



The Future Structure of Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention: First the Blueprint

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

The Future Structure of Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention: First the Blueprint

This issue of the *Journal of Agromedicine* is dedicated to presenting a collection of papers that will update a national action plan for childhood agricultural injury prevention in the United States. This collection of work was assembled from authors, the majority of whom are the truly seasoned researchers and policy experts active today in the area of childhood agricultural health and safety. In many instances, a paper you hold in your hands represents the culmination of a career's worth of accumulated knowledge on the subject. We expect these documents to have a profound influence on the future of policy and research on childhood agricultural health and safety. The 2012 plan, known as the "Blueprint for Protecting Children in Agriculture," builds upon previous work and sets the stage for people from across disciplines, regions, and perspectives to continue to move forward toward a common goal of safeguarding children in agricultural settings.

For nearly 25 years there has been an organized, national (US) approach for minimizing the toll of childhood injuries and deaths associated with agriculture. As the public became aware of the cumulative effect of seemingly random traumatic injuries and deaths of children in a dangerous work setting, there was a call for action that galvanized the commitment and vision of many stakeholders. In 1992, the first national symposium on this topic was convened to try to understand the causes and effects of

childhood agricultural injuries from many different perspectives. Participants included farm parents, public health officials, farm news reporters, pediatricians, sociologists, educators, and others. Together, they assembled the first body of knowledge on the scope of the problem and potential strategies for safeguarding children.

Over the next few years, many of these same individuals agreed to develop a national strategy with priorities to move forward with a united vision. This led to the 1996 National Action Plan for Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention. With endorsements from 80 national organizations—representing agriculture, health care, and farmworkers—the action plan was endorsed by the US Congress and leadership was assumed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Since 1997, NIOSH has facilitated data collection, communications across federal agencies, research studies, and assessment of progress. Although NIOSH and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded portions of the work reported in this issue's papers, private sector support for this initiative was substantial. Several millions of corporate dollars are given each year to support community-based safety programs. The spectrum of activities addressing farm safety for children since the 1990s is expansive and does not appear to be diminishing anytime soon.

By 2001, it was important to assess the status of the action plan and, if needed, re-set priorities. By this time, it became known that nonworking children were suffering more than half of the pediatric injuries on farms. Other assessments revealed that many farm owners and parents were not being reached with information intended to modify work assignments for youth and to eliminate unsafe, yet traditional, practices. Thus, in 2001 new priorities were set with an updated action plan.

Now, a decade later, many of the same committed individuals have been joined by newcomers to take a fresh look at the goals and strategies first proposed in 1996. The 2012 Blueprint for Protecting Children in Agriculture will be a detailed narrative description of an updated National Action Plan. The fully illustrated and referenced document is scheduled to be published by the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety (NIOSH-funded) and issued in April of 2012. The seven goals and related strategies of the Blueprint are built upon the background papers and their respective recommendations that you

will read about here. To set the stage, we have included a Foreword by the three people who have worked full-time, tirelessly in their respective organizations—Marilyn Adams of Farm Safety 4 Just Kids, Barbara C. Lee of the National Children's Center, and Susan J. Reynolds of Progressive Agriculture Foundation. These three women and their organizations have been the "face" of farm safety for children in the public and private sectors. Their comments are followed by the Executive Summary of the 2012 Blueprint, which is expected to set the course for our country for the next decade.

We hope you find this dedicated issue to be insightful and helpful in your own work. We know the authors will welcome your feedback and perspectives. We encourage you to cross-reference this issue with the full 2012 Blueprint document, which will be available in print and online soon.

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