

BUILDING HOPE AND HEALTH AWARDS

PRESENTED AT

CLOCK IS TICKING FOR RURAL AMERICA

AgriWellness convened the 4th biennial *Clock is Ticking for Rural America* in Sioux Falls, South Dakota August 3-5, 2009. One of the highlights of the conference was the presentation of the Building Hope and Health awards.

The AgriWellness conference planning committee selects the recipients of these awards. The awards recognize the contributions of a professional organization and a layperson to the field of agricultural behavioral health.

This year the conference was pleased to honor the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (professional organization) and Frank Schiefelbein (layperson).



MURRAY MADSEN AND
FRANK SCHIEFELBEIN

The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health

Murray Madsen, associate director of the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH), accepted the professional organization award. The GPCAH, located at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, was established in 1990 as one of the first two agricultural safety and health centers in the United States. Currently there are nine regional centers funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Early on the Great Plains Center recognized the need to integrate behavioral health research, training and interventions into agricultural health. The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health sponsored the Surgeon General's Conference on agricultural safety and health in Des Moines in May 1991, which was the first time psychological issues were included in such discussions. By 1999 mental health became a focus in the agricultural occupational medicine course at the University of Iowa, and it continues today.

Three years ago the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health public hearing at the GPCAH invited comments that contributed to Intermediate Goal 5.5 of the National Occupational Research Agenda for Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry to develop and promote adoption of effective interventions to enhance psychological well-being of workers. The inclusion of this goal in the NORA document is a landmark that represents how far the field of agricultural behavioral health, with the support of the GPCAH, has come.

The GPCAH puts its commitment to agricultural behavioral health in action by providing support and resources to local and regional organizations.

Frank Schiefelbein

Frank Schiefelbein is a Kimball, Minnesota cattleman. Frank became a rancher after spending his childhood summers on his grandfather's ranch. Frank and his wife, Frosty, passed the love of ranching on to their children. All of their eight living children – all sons - are now involved in some way in the ranching operation.

Anyone who meets Frank knows that he is not someone to sit around – he wants to get things done. And he has put all his energy, commitment and drive into improving access to mental healthcare especially for rural Minnesotans.

Frank was propelled into behavioral health advocacy by the suicide of one of his sons. He has worked tirelessly since then to improve all aspects of mental health delivery in the state of Minnesota. Mr. Schiefelbein serves on numerous statewide mental and behavioral health boards.

Frank “walks the walk” in his daily life as well. As he accepted the award, he told a story of his practice of replacing his cowboy hat with a Minnesota Psychiatric Society cap when he attends cattle sales. Farmers and ranchers approach him when he is wearing that cap to talk about how they need more counseling services from professionals familiar with agricultural stress.

Previous Building Hope and Health Award Recipients

2003: Fred Moskol (formerly with WI Office of Rural Health) and Sarah Lewis (WI Primary Care Assoc.) and Larry and Linda Barber, Iowa farmers who, after losing part of their farm, became advocates in the media and in training programs.

2005: Roger Williams, professor and Dept. Chair at the University of Wisconsin and Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska

2007: Kathy Schmitt, Wisconsin partner in Sowing the Seeds of Hope and with the Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture and Dan O'Brien, noted South Dakota rancher and writer

“The building hope and health awards bring deserved appreciation to people and organizations who have made significant positive contributions to the wellbeing of agricultural people.”

*--Michael Rosmann,
Executive Director, AgriWellness, Inc.*