

# Guidelines Available For Children's Ag Tasks

MARSHFIELD, Wis. — Parents wanting a resource to help match children's abilities with agricultural job requirements should know that North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT) are available.

Announcement about the guidelines and their availability was made recently during a celebration in conjunction with the annual conference of the National Institute for Farm Safety in Ocean City, Maryland. Speaking at that celebration was Orion Samuelson, WGN Radio's national farm radio broadcaster, and Andy Ambruster, an officer for the National FFA.

Select details about the guidelines are available at Internet site [www.nagcat.org](http://www.nagcat.org); the professional resource manual/parent resources themselves are available from Gempler's, a Belleville, Wisconsin, safety supply company, toll free at 800-382-8473 or at its web site [www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com); and farm safety specialists may be aware of distributors providing free parent resources.

"We hope these guidelines will help promote a strong work ethic for young people by giving them safe and appropriate opportunities for work experiences under adult supervision," said Barbara Lee, Ph.D., director, National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, a program of Marshfield Clinic, Marshfield, Wisconsin, and a site of the Children's Safety Network.

Lee is principal investigator for a team that developed guidelines at the request of farm parents who wanted guidance in assigning appropriate tasks to children. Guidelines were developed through a consensus development process involving over 150 individuals from the United States, Canada and Mexico including farm parents, teen workers, agricultural

safety specialists and child development specialists. "We wanted as many farmers and ranchers as possible to participate in this process," said Barbara Marlenga, Ph.D., project manager/associate scientist, National Children's Center. "We needed to know what would be helpful and what information they need to make decisions about jobs their children do."

Matching jobs to children's development is important. Annually, more than 100 children are killed and 100,000 seriously injured because of incidents involving agricultural machinery, livestock, falls or other events. Injuries may occur because parents and children mistake physical size and age for ability, overestimate developmental capabilities, or underestimate levels of hazard and risk.

The guidelines cover 62 agricultural jobs focusing on the most common farm activities children do. Categories are animal care; manual labor; haying operations; implement operations; specialty production; tractor fundamentals, and general activities.

Guidelines are based on child development principles, rather than a child's age. "Kids develop at their own pace, are influenced by their environment and have different things going on at home," Marlenga said. "If we said a 10-year-old could do a certain job, we might put half of them at risk."

Guidelines, developed with different versions for parents and professionals, are recommendations not mandates. "Like recommendations on children's toys and games, the guidelines serve as a point of reference which require further assessment and decision-making by adults," Lee said.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Canadian Coalition for Agricultural Safety and Rural Health, and federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau funded this project.



For months, Jason Sauder, Manheim, tried to think of an original way to propose to Jess Young. What better way, he decided, then to use "John Deere green" to paint the proposal and string the banner across one of the family's red barns. Last week, he nervously waited on the porch while Jess drove from her parents' (John and Terry Young's) Mastersonville farm to meet him. As Jess turned into the Sauder farm, she read the sign: "Jess, Will You Marry Me?" Jess described her reaction as "pure shock." She continued to drive very slowly up the long lane much to Jason's chagrin. But Jess had a reason. "I couldn't see," the teary-eyed 19-year-old explained as Jason slipped the diamond on her finger. The couple are planning a June 10, 2000 wedding on the Sauders' Century Farm. After the wedding, the newlyweds plan to move in one part of the large farmhouse so that Jason can continue crop and hog farming with parents Glen and Shirley Sauder and operate the family's custom combining business. Photo by Lou Ann Good.

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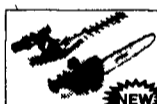
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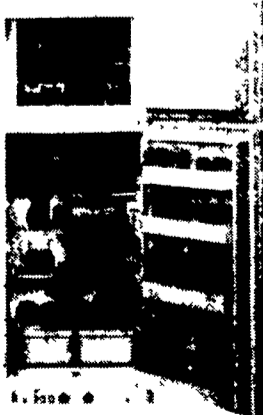
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