



Building a Safe and Strong Farm for my family

By Bailey Kemery for the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

Word Count: 730

Whether in a city, town or on a farm, raising a family is a challenge no matter where you call home.

When raising a family on a farm, the experience isn't just challenging; it is also incredibly rewarding. But what makes raising kids on a farm so rewarding, is also what makes it the most challenging. That's because raising children on a farm means they grow up where we work.

My husband and I are raising our family on a grain farm in western Saskatchewan. Our farm is located in the heart of a small farming community that is thriving because of the passion of our neighbours and friends. Our community works together to keep our local community centre flourishing, we fundraise for and support programs like the children's playschool, and we never hesitate to help each other through tough times. We are thriving because we work together, building each other up and, in turn, our community.

Raising our children on the farm in this community has many advantages. Our children will learn what it feels like to be part of something bigger than themselves, and they will know the value of hard work and that nothing comes free. They will learn that dedication to something will always yield a return, even if that return is merely the respect of their family and peers. They'll know where our food comes from, as well as how to respect and care for the animals and land entrusted to us. They'll understand challenges and victories. They'll cherish their heritage, including their pioneering grandparents and great-grandparents. I want my children to realize that every choice they make will affect everyone else around them.

When we mix our home and work lives, there can be many unknowns, especially when it comes to concerns about our children and their safety. That's why, at the end of the day, I ask myself, "Are we doing everything we reasonably can to keep our children safe?" I survived a childhood farm injury, and that experience gives me perspective because I never want my children to feel or experience what I did. So, how do we do better? I don't have all the answers, but I do know that I cannot fail my children by being complacent and blinded by frustration.





I know our strength lies in our family. Our family is the reason my husband and I come home at night, and why we strive to be and do better. We are constantly communicating about where we are, what we are doing, and where the kids are. My children are the reason I wear proper footwear, why I wear my seatbelt, and why I try to be a good example. After all, children mimic what they see, and it's my job to make sure they know about the importance of being safe on the farm.

There are days when I worry that I won't be able to protect my children forever. However, I hope that I can give them the courage to ask for help, to ask questions, and to make good choices. I want them to know that my husband and I will always support and encourage them. I want them to understand that when they come to us when something breaks or they see something unsafe that we will help and guide them. Above all, I want them to know that risking their safety is never worth hurt pride or hurt feelings.

Building a Safe and Strong Farm means more to me than just making sure we're using the proper Personal Protective Equipment or running the auto-steer correctly. Safety includes all of these practical things, but it's more than that – safety is also an attitude and a frame of mind.

A Safe and Strong Farm means that my family eats supper together because we've made it home safe. A Safe and Strong Farm means wildly imaginative games played in the living room. A Safe and Strong Farm means my children can lace up their skates. A Safe and Strong Farm means my children will never feel chronic pain and experience a facial disfigurement or struggle with a disability as I did. A Safe and Strong Farm means the continuation and survival of our family farm. A Safe and Strong Farm is something that my family and I choose to build – for ourselves, our community, and our future.

Cutline Kemery1: As a part of a multi-generational farm, the Kemerys grow grain in western Saskatchewan. Photo courtesy of Bailey Kemery.

Cutline Kemery2: Bailey, Tyson and Lila Kemery and their dog Anara. Photo courtesy of Bailey Kemery.

