Children Face Increased Injury Risks in Rural Areas

Safe Kids Kansas provides tips to keep kids safer for National Farm Safety & Health Week

Topeka – Safe Kids Kansas reminds families to make rural injury prevention a top priority during National Farm Safety & Health Week, September 15-21. In Kansas, approximately 165,603 children live in rural areas and these kids are at greater risk of unintentional injury-related death than children living in urban areas.

Whether children are working, playing or simply exploring, the environment on a farm allows a child to be exposed to an array of hazards. On average, a child dies from injuries on a farm once every 3.5 days in the United States. Tractors are the leading cause of those deaths, accounting for approximately 40 percent of unintentional farm injury death of children under age 15. According to a study released in the Journal of Pediatrics in 2012, less than one-third of farm-related injuries in youth from 2001-2006 were not work-related. The report concluded that injury prevention efforts should focus on better supervision of children and making sure children are assigned work that is appropriate to their developmental abilities.

The website www.CultivateSafety.org was developed by the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety to help families to identify hazards, find age-appropriate tasks on the farm for children, and create safe play spaces in a rural setting. The mini-booklet “Create Safe Play Areas on Farms” is available on the website in both English and Spanish.

Safe Kids Kansas recommends parents keep these safety tips in mind:

• Create safe play areas on the farm. Physically separate the space from animals, farm equipment and bodies of water.

• Practice water safety. Children should wear personal flotation devices (lifejackets) while in or near water.

• Tractors, mowers, mini bikes and ATVs that are built to only hold one person should never carry additional passengers of any age. Children under age 16 should never drive or ride ATVs, snowmobiles or tractors.

• Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in every sleeping area and on every level of your home. Test alarms once a month and change the batteries according to manufacturer’s recommendations.

• Ensure kids always wear equestrian helmets when riding a horse or pony. Select horses with child-friendly temperaments and always provide supervision.
• When walking along rural roads, teach kids to walk on the shoulder of the road facing oncoming traffic (the left side) and wear light colored or retroreflective clothing.

• Keep farm chemicals, cleaning agents and other potential poisons locked up and out of reach of children. Post the Poison Control Center’s hotline number, 800-222-1222, near all phones and program it into your cell phone.

• Buckle up everyone, in every vehicle, on every ride. Children must be buckled in an appropriate car or booster seat. Older children and adults should all wear seat belts. Set the example for a life-long, life-saving habit.

• Choose an adult or responsible teen to actively supervise children. Active supervision means keeping children in sight and in reach at all times and giving them your undivided attention. We know this can be challenging, but the best way to prevent an injury is to be aware of what your child is doing.

National Farm Safety & Health Week is a program of the National Safety Council’s National Education Center for Agricultural Safety: www.necasag.org. For more information about child safety, call Safe Kids Kansas at 785-296-0351 or 785-296-1223 or visit www.safekids.org.

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About Safe Kids Kansas
Safe Kids Kansas works to prevent childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability to children. Safe Kids Kansas is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing injuries in children. Coalition members include over 70 statewide organizations, agencies and businesses and a network of local coalitions across the state.

Visit us at www.safekidskansas.org and on Facebook.

This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request. For more information about obtaining an alternative format, you may contact Safe Kids Kansas at 785-296-1223, or csage@kdheks.gov. Both speech/hearing disabled and hearing Kansans can access the Kansas Relay Center by calling toll-free 1-800-766-3777. Callers should inform the relay operator of the number they wish to call and the type of call they are making direct, credit card, collect, person-to-person, etc.