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Children should learn farm safety practices right off the bat

Former New York Yankee Yogi Berra once said, "You can observe a lot just by watching." He might have been talking about baseball, but the same can be said for farm safety practices.

During Agricultural Safety Awareness Week, March 5th – 11th, Oregon Farm Bureau reminds parents and grandparents how important it is to practice farm safety habits, especially in front of children.

Nolan Ryan, Hall of Fame pitcher, rancher, and Farm Bureau member, joins the effort by asking all farmers, ranchers, and rural communities to make safety a part of their spring training, especially for children.

"It's amazing how much children learn through observation," said Paul Thorp, vegetable grower and chair of the Oregon Farm Bureau Ag Health & Safety Committee. "They look up to their parents and grandparents more than anybody, so it's important to become a safety role model by using a seat belt on your ROPS (rollover-protective-structure) equipped tractor and wearing personal protective gear every day."

The Farm Bureau Safety and Health Network, along with Mr. Ryan, designated "Step Up to the Plate for Farm Safety" as the 2006 theme for Agricultural Safety Awareness Week. The annual observance calls attention to safety as farmers prepare for the year ahead.

Young children often see a farm as a playground filled with animals to pet, things to climb, and places to hide. They lack the knowledge and judgment that can keep adults out of dangerous situations.

"Teaching your kids and grandkids by setting a positive example can make all the difference in preventing injuries," Thorp said. "They need to know that they are valued members of our families and that staying safe is both our job and theirs."

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Editors and news directors: The Ag Safety Now Web site (<http://www.agsafetynow.com>) includes a "Resources for the Media" section where you will find news releases and audio PSAs featuring Ryan, as well as related links.

The Farm Bureau Safety and Health Network is made up of professionals affiliated with state Farm Bureaus who share an interest in identifying and decreasing safety and health risks associated with farming and rural life.

Oregon Farm Bureau is Oregon's largest agricultural advocacy organization. Founded as a statewide voluntary membership organization in 1932 and with county roots dating to 1919, Oregon Farm Bureau today represents over 8,500 Oregon farm and ranch families.

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