# News Release

**Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission of New Brunswick**

## WHSCC HOSTS FIRST EVER ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PROGRESSIVE AGRICULTURE SAFETY DAYS™ IN ATLANTIC CANADA, SEPTEMBER 10 & 11

**Saint John, NB:** The Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission, in partnership with Potatoes New Brunswick, is excited to host for the first time ever east of Ontario Progressive Agriculture Safety Days™ for English-speaking students. On June 1, a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day™ was held at École Grande Rivière in St-Léonard for French-speaking students. Part of an international program, these one-day safety events provide fun, age-appropriate, and hands-on training to children to keep them safe not only on the farm, but at school, at home, on the road and near the water.

"From 1998-2005, 11 young New Brunswickers died on the job – that's simply unacceptable," said Lise Malenfant, assistant regional director for the WHSCC's northwest region. "To reduce not only fatalities but all workplace injuries to zero, it's critical that we instill a strong health and safety ethic early on – one we hope our youth will maintain throughout their working lives," Malenfant said.

Potato harvesting is a high-risk activity that employs many young workers, who are the sector at highest risk for workplace injuries. Because of this, the WHSCC has worked closely with the industry to develop and deliver customized safety awareness sessions to approximately 1,000 students in the northwest region in the last three years. The WHSCC and Potatoes New Brunswick have co-sponsored these Progressive Agriculture Safety Days™ to enhance this safety education.

"We're very excited to host this event for our youth. It's the first year this highly successful program has been presented east of Ontario, and we're proud to be involved," said Angela Acott-Smith, WHSCC education consultant and Safety Day co-ordinator.

Children are divided into small groups supervised by an adult or older teen leader, who help them rotate through various stations where topics such as railroad safety, firearm safety, ATV safety, fire safety, animal safety, and sun and water safety, in addition to tractor and equipment safety, are taught. The full-day events will be held in Florenceville September 10 and 11, with 11 schools in District 14 participating. More than 500 students are expected to attend.

"The presentations and demonstrations are dynamic and encourage participation. And when children have an active role in the learning process, they are more likely to retain the information," Acott-Smith said.

"And it seems to be working. Research done by the University of Alabama Institute for Social Sciences shows a significant increase in knowledge and safe behaviours for Safety Day participants on the three-month and one-year follow-up interviews in comparison to pre-test responses. Furthermore, three months after the camp, half the parents report safety-related changes in their child's behaviour," she said.

The data also indicate that indirect benefits include enhanced safety awareness of the wider community as children and adult volunteers share the information they learned, as well as enhanced community strength and cohesiveness resulting from the co-operation of many individuals and organizations in achieving a common goal.

For more information on the Progressive Agriculture Safety Day™ program, visit www.progressiveag.org.

For information on the Progressive Agriculture Safety Days in Florenceville, call Angela Acott-Smith at 506 475-2587.

**ABOUT THE WHSCC**
The WHSCC administers no-fault workplace accident and disability insurance for employers and their workers, funded solely through assessments on employers. The WHSCC is committed to preventing workplace injuries and illnesses through education and the enforcement of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.