



From Olympic Gold to Country Fields: Kaitlyn Lawes Makes Farm Safety a Priority in Her New Chapter

Byline: Erin Kelly for the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

Kaitlyn Lawes is nothing short of curling royalty in Canada.

A two-time Olympic gold medallist, world curling champion, and six-time Grand Slam champion, Lawes is widely considered one of the most accomplished curlers in Canadian history. But following her [recent announcement](#) of a temporary hiatus from curling, Lawes, 37, is embarking on a new chapter in her life as a farmer.

"I honestly did not know what the next chapter was going to look like. But I love where I am at in life, and I am so happy with everything that curling has brought me; it gave me the opportunity to meet my husband and now to be able to have two young girls and bring them up on the farm," says Lawes.

After purchasing farmland in 2022 near Notre Dame de Lourdes, located southwest of Winnipeg, Lawes and her husband, Stephan Vigier, moved to the farm full-time in September 2024, where they grow wheat, canola, and soybeans.

Lawes, who didn't grow up on a farm but spent many summers visiting her grandparents' farm in Ontario, says the decision was a "no-brainer," but not without its challenges.

"It's been a big learning curve for me being a city girl," she says.

In addition to the time spent commuting from the farm to different places, which Lawes says was a big adjustment while she was still curling, one of the key new learning experiences for Lawes has involved farm safety.

"I don't think I realized how essentially everything on the farm can have potential safety issues. It's made me realize that I have to be comfortable asking questions," explains Lawes. "I try to not spend too much time worrying about all the things that can go wrong and instead learning how we can prevent incidents from happening in the first place."

With two young daughters aged one and three, Lawes says she is grateful for the opportunity to raise her children on the farm where they have plenty of room to play outside. But she notes that safe practices are fundamental to making the most of that experience. Those practices include designating safe play areas and setting boundaries for herself and her children.



"I feel like we often get so caught up in a world of technology and other flashy things, and it just feels a bit simpler on the farm," explains Lawes.

"But, at the same time, it's important to learn the proper steps of making sure that everyone is safe so that you can have fun and enjoy the environment that you're in. My three-year-old understands that there are big tractors and lots of machinery and she knows that she has to keep her distance from those. We're constantly having conversations about safety with our girls, and those conversations will evolve as they get older." Having spent more than three decades curling, Lawes knows first-hand that the most successful teams have open and honest communication. And that same principle applies to farming, with effective communication being invaluable — but often underappreciated — for success, sustainability, and safety.

"Something that I can bring from sport into our family life is how to have open, honest conversations because the most successful teams, the most successful businesses and farms need to have open and honest communication. I think that is crucial for safety on the farm," says Lawes.

"Communication doesn't come naturally to everyone, but having time set aside to talk about things can make a difference. When you allow the floor to be open to conversations, it can lead to great things."

Shifting priorities

With a well-respected reputation for being an elite competitive curler, with an impressive 12 appearances at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts and earning recognition early on in her career with back-to-back Canadian junior national titles, Lawes' decision to step away from the sport for a year undoubtedly came as a surprise to some. But Lawes says that with her daughters being young, she knew it was the right time to take a break.

"I've curled for a very long time and curling owes me absolutely nothing. I owe curling everything. I am so grateful for all the worldly experiences I got to take in and all the people I met. I am the person I am because of this sport and I think it's going to help me in my next chapter," she explains.

Many farm families know all too well the challenges of balancing responsibilities on and off the farm. For Lawes, that balancing act was further exacerbated by the need to be on the road for competitions.

"I grew up playing the sport, so for a long time that was my main focus and I was all in on that. Then adding the farm and children, I was trying to figure out how to juggle being all in when I'm home on the farm and being present with my girls. But also, still all in with my team when I'm curling and competing. It was a lot and I knew it would be," Lawes says.



"I want to make sure that whatever I am doing, I am able to give 100 per cent. I want to be the best version for my girls; these years are so important, and I want them to see me present."

Lawes says that spending more time on the farm is also important to her from a safety perspective, noting that the busiest times in curling coincide with planting and harvest seasons.

While Lawes isn't completely writing off a return to curling in the near future, she says her focus for the time being is on learning about how to farm safely with her family.

"It's pretty special to learn things along the way with my girls. I can support them as they ask questions and explore and I can see it through their eyes," says Lawes.

"I don't think there are many instances where you can say I learned something new every single day, but I truly feel that on the farm. Every day, I am learning about the farm and how to keep my family safe. It's important to have a growth mindset no matter what age you're at; whether you're learning at one and three or 37."

About Kids FarmSafe Week

Kids FarmSafe Week is an annual public awareness campaign hosted by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association to promote the safety and wellness of children and youth on Canadian farms. Now in its third year, Kids FarmSafe Week takes place May 11-17, 2026, and is presented by BASF Agricultural Solutions Canada Inc. More information can be found at www.kidsfarmsafe.ca.

About the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) 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.

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Cutline: Kaitlyn Lawes is well-known for her success in curling, but after announcing she would be taking a break from the sport, she has a new focus: keeping her family safe on their farm. (Photo supplied by Kaitlyn Lawes)