

Views from VanDeWalle

Brandy VanDeWalle, Extension Educator in Fillmore County

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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. 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."

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 1.6 million children and adults. The Progressive Agriculture Foundation is in its 27th year of programming in the United States and 20th year in Canada.

Locally, since I have been involved with a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day in Geneva, we have grown from approximately 60 participants to 140 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 graders are invited to attend Progressive Agriculture Safety Day on Thursday, May 27, 2021 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, mental wellness, ATV safety, animal safety, food 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. and Fillmore County Emergency Management. Early registration forms and \$5 are due April 30th; forms can be [downloaded at fillmore.unl.edu](#). After April 30th, registration is \$10/youth. For more info or to register, call 402-759-3712 or email brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu.