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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: November 23, 2009

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Agricultural industry to focus on worker safety at January conference

Major issues affecting safety and health of production agriculture workers will be the focus of the first-ever "Be Safe, Be Profitable: Protecting Workers in Agriculture," conference to be held January 27-28, 2010, at the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott South.

The conference will address key practices associated with multiple agriculture production commodities, geographic diversity, and workforce characteristics. Conference speakers will discuss how to reduce injuries through collaboration among industry leaders, producers, and researchers at this first-of-its-kind conference, co-organized by the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America (ASHCA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

NIOSH Director John Howard, M.D., J.D., will deliver opening remarks. Dr. Howard was NIOSH Director 2002-2008, and reappointed in 2009. He also serves as coordinator of the NIOSH World Trade Center Health Programs.

Those among the nearly 30 speakers include:

- Peter Goldsmith, Ph.D., Associate Professor in Agricultural Strategy, University of Illinois, will deliver the keynote – "Global View: Issues affecting U.S. Production Agriculture." Dr. Goldsmith is also executive editor of International Food and Agribusiness Management Review. Before his career in academia, Dr. Goldsmith worked in the dairy industry as an assistant general manager of a cooperative and as a herdsman.
- Jorge Estrada is founder and CEO of Leadership Coaching International, Seattle, Washington. He specializes in organizational development, leadership development, executive coaching and training. Before launching LCI, Inc. in 2001, he worked in the feed and pharmaceutical industries in the U.S. and abroad.
- Gregory C. Gray, M.D., M.P.H., is Chair of the Department of Environmental and Global Health in the University of Florida's College of Public Health and Health Professions. His research interests include emerging infectious diseases, especially zoonotic infections, evaluation of rapid diagnostics for emerging pathogens, and the epidemiology of respiratory pathogen infections. He has conducted epidemiological studies of infectious diseases in all five continents.

- David R. Smith, D.V.M., Ph.D., is a Professor and Extension Dairy/Beef Veterinarian at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is a veterinary epidemiologist with special interest in discovery and outreach regarding pre-harvest control of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella* in cattle production systems.

Nine expert panels will target major issues affecting agricultural safety and health including: 1) heat-related illness; 2) respiratory issues; 3) livestock handling injuries; 4) language/literacy barriers; 5) safe tractor operations; 6) pesticide exposures; 7) pre-harvest food safety; 8) musculoskeletal disorders; and 9) zoonotic influenza.

Join ASHCA charter members American Farm Bureau Federation, Association of Equipment Manufacturers, Agri-Services Agency, CropLife America, Farm Foundation, CHS Foundation, Liberty Mutual, Discover Re, National Pork Board, Workers Compensation Fund and others in the identification and promotion of evidence-based safety strategies.

Proceedings of the conference will be documented in a special issue of the Journal of Agromedicine to be published in the summer of 2010. Conference registration is just \$150 before January 5, 2010. Sponsorship and exhibit space is available. Go to www.ashca.com or contact ASHCA at 715-221-7270, ashca@mcrf.mfldclin.edu for more information and to register.