

Child safety is priority, says new farm safety study

February 11, 2009, Regina, Saskatchewan - A new farm safety study says that although most Canadian primary producers believe farm safety is important (83 per cent), very few actually have a formal safety plan in place (15 per cent). Although producers report that safety is important, they may not practise all safety measures regularly.

"Farm Credit Canada partnered with the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) to conduct a study of Canadian producers to find out how safe producers are when working," says Greg Stewart, FCC President and CEO. "We found out what's going well and what could be improved. We also discovered what is preventing producers from implementing safety measures."

"It makes sense that producers say they make the safety of their children their top priority," says Marcel Hacault, Executive Director of CASA. "But we have work ahead of us to convince producers to include their own safety as a priority. We definitely see a gap between intention and action."

What's going well?

Taking precautions for children is the general safety measure most frequently practised (93 per cent). More than eight out of ten respondents state that they practise safe equipment handling (89 per cent), safe livestock handling (85 per cent) and training family members (83 per cent) on a regular basis.

What's not going well?

Only half of the respondents (51 per cent) say that they order additional safety options, such as ladders and monitors. Two-thirds of respondents (66 per cent) report that they regularly work when tired, and only one-third manage stress (32 per cent). Working tired and working under stress increase the chance of injury.

Why is safety important?

Producers explain that safety is a priority on their farms for three key reasons: safekeeping of their family members; the potential for financial loss due to accidents, largely through lost productivity; and the impact of first-hand exposure to farm accidents.

What prevents producers from taking safety measures?

Respondents report that the key barriers to practising safety measures are old habits (35 per cent) and time constraints (31 per cent). In short, producers take shortcuts to get the job done.

"Safe farm operations contribute to the long-term success of Canadian agriculture," says Stewart. "Offering our research expertise to CASA to assist them in creating strategies and programs to help protect producers and their families will contribute to building a safer industry."

The individuals surveyed were members of FCC's Vision Panel. The Vision panel is a national online research panel with more than 9,000 members (primary producers, those involved at all levels of the ag-value system and those whose businesses have a direct association with the agriculture industry). For more information regarding the study findings and CASA, log on to www.casa-acsa.ca or www.fccvision.ca/InAction.aspx.

CASA co-ordinates national agricultural safety initiatives to help farmers, their families and workers recognize and manage risk in the agricultural workplace. CASA's vision, "a Canada where no one is hurt farming".

FCC is Canada's largest provider of business and financial services to farms and agribusiness. Operating out of 100 offices located primarily in rural Canada, FCC employees are passionate about the business of agriculture. A healthy portfolio of more than \$15 billion and 15 consecutive years of portfolio growth are a reflection of our customers' success.

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