Experts Discuss Horizontal Drilling and Hydraulic Fracturing During Toxicology Conference

Phoenix, Ariz.; March 26, 2014 — Natural gas extraction from shale rock formations through the processes of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing has become the fastest-growing source of gas in the US. In 2013, more than half a million people were employed in this industry. As with any industrial activity, the question of whether there are worker health issues must be addressed. Experts are exploring this topic today at the Society of Toxicology (SOT) 53rd Annual Meeting and ToxExpo in Phoenix, Ariz.

“The rapid increase in production of natural gas using hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling has raised questions around the potential public health impacts of these techniques, including impacts on worker health,” says Debra Kaden, PhD, ENVIRON International Cooperation, co-chair of the “Hydraulic Fracturing: Are There Worker Health Issues?” roundtable. “The collaboration of occupational hygienists from government and industry with toxicologists and risk assessors is important and necessary to help mitigate any potential worker exposures.”

The “Hydraulic Fracturing: Are There Worker Health Issues?” roundtable is bringing together diverse views and stakeholder groups to discuss how risk may be further mitigated. Participants include:

- John E. Snawder, PhD, DABT, US Center for Disease Control (CDC) and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), who is providing information on the current safety and health research in upstream oil and gas extraction and production.
- Robert A. Nocco, CIH, CSP, Chevron, who is discussing the collaborative effort among oil and gas operators, oilfield service companies, equipment manufacturers, industry associations, and professional societies to better understand worksite conditions and operating variables in order to help protect worker health.
- Roger O. McClellan, DVM, DABT, DABVT, FATS, who is presenting toxicological and epidemiological findings and how they are informing decisions on improvements to the hydraulic fracturing process to help mitigate worker exposure and risk.
- Robert B. Rottersman, CIH, ENVIRON International Corporation, who is speaking about how to monitor the transient workers in the industry to build a comprehensive exposure assessment plan and ensure worker safety.

“Occupational hazards perceived to be associated with hydraulic fracturing are frequently debated and discussed by scientists, as well as the media,” says Ziad S. Naufal, PhD, Chevron, co-chair of the roundtable session. “We know hydraulic fracturing can be pursued safely. By bringing together experts from government, industry, toxicology, and occupational hygiene, we are able to
analyze the latest information and provide guidance for how hydraulic fracturing can be done even more safely.”

To speak with a topic expert from the “Hydraulic Fracturing: Are There Worker Health Issues?” roundtable, please contact:

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About SOT  
Founded in 1961, the Society of Toxicology (SOT) is a professional and scholarly organization of more than 7,700 scientists from academic institutions, government, and industry representing the great variety of individuals who practice toxicology in the US and abroad. SOT is committed to creating a safer and healthier world by advancing the science of toxicology. The Society promotes the acquisition and utilization of knowledge in toxicology, aids in the protection of public health, and has a strong commitment to education in toxicology and to the recruitment of students and new members into the profession. For more information about SOT and toxicology, visit the Society online at www.toxicology.org, follow us on Twitter @SOToxicology, and like us on Facebook.