

Views from VanDeWalle

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April 20, 2016

Progressive Agriculture Safety Day!

Statistics from those impacted by a farm-related injury or death are sobering. Many know someone who was impacted by a farm accident that in many cases could have been prevented. This is why I feel so passionately about conducting the Annual Progressive Safety Day each year. The Progressive Agriculture Foundation provides safety and health information to rural communities that need it, which is why I've teamed up with them. The mission of Progressive Agriculture Days is simple - to provide education, training, and resources to make farm and ranch life safer and healthier for children and their communities.

During the program's first year, a total of 2,800 participants and volunteers were reached throughout the South and Midwest and now the program impacts close to 110,000 annually. To date, the program has impacted more than 1.3 million children and adults.

Current 1st through 6th graders are invited to attend Progressive Agriculture Safety Day on Thursday, May 26, 2016 at the Fillmore County Fairgrounds. Youth will participate in a variety of events designed to help them be aware of safety in potentially hazardous situations such as bike riding, agricultural settings, electrical safety and others. This year, youth will walk away with an emergency disaster kit to use in the case of storms and other emergencies. Registration and consent form is REQUIRED by all youth who participate. This can be found at fillmore.unl.edu or by stopping by the Fillmore County Extension Office in Geneva.

April 28th is early bird registration at only \$3 per child that includes a t-shirt, lunch, snack and goodie bag. After April 28th registration increases to \$5 per youth in order to participate.

This event is hosted by Nebraska Extension in Fillmore County, Shickley and Fillmore Central FFA chapters, 4-H and W.I.F.E. For more info or to register, call 402-759-3712 or email brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu.

Pesky Purple Weed

People have asked me about the purple weed that has emerged in fields and lawns. Most likely that flower is henbit that is an annual forb in Nebraska and a member of the mint family, which means it has a square stem. It has distinctive leaves with crenate and lobed leaf margins and purple to pink flowers. For control, this weed is a winter annual, which means the seed germinates in the fall and the small plants overwinter before growing aggressively in early spring. It flowers in April and May and dies in the hot, dry summer weather. Flowers can produce a lot of seed, which is one reason henbit infestations can increase each year. Control of henbit this time of year is not recommended because the plant will die shortly. The best option for control is to hand pull the weed in lawns. This has the advantage of minimizing the amount of seed production for next fall. If henbit infestation becomes unacceptable, then apply a PRE herbicide in late summer to early fall. Finally, henbit that does germinate in the fall will be killed with the same POST herbicides that are used to control other pesky weeds like dandelions and creeping Charlie. Other management options for henbit control include, 1) maintaining a healthy and vigorously growing lawn or 2) adding a deep layer of mulch to landscape beds.