



AgSafe Ribbon Campaign Goes National for Canadian Ag Safety Week

*By Amy Petherick for the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association
Word Count:690*

A farm safety awareness campaign with Albertan roots goes national this year in the hopes that a unique ribbon will help remind adults working in agriculture to adopt the safest possible working habits.

Building on last year's Be an AgSafe Family safety week campaign, which aimed to keep kids safe on farms, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) is turning their eye on the safety of primary producers themselves this March. A symbol of the 2017 Appealing to Adults safety week campaign will start popping up on lapels across the country. If they look familiar, it might be because you may have seen a campaign quite like this already... in Alberta.

What have been affectionately called “twibbons” in the past, at least by Kenda Lubeck who is a Farm Safety Coordinator for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, were a creation she and her coworkers came up with back in 2012 to raise awareness about farm safety in the province. “We wanted a visual that would encourage discussions for everybody who has a stake in farm safety, whether it was somebody consuming food or the farmer putting it in the ground, you could identify yourself with the role that you could play in farm safety,” she says, adding, “and we had a pretty good run with it!”

At first, the ribbons were made of actual twine, since it is such a representative emblem for farming, but found it was too difficult to work with. Although the response to the campaign was favourable, Lubeck says that ultimately, the team decided it could only be pushed for so long until interest in them naturally waned. It was a coincidence that they had just started to talk about potentially reviving the initiative again in 2016 when CASA called proposing a national AgSafe Ribbon campaign in celebration of Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW).

“Ag Safety Week is about awareness and education,” says Robin Anderson, CASA’s Communication Coordinator. “The AgSafe Ribbon is another tool we can use to raise awareness about farm safety across Canada.”

CASA is planning on distributing the AgSafe ribbons through supporters of Ag Safety Week. “Sponsors, friends, CASA members are all encouraged to request ribbons to distribute,” says Anderson. “The success of Ag Safety Week depends on these organizations getting the word out about farm safety.”

Individuals are also encouraged to request bundles of ribbons through CASA's website for farm safety associations, agricultural groups, producer organizations, and agribusiness employees. Anderson says the ribbons are for anyone that is involved in the agriculture community and wants to show their support for farm safety.





"Farm safety is important to everyone that wants to see a healthy and thriving agricultural industry," she says. "The ribbon is a declaration that you support Canadian agriculture and want to see all farmers succeed and thrive on the farm, and that includes being safe."

Lubeck says the ribbon was always about helping the industry help itself where safety is concerned. Often they hear great concern from farm owners and operators about the health and safety of their workers or their children, with less concern for their own wellbeing. "But it's not just about the workers being safe," she says, "owners need to lead by example; don't just talk the talk, walk it." Wearing the AgSafe ribbon, like the proverbial string tied on your finger, serves as a reminder that everyone plays a role in ensuring safety is practiced on a farm. "And, sometimes, we just have to celebrate the things that we do right," Lubeck adds.

Anderson agrees, clarifying that even though these ribbons serve as a reminder and conversation starter, this is not a remembrance campaign. "It's a hopeful message, to work towards that ideal where no one is hurt farming," she says.

As the ribbons are released in February and people start to wear them through March, Anderson believes much will be learned from the resulting discussions. "Anybody from your ag equipment rep, to grandmothers, to farmers from British Columbia to Newfoundland, to government representatives, anybody can show their support for farm safety,"

To find out more about the AgSafe Ribbon campaign or to order ribbons, visit agsafetyweek.ca.

Cutline: The AgSafe Ribbon is raising awareness about farm safety across Canada.

