



For Immediate Release

For more information, please contact:

Jana Davidson
Progressive Agriculture Foundation
(814) 768-7391
jdavidson@progressiveaq.org

Faith Through the Darkness: A Life Lesson in Farm Safety

By: Jana L. Davidson, Education Content Specialist for the Progressive Agriculture Foundation

The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® program was created with one thing in mind.....to keep children safe on farms, ranches and in rural communities. Many in the agriculture industry know someone whose life has been affected by a farm-related injury or death. What is most disturbing is many of these incidents could have been prevented with a few simple safety precautions.



Tammie Stutts has been trying to reach children, mostly fifth graders, in Northeastern Louisiana for more than 20 years, as both a Farm Bureau member and Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® volunteer. Tammie, along with her daughter Blake, have coordinated a total of 21 Progressive Agriculture Safety Days since 1997. When Jacob Ross, a fifth grader in their small community, got severely injured in a farm incident the entire community knew about what had

occurred and were all praying for him. Ross made a remarkable recovery and was in attendance at Tammie's Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® in May of 2011.

According to Stutts, "Anytime you can hear someone's personal story or journey, it is not just a statistic and you change the mindset of this will never happen to me. It adds a personal touch with people you know." The year Jacob was a fifth grader and told his story, it really impacted the youth participants. "The children thought this is someone my age, living the life I live and part of my community," Stutts added.

Stutts initially worked with Jacob's grandma, who was a fifth grade teacher in their community, to help Jacob share the traumatic experience with his peers. He has come back to Tammie's Safety Days a couple more times over the years, helping kids understand how quickly things can go wrong when around farm equipment if not careful. Jacob's story was featured in a calendar produced by Bunge, a 5-star partner of the Progressive Agriculture Foundation, when a participant at Tammie's Safety Day colored a picture depicting what he learned.

As both a mother and farmer, Tammie is keenly aware of the importance of safety on the farm. It was at a Safety Day in 2016 that Tammie heard Amanda, Jacob's mom, share her side of the story. Tammie thought more people needed to hear it. After she reached out to Bernard Geschke, Program Specialist for the Progressive Agriculture Foundation, they found an author willing to help Amanda get her experiences down on paper and into print. The book, *Faith through the Darkness* written by Ryan Curtis, is a riveting story of one mother's struggle to save her son's life. The book was recently released on June 22, 2017 and is available for purchase through Amazon. More on the story can be found at www.ryancurtisbooks.com/books/faith-through-the-darkness

The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® is recognized as the largest rural safety and health education program for children in North America, reaching nearly 1.6 million children and adults since 1995. Application to conduct Progressive Agriculture Safety Days® in your local community are accepted annually on July 15. To apply to host a Safety Day or for more information about the program, visit www.progressiveag.org or call us toll-free at 888-257-3529.

Photo: Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® Coordinator, Tammie Stutts of Louisiana, helped shed light on a local mother's story and heart-wrenching journey when her 10-year-old son was severely injured in a farm incident.

ABOUT PROGRESSIVE AGRICULTURE FOUNDATION

The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day program, the largest rural safety and health education program for children in North America, is a program of the Progressive Agriculture Foundation (PAF), a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation. The foundation's mission is to provide education, training and resources 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. For more information, please visit progressiveag.org.

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

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