

# FARM SAFETY DAY FOR CHILDREN

The Falun Women's Institute recently partnered with their neighboring communities of Lakedell, Pipestone and Usona, west of Wetaskiwin, to provide a project for children aged 6 - 15 years called *Farm Safety Day for Children*. This project was implemented by these co-operative groups who felt that there is a strong responsibility and need to educate youngsters in all aspects of farm safety. Applications were sent out with the youths of the area's local schools, and one hundred children were accepted into the project's inaugural session.

"The children were divided into groups of 10, according to age," said Joyce Sjogren, spokesperson for the Falun Women's Institute. "Each group was supervised by a team leader, who remained with the youngsters throughout the day. For easy identification, the leaders and their 10 children wore color-coded name tags."

Ten sponsors from the area volunteered time and equipment to give hands-on demonstrations and talks. The areas covered were safety tips on bicycle and gun safety sponsored by the

RCMP; the details on safety checks on the farm, and what to do in an emergency sponsored by the fire department; basic first aid and how to access the 911 number properly with the EMS; hazards relating to power take-offs and grain augers, demonstrated by an equipment company; proper handling and wearing apparel for all terrain vehicles and snow mobiles was discussed; hazards and injuries caused by lawn and garden tractors was represented; health sponsors demonstrated dug-out and slough safety, thin ice and sun protection; chemical safety dos and don'ts, and animal diseases and the importance of staying out of harms way by a local veterinarian. An electrical station volunteer told his own story and corroborated it with a visible injury, making an impressionable impact on both the children and adults.

Solomon Kyeremanteng, head of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Farm Safety Program, watched and learned himself from the individual safety demonstrators of the program.

"At the end of the day, all the children received a special certificate, a goodie bag, and a good-sized stake with a warning sign (attached to it) for water hazards," added Sjogren. "The mother of one six-year-old, said her daughter laid down the law to her mother saying, "One seat, one person, Mom." She was relating to lawn mowers and tractors. Another wouldn't let his parents rest until the water hazard stake had been placed at a swollen creek near his home. In a lot of homes on the night after the course, the table talk was sure to be on what transpired during the day, and especially on the volunteer who lost his legs in an electrical accident."

Pat Netzer, Charlotte Stange, and Joyce Sjogren were instrumental in making this project happen, and have already committed to administering the program again next year with the help of the communities, their sponsors, team leaders and the many volunteers. If you or your community group is interested in finding out more about this pilot project, please contact Joyce Sjogren at (780) 352-7408.