

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF THE CONFERENCE

By J. Donald Millar, M.D.

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Assistant Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service

I am very delighted and proud to welcome you to this Surgeon General's Conference on Agricultural Safety and Health. The nickname is "FarmSafe 2000," and the theme is "a national coalition for local action."

Now all of this is by way of saying that everybody here is interested in preventing the unnecessary wastage of life, limb, and health that is associated with the oldest and noblest occupation—agriculture. Beyond that common interest, we are a very diverse group.

I would wager that some of you never heard, for instance, of NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, before this meeting. That is not unexpected, because most of the professional life of NIOSH has been devoted to the problems of smokestack industries—manufacturing, mining, and other occupations—but that is very rapidly changing in this rapidly changing world of ours.

We were created by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, which sought to "assure safe and healthful working conditions for every working man and woman." So we are obliged at this point in our national history to turn our attention to all problems that create unsafe and unhealthful working conditions for men and women.

That Act created two organizations you may have heard of OSHA and NIOSH;

both are quite different organizations; both are in different parts of the Federal Government, and you will hear from leaders of both during this week.

OSHA is located in the Department of Labor and has responsibility, among other things, for promulgating and enforcing occupational standards.

NIOSH is in the Public Health Service, the Department of Health and Human Services, and is expected to exercise scientific leadership in this field. So we are expected to produce and disseminate scientific information that enables the prevention of occupational diseases and injuries.

Among the things we do best is to convene people, such as at this conference, to bring people together so that they are able to share with each other useful scientific information, which can permit the practice of prevention in every setting where it can be done. So we were very eager when the Surgeon General called on us to sponsor this conference—the first of its kind in agricultural safety and health that has ever been convened.□

Dr. J. Donald Millar: And now it is my distinct pleasure to introduce the convener of this Conference, the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service. She is the first woman and the first Puerto Rican to hold the position of Surgeon General. She is a dynamic and vivacious leader in the war against death and disease. I give you the fourteenth Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. Antonia C. Novello:



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Public Law 101-517

**April 30 - May 3, 1991
Des Moines, Iowa**

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL TECHNICAL
INFORMATION SERVICE
SPRINGFIELD, VA 22161



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

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Convened by

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

September 1992

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Cincinnati, Ohio 45226
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U.S. Department of Commerce
National Technical Information Services
Springfield, VA 22161
NTIS PB 93-114890/\$77.00 or A/06

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402
GPO 017-033-00463-3

DHHS (NIOSH) PUBLICATION NUMBER 92-105

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