



Children on the Farm

THE NETWORK: providing agricultural occupational health and safety information and programs to Saskatchewan farm families since 1988

Growing up on a farm can be a wonderful experience for children. However, without proper supervision it can result in tragedy.

Recent research indicates that it is the long work hours that parents put in that influences the health and safety of their young children. Some of the strategies parents use to cope with child supervision issues puts children at risk.

“Our children are the most important resource on the farm.”

The Canadian Agricultural Injury Reporting (CAIR) study indicates that three-quarters (74.2%) of child fatalities were work-related. Of these deaths, three-quarters (73.5%) involved an adult who was engaged in agricultural work. For example cases where a child extra rider fell from a tractor or where a pickup truck re-

versed over a child bystander. Of the remaining quarter (26.5%) of work-related fatalities, the child victim was working.

The good news is that the number of agriculture related child fatalities is dropping. We need to keep decreasing this number until child related farm fatalities are eliminated. Until there are zero fatalities, kids are still at risk.

Children need to be explicitly taught that farm implements are not toys. Take the time to remind children frequently that the farm is not a playground. Keep children safe by designating a safe play area for them in the yard and teach them that the rest of the farm is out-of-bounds.

Kids learn best by example and parents must teach their kids to recognize hazards, evaluate the risks and to practice safety on the farm.



The best way to keep youngsters safe is to create a safe play area

1. Select a location that is removed from the farm activity. Preferably it will be adjacent to or in close proximity to the house. Ensure the location is sheltered from wind, free of pests (ants, snakes, rodents, etc.) and free of hazardous plants.

2. Surround the play area with a child protective fence and self-latching gate. Ensure it is sturdy, easy to maintain and a minimum height of 4 feet.

3. Choose play equipment. Quality play equipment does not have to be expensive. Choose balls, sandboxes or tree swings. Remember all structures that can be climbed should be positioned at least six feet from fencing or other equipment.

4. Use protective ground cover such as sand to absorb the shock of falls under play equipment with elevated surfaces such as slides, monkey bars, and swings.

Designing a safe play area for young children on the farm can be challenging. For a resource on creating Safe Play Spaces go to:

National Children’s Centre for Rural Safety and Health:

www.marshfieldclinic.org/research/children/safePlay



The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) supports Progressive Agricultural Safety Days in Canada.

This is a hands-on, fun, and educational program that helps children across Canada learn about dangers and potential deadly outcomes of unsafe behaviour on the farm. Progressive Agriculture Safety Days are as fun as they are educational. These one-day events teach children safety and health lessons that keep them and those around them safe and healthy on a farm, ranch or at home. Children grades K-8 learn hands-on interactive ways about identifying farm hazards, how to avoid them and stay safe.

Safety days are organized locally which allows each community to meet the needs of their area. There is year round support and each coordinator is provided with training on how to organize a Safety Day.

If you are interested in a safety day in your area, go to the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association and click on Progressive Agriculture Safety Days on CASA's website: www.casa-acsa.ca

“The mission of the Progressive Agriculture Safety Days is simple – to make farm and ranch life safer and healthier for all children through education and training.”

Guidelines for Parents

Unintentional injuries can happen when parents and children underestimate the level of risk and hazards associated with a task and mistake age and size for ability. The North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT) was developed at the request of members of the farm community.

The basis for these guidelines is to provide parents with a tool that will assist them in assigning safe farm jobs to children 7 to 16 years. Children can be assessed from a physical and cognitive perspective and recommendations are made for the supervision required and safety tips.

For the North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks go to Safe Kids Canada website resource list: www.safekidscanada.ca

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I take my play farming
very seriously.

The Network has a large variety of health and safety resources available. Please call (306) 966-6644 if you would like a copy sent to you, or check out our on-line electronic copies at aghealthandsafetynetwork.usask.ca

Disclaimer: This information is intended to educate the reader. It is not a substitute for examination, diagnosis, and medical care provided by a licensed and qualified health professional. A Reference list is available upon request.



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