

Three youths who attended the June 13 Progressive Agriculture Safety Day in Imperial also won essay contests as part of the activities.

A panel of three judges selected the following winners—Ashley Bubak, age 6-8 division; Caleb Bubak, age 8-11; and Elizabeth Tomky, age 12-14.

Each of the writers won a DVD player and 4-H T-shirt, said co-coordinator Chris Tomky.

The contest was held prior to the Safety Day activities and winners were announced at the June 13 event, Tomky said.

Below are the winning essays reprinted.

Living safe and growing strong

By Ashley Bubak

Age 6-8 winner

I love being a farm girl! Safety is very important on a farm. I want to grow up to be a big, strong farm girl so I need to follow all the safety rules.

We raise cattle on our farm. I like to feed my little heifer and I have to be careful not to get kicked. I help mom and dad brand cattle. I have to be careful not to get ran over by the big steers.

We all show calves at the fair. When we are working with our calves at home, we cannot scream around them. We cannot make quick movements around them either. You need to give them their space when you walk behind them.

The majority of beef cattle accidents occur while the victim is handling the livestock. One thing to remember is to work in pairs whenever possible. Cows with calves are another safety concern. First calf heifers are especially dangerous because you have no way of knowing how she will react to motherhood.

I plan on working around cattle my whole life. I just need to remember all the safety rules that I've learned.

Living safe and growing strong

By Caleb Bubak

Age 9-11 winner

I live on a farm where we use lots of things that require a power take-off to run them. Some of the things that require a pto are a roller mill, auger and a tractor mower. I use a mower during the summer that uses a pto. Sometimes on the weekends when we are grinding high moisture corn, I help my dad run the roller mill because he has to run the tractor pushing the corn. I also help run the auger.

Working around a pto or any moving piece of equipment can be dangerous. There are many safety precautions to be aware of when working on the farm. When you are running a roller mill or auger you have to be very alert. First you have to be careful of the moving pto shaft. You can't wear baggy pants or things with strings hanging on them or the auger will catch them and pull you in. Once the auger gets a string or a piece of your clothing, it will pull you in. It is going so fast that you can't do anything about it. It will cause major injuries or even death. Don't stick anything into the auger or it will get chopped up or even cut off. A good safety precaution is to put wire guards over the augers.

Mowers are dangerous, too. You have to be careful of the sharp blades. You have to be careful where you are driving because if you run over something like a rock it will fly. I learned to be careful where you drive the hard way. If you run over string, it gets stuck in the blades and you will be digging it out for hours. That is how I'm safe on the farm.

Large animal safety

By Elizabeth Tomky

Age 12-14 winner

Horses, steers, bulls and heifers can be really dangerous animals. These animals can either break bones in your body or even paralyze you. Most ranch children and adults get hurt around these animals because they are careless. Safety is something everyone needs, so no one gets hurt.

All animals have blind spots. These areas are specifically around the butt area and that's where an animal can't see you. When the animal knows your present but can't see you, they can panic and start kicking. If anybody is in the wrong place anyone could get kicked or trampled over.

If trying to lead a steer and you have no idea how to handle it, I wouldn't go too far. Handling large animals takes muscle. Large animals can get away from anyone very fast. If someone's handling a steer I hope they have a halter and a hard grip. The animals can be jumpy and hard to hang onto. If someone loses control of an animal that they haven't handled before, that person could get hurt badly from them. The animals could trample someone and do much harm or even harm others near you or other people trying to gain control of the loose animal. Be careful when handling those big animals.

Animals are fun to be around, but being safe is a "HAVE TO" around them. I try to be safe and give the animals their space when they need it. I don't want to be the one who is careless and then gets killed, hurt badly or paralyzed. I want to be the one who helps others with safety and be the one to survive without a scratch.