



NEWS RELEASE



CUTLINE: Trainees learn to rescue an "injured person" from an auger during Sunday morning's simulated farm accident in Bay. The rescue was part of the training for first responders for Farmedic training. The exercise was sponsored by Arkansas State's University's Disaster Preparedness Program.

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ASU: Disaster Preparedness Program holds Farmedic training exercise for farm equipment-related accidents

JONESBORO, AR – Those driving through Bay, Ark., early Sunday morning may have noticed a lot of activity involving farm equipment and rescue personnel at the Kevin McMaster farm. Thank goodness, though, it was just a drill.

Farming can be a dangerous business and the people involved in Arkansas State's Regional Center for Disaster Preparedness education program recognize this. So, they happily agreed to take on the responsibility of hosting the first-ever training course for ASU throughout the weekend to teach first responders how to react and rescue in the event of a farming accident. National instructors were on hand for training.

“The Regional Center for Disaster Preparedness at ASU has recently taken responsibility for this training course throughout the state of Arkansas,” said Brent Cox, assistant professor of Disaster Preparedness Emergency Management and a volunteer with the Greene County Rescue Squad. “This is a first for the program, the College of Nursing and Health Professions and Arkansas State University. We are very excited about having a key role in such an important service to the agricultural community, not only in northeast Arkansas but throughout the entire state.”

Cox said the two-day course began Saturday with classroom work at the ASU's College of Nursing and Health Professions of which the Disaster Preparedness program is a part. The classroom instruction included a farm accident awareness course for farmers, farm employees, farm families and anyone who is around a farm or farm equipment setting.

Kevin McMasters is a student in the Disaster Preparedness program, and Cox said he graciously agreed to allow trainees to use his farm as a site for simulating the accidents. On Sunday morning, the trainees met at the McMaster farm to participate in drills involving simulated farm accidents. Trainers were on hand to provide instruction to volunteers from the Greene County rescue squad, the Jonesboro Fire Department rescue team, emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

“It was good hands-on training experience,” continued Cox. “We educated first responders on the response to farm-related emergencies and, using mannequins, the actual extrication of injured personnel in farm-related emergencies.”

Mannequins were strategically placed under a flipped tractor, in augers and under bushhogs as trainees put their classroom instruction to the test. Cox also said training was provided in the event of a grain silo entrapment.

The training program is affiliated with Farmedic of McNeil & Company, Inc., a leading provider of insurance programs and risk management services for emergency service organizations and other specialty markets nationwide. The national Farmedic training program has been involved in rural agricultural incident response since 1981, but officials noticed the lack of available farm rescue education among first responders. The training program was born.

Cox said that, like other exercises performed by the Disaster Preparedness program such as earthquake scenarios, ASU would conduct Farmedic drills in the future.

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