



## Ag Safety Day Event Helps Instill Lifelong Safety Habits for Younger Generations

### Byline: Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

Margaret Mead, an American anthropologist, once said: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

And in southwestern Ontario’s Chatham-Kent area, two sisters embody that message by working to make a positive influence on younger generations.

Cassi Brunsveld and Angela Vyn organize the highly-popular Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® at Guelph University’s Ridgetown Campus. The sisters, who grew up attending the well-known event, revitalized it in 2016 after several years of its inactivity, continuing a valued community tradition.

“When we found out it wasn’t happening anymore, we put our heads together and said maybe this is something we should bring back. We have kids of our own and wanted them to be able to participate — creating those childhood memories and learning about the importance of safety on the farm as well. It was always very well-received in our community and we believe that events like this are important to have,” says Brunsveld.

Progressive Agriculture Safety Days® are one-day events tailored for children with age-appropriate activities on various safety topics. At the [Ridgetown Farm Safety Day](#), which is held every July with upwards of 130 participants, interactive learning has been a central focus of the event.

“A big thing for us when we started this was to really make it a hands-on approach to learning about safety versus textbook learning. And every year we look at what hands-on activities we can get that the kids will be excited about,” explains Vyn.

“One of the topics we cover is tractor safety, where the kids sit in a tractor and learn about the blind spots and how tractor operators can’t see everything around them. Them sitting in the tractor and seeing the blind spots themselves is something they’ll remember over us just talking to them. So, it’s really about making things hands-on and practical.”

While tractor safety is a recurring topic covered at the Safety Day event, other familiar farm topics have included grain safety, enclosed spaces, fire safety, and farm equipment safety. But the event’s workshops have also covered topics that go beyond the farm, such as bicycle safety, internet safety, and bullying awareness, attracting both rural and urban kids.



“We have a lot of kids who come from a more urban area, but are exposed to rural living through their grandparents or other family,” Brunsveld says, noting that some families come from over an hour away to attend the Safety Day. “While it’s called ‘Farm Safety Day,’ we are also teaching about things like fire safety and bike safety. Fire can happen anywhere. And rural and urban kids all have bikes. So, it’s not just specific to farm kids.”

Adds Vyn, “It also helps to bridge the gap between rural and urban. When urban kids can have an insight into some of the things that go on at the farm, I don’t think that’s a bad thing.”

Given that many kids start helping out around the family farm at a young age, Brunsveld and Vyn say instilling safety lessons from an early age is essential, which is why they invite kids as young as five years old (and up to age 12) to participate in the Safety Day.

“Whether you’re five or 12, you’re still exposed to situations and any knowledge that they have is helpful. Even if they are too young to manage a situation themselves, they can have the knowledge to identify when something isn’t safe,” Vyn explains.

“Being a parent to two young boys, they’re always around the farm with us,” adds Brunsveld. “But they know when they hear the tractor start that they need to be far away. There’s a lot that goes on around the farm and they need to know what they need to do to be safe so having that awareness instilled from a young age is important.”

In addition to the 50 to 70 volunteers who help make the event happen every year, Vyn and Brunsveld note that corporate sponsors and the community have been indispensable to the event’s success. That support means participants get snacks and lunch, a t-shirt and hat, and a take-home bag — which has included items like fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and fire blankets — for only \$10 each.

“We really don’t want to have families deterred from attending because of the cost. We want to make it as affordable and beneficial as possible, so we really appreciate all those who financially help us out so we can keep the cost lower,” Brunsveld explains.

Asked what advice they would give to anyone considering introducing a Safety Day in their community, Brunsveld and Vyn emphasize the importance of tapping into existing resources from the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, the Progressive Agriculture Foundation, and other safety organizations. And while planning such an event is a lot of work, they stress it is worth it if it means potentially preventing someone from getting injured or worse.

“The hope, of course, is that somebody doesn’t end up in a dangerous situation or become seriously injured because they took away something from one of our Safety Days,” says Vyn. “And that makes it all worthwhile.”



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

### **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](http://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](http://www.casa-acsa.ca).