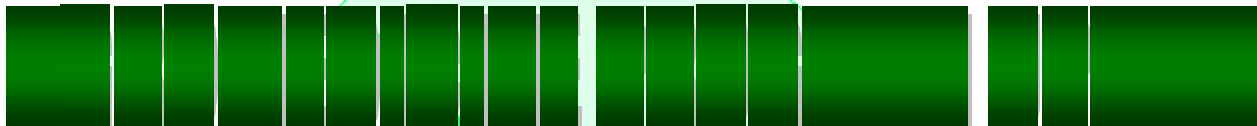


The Newsletter of the Clemson University / MUSC Agromedicine Program



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PROGRAM NOTES

> Another new year has begun! We look forward to working with you whenever possible and to being of service whenever needed. Please keep the **Agromedicine Program** in mind as you plan programs for the coming months.

> The following topics are available for presentation to both lay and professional groups:

Tick-borne disease
Spider bites
Insect bites and Stings
Radon
Mold and Mildew
Pesticide Health Effects
Sun-related Skin Damage
Pesticides and Birth Defects
Mercury in the Environment
Heat-related Illnesses
Avian Influenza
Food Safety—Food Scares

Other topics can be developed on request!

> The founders of the South Carolina Agromedicine Program met in Clemson in December on the occasion of Dr. Schuman's gift of copies of his book **Rainbows in Washtubs** to the

Robert Muldrow Cooper and College of Agriculture, Forestry and the Life Sciences Libraries. Dean of Libraries, Dr. Kay Wall and Dr. Susan Barefoot accepted the volumes on behalf of Clemson.

Many friends of the Agromedicine Program were also in attendance to recognize Dr. Schuman's multiple contributions to agricultural health and safety in South Carolina and the region.



Photo Courtesy: Micki Reid CU Library
Drs. Stan Schuman and Jere Brittain at book presentation, Cooper Library, Clemson University
December 13, 2007

Dr. Schuman continues to write and publish papers and poetry. Dr. Brittain continues to work his farm in the hills of North Carolina

and has recorded several CD's of his own songs, self-accompanied on dulcimer! Working in agromedicine must spark creativity!

As the twentieth year of publication of the **Agromedicine Program Update** begins, it is appropriate to remember and thank those who had a hand in the development of this program and its continued operation, in addition to Drs. Brittain and Schuman—with apologies to any I omit! Barbara Baughman, Drs. Gene Cornett, Merle Shepard, Jim Rushing, Mac Horton, John Kelly and Bud Webb; Danny Howard, Jan Lay, Larry Spell, Sue Harmon, Sam Caldwell and JoAnn Stukes.

RECENT CONSULTS

>The unseasonably warm weather has apparently kept more ticks active than usual at this time of year. Our usually slow time of the year around the holidays was punctuated with several calls about tick attachments and what to do about them. Our one page handout on

“Handling Tick Attachments” is available on the web at: www.musc.edu/oem/ticks.htm or by calling our office for a hard copy.

>Delusory parasitosis knows no holiday! A new patient presented in December with the sensation of “something crawling” on her skin. Evaluation of extensive samples showed no “culprit” insect (with appreciation to Drs. Eric Benson and Ian Stocks for their continued assistance with evaluation of selected samples and insect identification). Treatment is ongoing, working with the patient and her primary physician. A review article on DP is available at: www.ent.uga.edu/pubs/delusory.pdf

FROM THE LITERATURE

>Cross-subtype Immunity against Avian Influenza in Persons Recently Vaccinated for Influenza
Good news! Researchers at Italy’s National Institute for Infectious Diseases in Rome have found a small number of CD4 T cells specific for subtype H5N1 (Avian influenza) in several persons at baseline, and seasonal flu vaccine administration enhanced the frequency of such reactive CD4 T cells. Seasonal flu vaccine is also able to raise neutralizing immunity against influenza H5N1 in a large number of subjects.

--Gioia C, Castilletti C, Tempesilli M et al. Emerg Infect Diseases 2008; 14(1):121128

So, it is certainly not in everyone who is vaccinated and there have been no clinical trials to indicate the amount of protection against Avian influenza these changes produce, but it is yet another reason to **Get that flu shot and get it NOW!** It’s early in flu season, and it looks like this may be a mild one, but get that shot anyway!

>All Antioxidants aren’t Equal

Nutritionists with the USDA Agricultural Research Service measured the plasma antioxidant capacity (AOC) of subjects following a single meal of blueberries, cherries, dried plums, dried plum juice, grapes, kiwis or strawberries. Blueberries, grapes, and kiwifruit yielded the greatest increases in plasma AOC.

--Prior RL, et al J Am Coll Nutr 2007;26(2):170-181

>More on Antioxidants

Norwegian researchers showed that anthocyanins from bilberries and black currants reduced levels of transcription factor NF- κ B. NF- κ B controls a wide range of inflammatory responses. Anthocyanin supplementation decreased several inflammatory markers by 15-25% in studies performed in humans.

--Karlsen A, et al. J Nutr 2007; 137:1951-4

>Noise Exposure in Farm Youths

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health report on a pilot study of ten

youth working on Vermont dairy farms. Their average age was 15.5 years and they had started working on the farms at an average age of 8.4 years. Personal and area noise measurements were performed using noise dosimeters. Two of the ten young people exceeded the OSHA action level, having eight-hour time weighted averages of 95 dBA and 92 dBA.

--Lander L, Rudnick S, Perry M. J Agromed 2007; 12(2):25-32

It is only a pilot study, so needs repeating in other farm environments with larger numbers of participants, but it indicates that there may be a population of young people who are at risk for hearing loss due to their very early work experiences, not to mention all the noise exposure that comes through those iPod and other MP3 player headphones!

>Fish Intake, Contaminants, and Human Health

An “old” review article, but one which summarizes the pro’s and con’s of fish consumption well, was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in late 2006. Copies are available on request from this office or on line at:

<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/296/15/1885>

Happy New Year!