loss of life, person injury, property loss, and environmental impact due to both unintentional disasters and human caused emergencies, including intentional acts. Specific emergencies that will be covered include fires, explosions, tornadoes, floods, winter storms, vandalism, chemical releases, bioterrorism and radiation exposure. The course will cover the application of basic management and first response strategies that have been demonstrated to reduce the scope and magnitude

of losses associated with significant incidents. Information on relevant resources, web sites, and governmental agencies will also be included in the course.

