



## SESSION 4: SAFE PORTRAYAL OF THE AG INDUSTRY & HOW TO SPOT HARMFUL MESSAGING

### SPEAKERS:

- Marsha Salzwedel, Ed.D, Project Scientist, National Farm Medicine Center
- Sam Goldberg, Film Producer (SILO)

**BRIEF SUMMARY:** This session highlighted how to effectively report on-farm incidents and safety protocols and to gain an understanding of why messaging is key in shifting behaviours and ultimately, creating safer farms.

**Marsha:** Marsha spoke to the unsafe portrayal of various agricultural tasks and the importance of intentional messaging – along with the attitudes of “what does it matter, what difference does it make?” when it comes to making these changes. She explained that when we continually show something unsafe – something as seemingly innocent as children around livestock - we established this as a norm. As research has shown, when we see something repeatedly, we accept it into our understanding as normal. We begin to establish unsafe traditions – and the agricultural industry has many of these traditions. For example, we often see photos of children riding on tractors. Marsha notes that it is important we take the opportunity in media to break those unsafe traditions to cultivate safety. As we know, having children on the worksite is the main causes of injuries and fatalities for youth on farms. A common image shown are young children riding on ATVs and tractors or children around large animals – showing these images perpetuates the belief that it’s OK. But injuries and fatalities due to these behaviours are more common that people realize. She offered a resource for media – do and don’t guidelines to reporting incidents. One example is the use of the phrase “freak accident”; this makes it seem unique and artificially minimizes the risk. When in reality, it was predictable and preventable. The media should also serve as a tool in raising awareness. It is important to help people understand what causes these incidents. If the articles don’t give that information, then people won’t understand what could have been done to prevent them.

**Sam:** Growing up in New York City, Sam explained his journey from having a limited relationship and understanding of the farming community to advocating for farm safety. He was pitched the movie by a film director with an agricultural background and felt the film industry lacked an authentic representation of a rural community. When travelling the U.S and speaking with farmers, Sam quickly realized everyone he met was or knew someone who had been maimed or killed in a farming incident. He later learned that stats show the fishing and agricultural industry is one of the most dangerous sectors to work in North America. As he connected with farmers, the making of the film became, for him, less about telling the story of an underrepresented part of the population and more about raising awareness of farm safety. To achieve this, SILO partnered with various organizations

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across the country, including the Farm Bureau, Cargill, and like-minded safety associations, like CASA. The aim of SILO became to be a tool that unifies and serves as a starting point for difficult conversations. The partnering organizations bring the technical know-how and film brings heart. For the high-school student who is perhaps uninterested in learning about safety to the 60 year old farmer who has always done something a particular way, SILO is meant to be a cautionary tale that draws out the emotion and brings about a change of heart and behaviour. Sam noted that screenings are available. See link below for more information.

**RELEVANT RESOURCES:**

- **Media guidelines, dos and don'ts:** <https://cultivatesafety.org/Resources/>
- **SILO the film, screenings, and resources:** <https://www.casa-acsa.ca/en/begrainsafe/begrainsafe-silo-the-film/>
- **CASA's media guidelines:** [https://www.casa-acsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/CASN-Media-Guidelines-FINAL\\_7-19-10.pdf](https://www.casa-acsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/CASN-Media-Guidelines-FINAL_7-19-10.pdf)
- **Age appropriate tasks – guidelines:** <https://www.casa-acsa.ca/en/resources/ag-youth-work-guidelines/>
- **Toolbox Talks:** <https://www.casa-acsa.ca/en/resources/toolbox-talks/>
- **Be Grain Safe Program:** <https://www.casa-acsa.ca/en/begrainsafe/>
- **Producer Training:** <https://www.casa-acsa.ca/en/begrainsafe/producer-training/>

**MEETING LINKS:**

- **Watch the session recording here:** <https://youtu.be/1Uc3ITsIXaQ>