

April 4, 2018

To: Minto Council

From: Marlene Ottens, Wellington County Farm & Home Safety Association

The Wellington County Farm & Home Safety Association is a county-wide group that focuses on safety, not only on the farm but around the home and community as well. The group has representation from most municipalities in Wellington County, farm-related organizations, and safety-oriented groups. We hold safety days throughout the year in various formats, and we occasionally set up an information booth at other events. We have a lot of support from farm businesses.

Last fall, we held a safety day hosted at ESM Farm Equipment in Wallenstein. We had safety booths about large animals, electricity, traffic safety, farm equipment, fire safety, first aid, and more. Children and parents are divided into small groups and rotate through the booths every 20 minutes, receiving all the safety messages. At the end, they receive a swag bag with safety information and giveaways geared towards kids, and we also had an information table for the adults to take whatever they want. We hope to do a similar day this year in the Mount Forest area.

We hold safety days in Mapleton, Minto and Centre Wellington on a school day. All the children in the region in a certain grade (it varies by region, usually Grade 4-6) attend with teachers and parent volunteers. Like our other safety day, they are divided into groups and move from station to station to receive the safety messages and ask questions. We recently held a very successful Pancake Breakfast in Alma with a similar format that attracted about 300 people. We spent two full days at the Drayton Farm Show, talking to hundreds of children and adults, and hold a Breakfast on the Farm in June.

These activities require many volunteer hours and we repeat a lot of the same information! Nonetheless, children and adults continue to be injured on their farms. It's a unique workplace, since it's one of the few where children live on the job and the hazards are present 24/7. There sometimes is a generational attitude that if it worked okay for my dad and grandpa, I don't have to do it differently. We especially focus on the Mennonite community, where there are often many children on one farm and sometimes a more casual attitude towards safety.

These activities also require funds, which the municipalities have generously contributed to each year. We buy giveaway items, such as colouring books, safety information, bookmarks and wristbands. We also sponsor fall fair prizes for safety-oriented posters, and we created a portable miniature farm filled with people doing unsafe things for children to identify - a great conversation starter about safety. We also purchase airtime on local radio stations to advertise upcoming events and we hope to have regular PSAs about seasonal safety, such as "It's springtime, so watch out for farm equipment on the road!"

One other focus is ATV safety, an increasing concern as urban families purchase them for recreation even without land to use them on. It is our desire to see a unified plan from all the municipalities as far as when and where ATVs are allowed to go. Currently there are few guidelines, but lots of confusion. We held an ATV information night at the OPP detachment in Teviotdale two years ago and there was an overflow crowd in attendance. We held a similar event in Puslinch last year, and have another one scheduled for tomorrow evening (April 11) at the Wellington County Museum, Aboyne Room. Most people want to obey the rules, but they need to know what the rules are.

As mentioned, all these events require volunteers and funds. We thank Minto for the \$300 donation and request the full \$500 for 2018. We also request that it be added to the annual budget.