

Workshop Teaches Parents How To Protect Children On The Farm

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)

— Kids like to help on the farm. Unfortunately as many as 300 children are killed on farms nationwide each year. In the county, at least two children die every year from farm injuries and many more are injured.

Marilyn Adams knows the pain of losing a son from a farming accident. Her 11-year-old son suffocated in a grain bin on the family's Iowa farm.

After his death, Adams founded the national Farm Safety 4 Kids to help other parents be aware of potential farm hazards. Adams is the keynote speaker at the SAFE KIDS seminar, Feb. 10, from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The daylong workshop at the Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Rd., Lancaster, is geared toward parents.

Dr. Albert Price, retired pediatrician, and Shari Keyser-Groff, director of the county SAFE KIDS Coalition, said the seminar will focus on age appropriateness of farm tasks and an introduction to "First on the Scene for Farm Families" — what you need to do to increase chances loved ones will survive.

Keyser-Groff said, "We are not trying to tell parents how to run their farm or how to raise their family. But we offer guidelines for making tasks safer. We teach child development principles to help parents determine appropriate

tasks for their children."

Children often help with farm chores at an early age. It's a great way to teach responsibility and the satisfaction that comes from hard work. But too often, children are assigned tasks beyond their age ability.

"Many deaths and injuries could be prevented if parents understood how a child develops before they assign chores," Price said.

Guidelines for more than 62 agricultural jobs focusing on tasks most commonly performed on the farm have been developed by North American Guidelines to Children's Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT). These are divided into seven categories: animal care, manual labor, haying operations, implement operations, specialty production, tractor fundamentals, and general activities.

Guidelines are based on child

development rather than age. Chores need to be assigned by considering a child's coordination, attention span, memory, balance, strength, and reaction time.

To prevent injuries, a child should never try to lift anything — such as feedbags — that weigh more than 15 percent of his or her body weight. Children should be taught proper lifting techniques to prevent serious back strain or injuries.

An adult should always demonstrate a chore such as feeding calves and then watch a child safely perform the task four to five times before allowing the child to feed calves without supervision.

Animals behave unpredictably, so young workers must have quick reaction and good peripheral vision. The guidelines give steps to enable parents to determine if a child has appropriate peripheral

vision, eye-hand coordination, and other skills necessary for each task.

Other scheduled speakers at the seminar include city firefighters Brian Klugh and Lloyd Henry, county extension agent Bob Anderson and Dennis Murphy, professor of agriculture at Penn State.

SAFE KIDS Coalition is conducting the event in partnership with St. Joseph Hospital, Lancaster General Hospital, and the Penn State Extension. Financial supporters are Old Guard Insurance Company, Southern States Cooperative, and New Holland North America, Inc.

Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for high school students. Participants can be from any state to attend.

To register or for more information, call SAFE KIDS at (717) 390-3801.

Cut Holiday Stress

Holidays are a good time for families to get together to strengthen family ties. But, if we aren't careful, the holiday stress and strains will overcome the goodwill of the season. Debra Bryant, Wayne County Cooperative Extension Agent offers these thoughts on reducing your stress this holiday season.

Try not to overdo it. Being tired causes more stress. Staying up late finishing gifts, wrapping presents, or being out at a party means you'll be under extra stress.

If you know you'll be up late, plan a short nap the next day to catch up. No time for a nap—relax in a chair. Put your feet up for 20-30 minutes. Keep a family calendar and don't schedule several late nights in the same week. As a family, sit down and decide what things you will do and which things you won't. Choosing rather than doing everything means you'll all enjoy yourselves more.

Expect some problems.

Anytime a group of people are cooped up together, there will be problems. We can all be on our best behavior for an hour or two, but when the same people spend a day or more together sparks fly. This can happen too, even with immediate family members. When a son or daughter goes away to college and returns home for the holidays, many families experience problems. The young person is used to being independent and may forget family rules or to check their plans with other family members. Family members should discuss this issue before the problems start to avoid stress on everyone.

Nuts Require Careful Storage

During December, nuts take a prominent place on the grocery list. Nuts are high in fat, however, and can turn rancid quickly without proper storage. Rancid nuts will ruin whatever food they flavor; therefore be sure the nuts you purchase are fresh.

Beware of "bargain" nuts — they may not be such a bargain after all. Be sure nuts have been

sealed into airtight containers and that they haven't exceeded their expiration date.

Taste before adding to food. At home, store airtight in a cool place. You can refrigerate shelled nuts for up to four months, or you can freeze them for up to six. Unshelled nuts keep about twice as long as those that are shelled.

Give yourself a break.

Let the kids go bowling or out to a movie with friends, so that adults can have some time together or to rest. Plan an hour to do something that is relaxing or that you just would enjoy doing.

Be a welcome visitor.

While visiting don't overstay your welcome. Call ahead to let hosts know you will be coming and when you will be leaving.

If going to a party or for dinner, call your hosts and offer to take something. Remember to help out as much as possible.

Don't expect to be waited on. Try to be the kind of guest you would like to have in your home. Not only will there be less stress for the hosts, but everyone will be able to enjoy themselves.

Ask for help when you need it.

It's no crime to admit you can't do it all. But don't expect someone to notice and offer you help. Give family members warning that you'll need their help and let them choose what they want to do if possible.

Working together on a project can be lots more fun than doing it yourself. Some unwilling helpers may even find themselves having a good time helping get the cards out or wrapping presents.

Using some of these ideas will help you relax and enjoy your holiday season with family and friends. If you would like more information on reducing stress in your life, contact Wayne County Cooperative Extension, 925 Court St., Honesdale 18431 (570) 253-5970 ext 239.

Working With Large Animals Can Be Risky For Children

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Many non-rural residents think of farm animals as charming, docile creatures, but many children die or are seriously injured each year in livestock-related incidents.

Adults should closely supervise children working around large animals, said a farm safety expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"Horses, cattle, llamas, emus and ostriches can move suddenly and quickly," warned Dennis Murphy, professor of agricultural engineering. "These animals also can kick and bite, causing significant injuries."

Murphy said parents should gauge a child's ability to perform tasks associated with large animal care.

• **Ability.** Children must be comfortable around large animals, Murphy said. "An adult should demonstrate how to work with large animals on the site where the child will work," he said. "The adult should train the child on animal behavior and closely supervise the youngster at least five times until he or she shows the ability to do the job safely."

• **Strength.** A child should not try to lift anything — such as feed bags — that weighs more than 15 percent of his or her body weight.

"Children also should not push things that are heavier than 15 percent of their body weight," Murphy said. Parents should train their children to lift properly, Murphy said. Proper lifting techniques, such as lifting with the legs rather than the back muscles, can prevent serious back strain or injury.

• **Reactions.** Animals behave unpredictably, so young workers must have quick reactions. Murphy also emphasizes that children should have good peripheral vision. "Children with limited vision may not see obstacles or people in the work area," Murphy explained. "Test peripheral vision by having the child look straight ahead. The child should be able to see your finger enter his or her field of vision at shoulder level."

Murphy said adults also should ensure a safe working environment before children are allowed to work. At minimum, the work area should have:

• If working in a closed building, an effective ventilation system.

• All guards and shields in place on feeding equipment.

• No hazards in the work area.

• An escape route the child has been trained to use.

• Animals with no diseases.

• A respirator fitted for the child that the child knows how to use.

• A place for the child to change clothes and wash hands after the job.

When leading or grooming large animals, Murphy recommends that children not be allowed to lead an animal until they have proved themselves strong enough to control the animal. "An adult must demonstrate proper leading and grooming techniques as well."

Murphy said children should always wear proper clothing when working with large animals, particularly steel-toed boots with non-skid soles.

Parents or other interested professionals can buy booklets of six to 10 posters covering similar agricultural tasks or a professional resource manual by calling Gempler's, a Belleville, Wis., safety supply company, at 1-800-382-8473, or by visiting its Web site: www.gemplers.com.

Guidelines Established For Children's Agricultural Tasks

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Farmers can assign appropriate farm tasks to their children using the newly developed North American Guidelines to Children's Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT), according to a safety expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

Every year across the nation, more than 100 children are killed and approximately 100,000 are seriously injured in incidents involving agricultural machinery, livestock, falls or other events.

"Matching chores to children's development is important," said Dennis Murphy, professor of agricultural engineering. "Injuries may occur because parents overestimate their child's physical size and age without taking into

account the ability to perform the job. For farming jobs, you have to consider balance, strength, reaction time, coordination, attention span and memory."

Murphy said, "Parents also can underestimate the risk involved with farm jobs because they may feel their own child is exceptional."

The guidelines, developed by the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, are divided into seven categories: animal care, manual labor, haying operations, implement operations, specialty production, tractor fundamentals and general activities.

The guidelines are not based on age, but rather on child development principles. "Children deve-

lop at their own pace," Murphy said. "One 10-year-old may have no trouble doing a job that is well beyond the capabilities of another 10-year-old."

The center created guidelines for 62 agricultural jobs, focusing on tasks most children commonly perform on the farm.

Limited details on each agricultural task are available on the NAGCAT Web site at www.nagcat.com. Parents or other interested professionals can buy booklets of six to 10 posters covering a specific work category or a professional resource manual by calling Gempler's, a Belleville, Wis., safety supply company, at 1-800-382-8473, or visiting its Web site: www.gemplers.com.