

Death of Norton County teen highlights safety risk associated with farming



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SEDGWICK COUNTY, Kan. The death of a Norton High School student this week marked the fourth deadly farming accident this year in Kansas and statistically, farming remains one of the most dangerous professions in the U.S.

Although officials haven't released many details in Monday's death of Norton High School sophomore, Thunder Linner, the Norton County sheriff says the teen died using farming equipment.

Statistics from Kansas State University Research and Extension show that nationwide, more than 700 farmers die in accidents every year and more than 100 children die in farm-related accidents.

There are teams out there not just to educate farmers on how to stay safe, but also to train on how to rescue them when needed.

Guillermo Jaso with the Sedgwick County Fire Department says most accidents involve equipment. He's part of the team train to respond to farming accidents when they happen.

The team also spends a lot of time trying to prevent farming accidents in the first place. Jaso says the most common accident when it comes to farming involves grain elevators. Last year two people died in a grain elevator accident in Sedgwick County. Jaso says it's important to use a buddy system when you're in a grain elevator so that if something does go wrong, someone is there to call for help.

Other common accidents include becoming trapped in moving parts like an auger that moves grain or power equipment. Jaso says keeping clothing and hair away from the moving parts is important.

In Kansas where many teens work on family farms, Jaso says it's important to always be talking with children about safety and to start as early as possible.

"Kids in our rural areas of our state are exposed to that type of machinery all the time, whether they want to or not," Jaso says. "At some point of their life, they're going to be around it and they should know how to act around that equipment."

Resources are available to speak with your children about safety when it comes to working with machinery or agricultural equipment. Among those resources is the Kansas Farm Bureau

Next month the Sedgwick County Extension Office will hold a tractor safety workshop for 14 and 15-year-olds who do farm work. You can find information about the workshop on the extension office

Sedgwick County Extension Office website.