

Views from VanDeWalle

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Progressive Agriculture Safety Day

Recognized as the largest rural safety and health education program for children in North America, Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® (PAF Safety Day) provides age-appropriate, hands-on educational lessons primarily designed for children ages 4 to 13 years old. Since the program's start in 1995, more than 1.9 million individuals have been reached in 45 states, two U.S. territories, and nine Canadian provinces. Trained PAF Safety Day Coordinators partner within their community, using one of the three delivery modes, to customize their PAF Safety Day selecting from more than 30 safety and health topics with hundreds of activities and demonstrations to meet the needs of the youth in their area.

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. Therefore, 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. The vision is that "no child become ill, injured or die from farm, ranch and rural activities."

Locally, since I have been involved with a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day in Geneva, we have grown from approximately 60 participants to over or nearly 100 youth from surrounding counties. This half-day event involves many volunteers and local sponsors to make the program what it is today. Every year, business staff or volunteers help teach the hands-on activities. In addition, area FFA chapters assist in delivery of sessions and guiding youth participants to each session.

Current 1st through 6th grade youth are invited to attend Progressive Agriculture Safety Day on Thursday, May 23, 2024 at the Fillmore County Fairgrounds in Geneva, NE. Youth will participate in a variety of events designed to help them be aware of safety in potentially hazardous situations in and around rural and agricultural settings, including electricity, food safety, ATV safety, underground utility safety, railroad safety, seatbelt safety, hearing safety, etc. NE Extension hosts this event in Fillmore County, along with Shickley, Fillmore Central, Exeter-Milligan-Friend FFA chapters, 4-H, W.I.F.E., Fortify, and Fillmore County Emergency Management. Early registration forms and \$5 are due April 23rd; forms can be [downloaded at fillmore.unl.edu](#). After April 23rd, registration is \$10/youth. For more info or to register, call 402-759-3712 or email brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu.