

Midwest Agricultural Mechanics Instructors Conference

This past week agricultural education instructors from across the Midwest gathered in the Chicago land area to take part in a pilot conference project hosted by American Technical Publishers. Participating companies and organizations in the conference were Briggs & Stratton, Decker Safety Systems Consulting and Investigations, Inc., Fluke Corporation, Lincoln Electric, Milwaukee tools, Chicago Pipefitters Local 597, United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of America, The National FFA Organization and The National Council for Agricultural Education.

The objectives of the conference were to provide an opportunity for agricultural mechanics instructors to network with key industry representatives and peer professionals and to learn trends and career pathways in agricultural mechanics. One of the strategic priorities of the National Council for Agricultural Education is to create a "Culture of Safety. During the conference participants were addressed by Ken Allen, past president of the Council and Chairman of the "Culture of Safety" committee for the Council. His very hard hitting address and commitment to creating a "Culture of Safety" across agricultural education was very well received by all who attended. With the new initiative organizations are being asked to participate in developing a "Culture of Safety" in all programs, resources and events put on for students in agricultural education. There is a growing number of organizations signing on and local programs who are vowing to support the initiative and a "Culture of Safety". Look for additional information on how you can take part in the coming weeks. Another objective that was very successful as a result of the conference was to identify new ways agricultural mechanics technology and safety can be both supported and enhanced by working with industry partners. There were initial discussions and commitments between organizations and company partners as to how they can work more closely together to provide advanced training and career options for those students interested in a career in agricultural mechanics. Breakout sessions for the two days ranged from new training in welding technology and techniques to career path opportunities for agricultural mechanics students. Other topics addressed were the CASE curriculum in agricultural mechanics, Panel discussion on challenges for agricultural mechanics instructors, Grain handling safety and hazard and prevention, hands on electrical concepts, new Small Engine

technology and safety, new technology in power tools and safety and alignment to Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Standards (AFNR) and how they are being tied to the Agricultural Mechanics Career Development Events provided by the National FFA Organization.

The pilot conference was well received by participants as well as the hosts ATP and sponsors. They will look at more conferences like this across the country. As plans are developed we will be providing information on Monday Morning Monitor and the Council Web site.