



Ag Days Features Farm Safety Focus

By Amy Petherick for the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association
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As part of its 40th anniversary celebrations in 2017, Manitoba Ag Days will expand their Farm Safety Zone into a Farm Safety Feature. Making a conscious effort to raise awareness among all farmers attending the event, organizers are encouraging all exhibitors to highlight farm safety messaging or share a product that exemplifies safety in their booth.

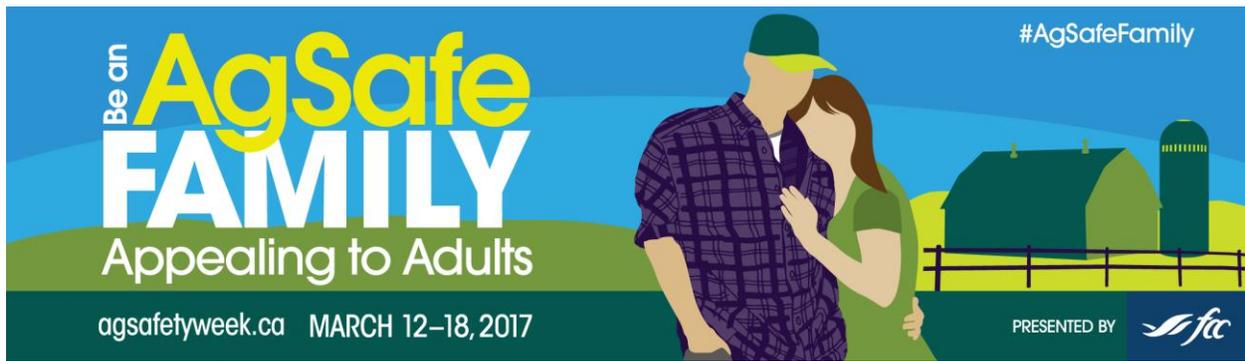
Although farm safety has been a part of Manitoba Ag Days since 1981, this year's launch of the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association's (CASA) BeGrainSafe program will be particularly special and something organizers hope will grab the attention of both farmers and their families. "When the Keystone Centre expanded in 1993 and our show was permanently relocated to the City of Brandon, we started a relationship with the industry to create a "Farm Safety Zone" at the show", says Kristen Phillips, general manager for Manitoba Ag Days. "At the end of the show, the main goal has always been that we inspire attendees to talk about farm safety and make positive changes for safety on their farm."

The new BeGrainSafe program was developed in response to the needs of the agricultural community, partly inspired by requests for training from across Canada. "For the last few years, CASA has been aware that there is a real need for a Canadian grain safety awareness and rescue training program," says Glen Blahey, CASA's Agricultural Health and Safety Specialist. "Grain yields are larger than ever, we are seeing record amounts of grain moving through the system, and this means there is a greater chance of an individual being exposed to the hazards associated with grain handling."

Ag Days board members, Scott Perkin and Dustin Williams, had the opportunity to see a mobile grain entrapment unit from the United States in 2015. They thought it could be a great "feature booth" at the Manitoba Ag Days show but unfortunately, no Canadian unit existed and the unit from the United States wasn't available. However, CASA was in the midst of developing the BeGrainSafe program. Upon hearing about the new grain safety program, Manitoba Ag Days invited CASA to apply to their Ag Days Gives Back Grant for Community Improvement - Safety & Emergency Services and although it was up against some tough competition, the initiative really struck a chord with the Ag Days Board.

"Their application said that they were going to build a mobile entrapment trailer and use it as a training unit here in Canada," Phillips says. "Our whole board rallied behind this application, especially knowing how real it was for one of our board members and his family."





Todd Botterill lost his own father in 2009 to a farm incident. Robert ‘Bob’ Botterill was 63 years old and had other places to be the evening he got into a grain bin of seed oats. Todd says he knows his father knew it wasn’t safe. It even appeared as though he had originally tried to break up some crusting on the grain surface with a pole from outside the bin. But he was in a hurry, so he went in anyway; alone.

“I think we all get away with a lot of things; you look back after and go ‘well, that was stupid,’ but you get away with it,” Todd says. “Sometimes, you start to take that for granted.”

Todd applauds any demonstration that can fight that tendency. As the Ag Days organizers set out to champion safety again this year, he hopes the BeGrainSafe program will leave a lasting impression that could prevent other tragedies. He says he would consider their efforts a great success if they would “show farmers ways that might be safer, and the ramifications of some of their decisions, before they learn them the hard way.”

Phillips says this is why it’s so important to them that CASA not only debut the new program during their show, but also that Ag Days could play a role in bringing an important educational tool like this to Canada. After seven people lost their lives in grain entrapment related incidents in 2015, making farm safety more appealing to adults has emerged as an important undertaking. It’s a real testament to the Manitoba Ag Days’ entire organization that they have been able to so seamlessly incorporate farm safety into an event most farmers attend, at least in some part, for fun. Phillips would strongly encourage other organizations to seek similar ways to become promoters of farm safety. She says it’s up to everyone to talk about implementing safety on farms everywhere in this country. “I think if we aren’t advocates and talk about safety, then we’re not doing ourselves justice,” Phillips urges.

The BeGrainSafe program will be launched by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association at the Keystone Centre in Brandon, Manitoba on January 17th, 2017. Live demonstrations will run on the hour every hour right through until the end of the show on January 19th.

For more information about the BeGrainSafe program, visit casa-acsa.ca/grain.

Cutline MB Ag Days 1: Todd Botterill, an Ag Days Board Member, lost his father in 2009 in a grain entrapment.

Cutline MB Ag Days 2: Grain hazard display at Ag Days in 2016.

Cutline MB Ag Days 3: Ag Days Board Members have decided to make Farm Safety a priority at the show in Brandon. Front row (from left): Sharon Ardron, Kristen Phillips, Andrea Guthrie, Rejean Picard, Roy Arnott, Dustin Williams. Back row (from left): Scott Perkin, Greg Setter, Craig Davidson, Christine Roskos, Ernie Sirski, David Laudin, Todd Botterill, Brad Crammond, Blake Nestibo Missing: Stephanie Cruickshanks and Hannah Minshull.

