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## For Immediate Release

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### Teaching Children to Be Safe on the Internet is Important

*Through Internet safety education, Progressive Agriculture Foundation helps parents and children make the Internet a safer place.*

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Sept. 15, 2011** — In recent years, Internet safety has become a growing concern among parents whose children use and rely on the Internet on a daily basis. Ninety-three percent of teens (ages 12–17) are online on a regular basis. Parents may or may not be familiar with the potential online dangers that children are presented with every day.

It is important to express to your child that the Internet can be a very helpful tool, but can also be very dangerous. Research shows that middle school–aged children are at highest risk for Internet danger, as they're most willing to share personal and private information online with other community members.

“As adults, our childhood experience was much different than that of our ‘digital native’ children. They will experience very harsh and mature content at their fingertips at a very early age. It is our duty as teachers of this generation to start the education process early,” says program specialist Bernard Geschke of the Progressive Agriculture Foundation®, a group that helps rural communities provide safety and health education to children ages 8 to 13.

Here are some things you should explain to your child to ensure that they stay safe online:

- 1) Teach your child that conversations meant to remain personal or private online can quickly become public in the virtual world because it's easy to forward and share them.
- 2) Let your child know that if they come across subject matter that makes them feel uncomfortable, they should talk to a trusted adult about it immediately.
- 3) Teach your children the harm of being bullied and bullying others. One in three children have experienced harassment online. If your child is the target of this behavior, encourage them to not respond and seek help from a trusted adult.
- 4) Review the privacy settings for sites that your children may visit frequently. It's best for parents and children to review these settings together and decide which settings are the best.
- 5) Encourage your child to be a “digital leader” and to not engage in dangerous, hurtful, embarrassing or degrading situations online.

Safety tips such as these are examples of the things children learn when they attend Progressive Agriculture Safety Days<sup>®</sup>, which are held each year in more than 400 local communities throughout North America.

Safety Days are fun, hands-on, one-day events that provide children with education and training that can keep them and those around them safer and healthier on a farm or ranch, and at home. The program explores more than 30 topics, including ATVs, firearms, water/outdoor safety and knife safety. PAF provides the curriculum, coordinator training, take-home bags, T-shirts and other resources to help make the Safety Days a reality. PAF is committed to providing farm and ranch safety and health education to children across rural America in an effort to reduce farm- or ranch-related injuries and death.

### **About Progressive Agriculture Foundation**

The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day program is the largest rural safety and health education program for children in North America and a program of the Progressive Agriculture Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation. The Foundation's mission is to provide education and training to make farm, ranch and rural life safer and healthier for children and their communities. In 2008, PAF was awarded the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance National Charity Seal, demonstrating its commitment to accountability and ethical practices. Safety Day applications are due each July 15 for Safety Days that will be conducted the following calendar year.

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**Editorial Note:** The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day<sup>®</sup> logo and Safety Day photos are available upon request by calling (888) 257-3529.