



## **Safety Days Aim to Create a Culture of Safety Amongst Saskatchewan Children and Youth**

**Byline: Erin Kelly for the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association**

They say it takes a village to raise a child.

And in Saskatchewan, that village comprises a network of dedicated volunteers who host the province's Progressive Agriculture Safety Days®.

Every year, the provincial Safety Days, overseen by the Saskatchewan Association of Agricultural Societies and Exhibitions (SAASE), have some 500 volunteers contributing thousands of hours of their time. So, it's no surprise when Glen Duck, executive director of SAASE, stresses that the Safety Days wouldn't happen without the support of volunteers across the province.

"We're lucky to have so many dedicated agricultural society volunteers throughout the province who work on this and recognize how important it is to teach our kids about safety," says Duck. "Agricultural societies have for long been gathering places for people and have always done a lot of work as far as agricultural education is concerned, and they continue to be the heart of the communities they serve."

It was a conversation with the provincial Minister of Agriculture in 2011 about a gap in farm safety programming for youth that got things rolling for introducing Safety Days in Saskatchewan, which got underway in 2012.

Safety Days, coordinated by SAASE's agricultural society members and supported by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, consist of one-day, age-appropriate events that teach students about various safety topics, with a focus on rural health and safety.

"We call it the SAASE Provincial Safety Day program, but we are such a small part of it. It's everyone else around the province who does the hard work and heavy lifting. It's the volunteers and the commitment from the agricultural societies and the schools that make this whole program happen," Duck says.

And it's safe to say that the provincial Safety Days have been a resounding success, with an average of 15 events attended by approximately 5,000 students across the province annually. In addition to the dedicated volunteer base, part of the Safety Days' success is the flexibility provided to individual events.

"The flexibility of the program is really important so that the content can reflect what's relevant to a particular area, so each Safety Day is different. We've had Safety Days up in the northern parts of Saskatchewan where there has been bear trap safety. We've also had



oil pumpjack safety in areas where oil is produced,” explains Duck, who attends every Safety Day in the province and has received “tremendously positive feedback” about the events.

“As our communities, and society in general, evolve, there are different issues that we inevitably have to deal with. And that’s why the program’s flexibility is so important and part of what makes this such a success.”

While he is quick to give credit to local SAASE members and volunteers for the success of Safety Days, Duck’s passion for educating children and youth about safety issues is nothing short of inspiring. For Duck, that motivation comes from wanting to help embed a culture of safety amongst the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

“You have to start with kids when it comes to safety. For some farmers, it can be tough for them to change, whereas with kids that safety messaging can have more of an impact,” Duck says. “We are trying to change the culture of safety and the only way to achieve that is through youth.”

One of the key lessons that Duck hopes kids take away from a Safety Day event, regardless of the location and topics covered, is the importance of always being aware of their surroundings.

“If kids come away with that knowledge, then that’s tremendous and we’ve all done our jobs.”

What’s more, that awareness can also influence parents, grandparents, and other adults.

“I hear all the time about kids who go home from a Safety Day and talk about all of the different things they learned. Hopefully they can influence their parents’ behaviours if they see something unsafe that they learned about,” he says.

“We want kids to know they have a voice when it comes to safety.”

Though there is no question that SAASE has much to be proud of when it comes to the Safety Days, they won’t be resting on their laurels anytime soon and hope to expand the program into new communities to educate more children and youth about safety.

“When we originally set this up, our objectives were to increase awareness about rural family health and safety issues through education, increase access to a variety of rural safety materials and resources, create a long-lasting and sustainable project that would be maintained by the community, and, ultimately, decrease the number of injuries with kids. None of that has changed but we are always looking for new opportunities,” explains Duck.



"It's important that we keep teaching kids, because as COVID has proven, there are always new health and safety issues that come up. At the end of the day, safety is not a topic that will ever get old."

For more information about Progressive Agriculture Safety Days®, visit [progressiveag.org](http://progressiveag.org).

### **About Kids FarmSafe Week**

Kids FarmSafe Week is a public awareness campaign hosted by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association with the aim of promoting the safety and wellness of children and youth on Canadian farms. Now in its second year, Kids FarmSafe Week takes place May 12-18, 2025, and is presented by BASF Agricultural Solutions Canada Inc. More information can be found at [www.kidsfarmsafe.ca](http://www.kidsfarmsafe.ca).

### **About the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association**

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and safety of farmers, their families, and agricultural workers. CASA is funded in part by the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. For more information, visit [www.casa-acsa.ca](http://www.casa-acsa.ca).

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### **Image:**

[SAASE Safety Days](#)

**Caption:** The Saskatchewan Association of Agricultural Societies and Exhibitions' (SAASE) Safety Days reaches some 5,000 students across the province annually in an effort to heighten awareness about rural health and safety issues. (Photo supplied by SAASE)