Overview

In the past year, the ANR EH&S program continued development of a “safety culture” within ANR. Significant accomplishments included continuing the UC Be Smart About Safety Program, which provides funding for equipment and services to assist ANR facilities with improving workplace safety. EH&S promoted efforts to assess and improve safety programs within ANR units, by increasing visits to ANR locations throughout the state. EH&S worked with the 4-H Youth Development Program and Master Gardener Program to develop safety programs specific to their unique needs. The EH&S website remains an important tool for communicating and sharing information to assist ANR staff in improving safety and compliance in ANR workplaces.

Be Smart About Safety Program

The Be Smart About Safety (BSAS) program uses funding from UC’s Workers Compensation program to invest in projects that will reduce the frequency and severity of injuries and thereby, reduce the overall cost of the workers compensation program.

EH&S has facilitated providing more than $150,000 in BSAS funds directly to Cooperative Extension (CE), Research and Extension Center (REC) and Statewide Program offices for purchase of safety equipment or training. Sixty-five ANR locations or programs received funds for projects such as: equipment to aid in the lifting, moving and storing of materials (lifts, handtrucks, carts, storage cabinets; etc.); ladders; office ergonomic improvements (chairs, workstations, footrests); first aid or emergency response kits; fire extinguishers; chemical spill kits; safety gas cans; emergency eyewash; safer shop equipment (grinders, saws); portable shade solutions for heat illness prevention; CPR and first aid training; pesticide safety training; stress management training; and sub-regional safety meetings.

Site Visits, Program Reviews and Inspections

During the past year, EH&S made visits to 12 CE offices, all 10 RECs, and several statewide programs and administrative offices. The purpose of these visits was to provide training, conduct ergonomic evaluations, provide assistance with safety issues and evaluate health & safety programs and general conditions. In addition EH&S conducted four onsite safety coordinator training sessions throughout the state.

Safety Program Reviews were performed at 21 locations, including 10 RECs, six CE offices, one regional office and four 4-H barns. Safety Program Reviews are mock regulatory audits, where EH&S reviews the facility, safety program and training records. A written report is provided that summarizes the potential safety deficiencies or regulatory violations observed during the review, provides regulatory references and guidance documents to support the findings, and offers recommendations for corrective actions. Most of these Program Reviews were
Conducted jointly with ANR’s Risk Services Office. The Risk Services portion of the Program Review included a review of insurance claims, background check procedures, facility use agreements, waivers, and insurance certificates.

Results of the EH&S Program Reviews identified a total of 323 deficiencies with 26 (or 8%) labeled “minor”, 223 (or 79%) labeled “moderate” and 74 (or 23%) labeled “serious” deficiencies. No “imminent” hazards were identified. All deficiencies were corrected within their assigned timeframes.

Although there was an increase of 30% in total locations audited in the past year, there was a 7% decrease in the “serious” deficiencies found. This may be attributed to an increase in the awareness of and correction of hazards that have the potential to cause serious injury.

During 2008–2009 11 inspections were performed by 11 different regulatory agencies at five RECs and two CE offices. Inspections were conducted by four county Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPAs), two Air Pollution Control Districts, one city Fire Department, one county Fire Department, California Department of Toxic Substances Control, one county Planning and Development Agency, and Cal/OSHA. Thirteen violations were issued and corrective actions were taken to abate 12 of the violations within designated timeframes. One fine ($100) was issued as a result of an inadvertently overlooked permit condition. ANR facilities were reminded to provide copies of permits to EH&S so that the EH&S office can assist in assuring that compliance with all permit conditions is achieved.

EH&S Training

EH&S Office staff have continued to provide training at ANR facilities and offices, including respirator fit testing and training and presentations on safety responsibilities, injury illness prevention program (IIPP), building evacuation, driver safety, use of fire extinguishers, safe lifting practices, workstation ergonomics, and hazard communication. More than 442 persons were trained by ANR EH&S staff this year, including REC employees, UC departmental staff and students, USDA personnel, 4-H and Master Gardener volunteers, and CE employees. Review of written evaluations of EH&S training and presentations indicated attendees have an overall favorable approval rating of 100%.

EH&S Plans, Forms, and Templates

Several updates were made to existing plans, forms, postings and checklists on the EH&S web site. Updates include; Forklift checklist, Program Review format, and Tractor/Forklift postings. The EH&S office coordinated required five-year reviews of Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plans for five RECs. A Business Travel Insurance Program was implemented, providing an easy link for ANR employees to register for this UC System-wide program.

Master Gardeners

During the past year, the EH&S office continued developing safety resources for the UC Master Gardener Program. Master Gardener is a statewide program with over 3,600 volunteers in 36 counties that extends UC research-based information about home horticulture and pest management to the
To support safety and environmental stewardship within the Master Gardener Program, an additional eight Thinking Safe and Green notes were developed at the request of Master Gardener staff and participants, bringing the total notes to 23. Moreover, the EH&S office developed and published a Master Gardener Safety Manual for use by Master Gardener staff and volunteers.

4-H Youth Development Program (YDP)

The EH&S office continued to provide health and safety support to 4-H YDP. Working with input and review from the 4-H Policy Advisory Committee, EH&S developed materials that can be used to train 4-H members and volunteers to carry out their activities in a safe manner and prevent injuries.

Safety materials included the development of an additional 18 “Clover Safe” notes and 15 attendant activity sheets. A total of 82 Clover Safe notes and 66 activity sheets are now posted on the EH&S web site. A series of 82 Newsletter Items have been developed for use by 4-H Program Representatives. Newsletter Items are intended for insertion into local 4-H newsletters and correspond to the detailed Clover Safe notes.

Drinking Water System Compliance

The EH&S drinking water system compliance program continued to provide site-specific water sampling and analyses schedules, spreadsheets for recording required data, quarterly and annual water system reports, and Consumer Confidence Reports for regulated REC water systems.

In support of Desert REC, EH&S staff secured regulatory approval for the replacement of outdated components of the drinking water system. A new above-ground drinking water storage tank has been installed as shown in the above picture and a new pre-filter is scheduled for installation during the current fiscal year. In addition, the poorly performing conventional water treatment system is proposed to be replaced by an automated microfiltration unit. This new treatment system will result in a more reliable operation, with lower maintenance, and provide improved water quality to comply with ever-increasing drinking water quality standards.

Accident/Injury Investigation and Prevention

At the start of this year, the EH&S office started to conduct follow-up calls on all reported ANR injuries. The goal was to identify trends in injury causes and thereby, implement measures to prevent future injuries of similar nature from occurring. During the '08-'09 FY the most frequently reported ANR employee injury was sprains and strains (22 total). Since the cause of most sprain and strain injuries ranged from slips, trips, and falls to car accidents, the only underlying factor that was common in all occurrences was a diminished awareness of the injured person’s surroundings. To address this decrease in awareness, in the coming year EH&S staff will search for programs and tools that can assist employees to remain focused and identify potential hazards in their workplaces, whether indoors or in the field.

EH&S Program Goals for 2009-10

Some of the initiatives that EH&S staff will be working on in 2009-10 are listed below:

- Enhance the Safety Coordinator Program, including quarterly Safety Coordinator Update e-mails and an annual Safety Coordinator webinar to share information and get input on how EH&S can help improve safety across ANR.
- Implement more online training options.
- Review and update all EH&S policies and guidelines.
- Development of a camp safety manual for 4-H YDP.

Contact ANR EH&S: http://ucanr.org/askehs

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