

Ag Safety Workshops Provide Important Training

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Lancaster Farming Staff
BEAVER SPRINGS (Snyder Co.) — Really great things often come in (barn) packages. Just ask Cynthia Shaffer, ag instructor and FFA adviser at West Snyder High School in Beaver Springs.

In January at a national safety workshop at the Crown Plaza Hotel near the airport in Atlanta, Ga., participants were handed a box shaped like a barn, with a red exterior and multicolored roof.

What was astonishing to those who participated was what the box contained.

Shaffer is convinced there is enough resources and material in the box than her students could ever use for farm safety, she said.

The box contained a computer CD-ROM, filled with an index providing safety topics for a wide range of farm and nonfarm activities. She found a 50-page handy resource guide for instructors of farm safety. Shaffer also found video tapes, stickers, signs, and other material to help not only teach children farm safety, but to make children teachers of farm safety.

The workshop in Atlanta was cosponsored by a wide array of commercial enterprises, including large farm equipment, seed, chemical, and other companies. The program, coordinated by the National FFA Foundation, is called Partners For a Safer Community.

National release of the project began during the winter with the training of 136 educators, community representatives, and students representing 47 states in Atlanta, Denver, and Minneapolis. The purpose of the program: educate instructors on the materials available to teach farm and off-farm safety.

The workshops were tested through a test pilot project in Missouri before being used nationwide. "A lot of research was put into it, and it shows," said Shaffer of West Snyder High School.

"As an ag teacher, I wanted to teach safety to my shop classes," she said. "But the material we used worked better than anticipated. The information was very valuable. I found more information that my students ever use in one box."

There was concern among the educators at the workshop that the material was too complex to fully integrate quickly midway in to the school year's curriculum. But many schools elected to use the resource guide and other materials in the box right away, Shaffer noted.

Some of Shaffer's students spoke about the importance of safety through a series of radio presentations. Importantly, on May 13, the FFA students (of which safety training is required of all first-year members) presented a workshop to students in kindergarten through sixth grade during Safety Day at West Beaver and Beaver Adams elementary schools.

During the Safety Day, the sixth graders were provided information

about gun safety. The fifth graders were instructed on ATV and lawn mower safety. Fourth graders studied tractor and farm equipment safety. Third graders were taught fire and chemical safety. Second grade students were given the basics of first aid. First grade classes were provided information on strangers, dangers, and 911. And the kindergarten classes were taught animal safety.

Along with fellow FFA adviser Steve Kline, Shaffer believes the "box" could be effective during a state safety workshop in Pennsylvania.

As a result, working with Kerry Hoffman, Penn State pesticide education coordinator, a state training workshop will be conducted Monday, Oct. 12, at a site to be determined in the Hershey area. The workshop will be coordinated with the assistance of ag engineering services at Penn State. More about that will be available in a later issue of *Lancaster Farming*.

The impressive part of the national workshop training is that it involved ag science students.

Carolyn Howard, daughter of Mary Herman, Beavertown, participated in the national training. Carolyn will be in the 10th grade at West Snyder High School. Like

many student representatives and FFA'ers who take the course (West Snyder FFA has a total of 65 members), the course was designed to allow students to learn about safety and "a lot of guidance and how to apply skills and leadership, much like county FFA leadership workshops," said Shaffer.

The national workshop selected younger students so they can spend their remaining years in high

school imparting safety knowledge to other students.

In the meantime, Shaffer said that students and FFA members will be continuing to make presentations at various activities, including farm organization meetings.

For more information about the Partners program, contact Shaffer at (717) 658-8144 or Kerry Hoffman, (814) 865-2134.

Northeastern Farm Credit Sponsors Financial Advisers Seminar

LEWISBURG (Union Co) — In a newly formed alliance with American Express Financial Advisors, Northeastern Farm Credit sponsored a seminar on "Preserving the Family Farm. Financial Strategies for Today and Tomorrow"

The seminar was held in May at Northeastern Farm Credit headquarters in Lewisburg. More than 40 Farm Credit customers were in attendance. American Express Financial Advisors William H. Gehron III and Ronald E. Cioffi led the

seminar. This alliance with American Express came about as a result of Farm Credit customers who had questions regarding real estate transfers and investment issues. American Express Financial Advisors offer a full spectrum of services dealing with these and other issues.

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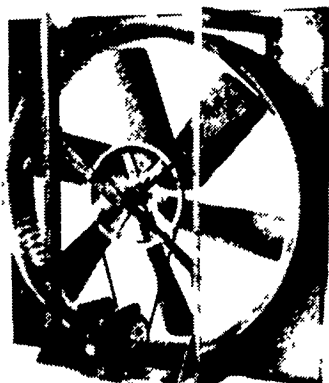
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