

★ PROTECTING AMERICAN LIVES ★

Making The Agriculture Industry Safer For Everyone

(NAPSA)—Agriculture continues to be a cornerstone of the U.S. economy and fabric of our society. Many Americans associate the phrase “amber waves of grain” from “America the Beautiful” with strength, freedom, beauty and independence.

However, the wholesome image of farming doesn't always take into account the hazards that accompany this occupation. Even though agriculture has made safety advances over the last several years, it continues to be a dangerous way to make a living. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), agriculture is the country's most hazardous occupation.

Many members of the industry are making great strides that are setting new standards in agricultural safety. One example is St. Louis-based Monsanto Company, which came to the agricultural industry from the scientific research and traditional manufacturing arena—both environments where pioneering safety work was developed.

To improve safety in agriculture, Monsanto has applied the safety values from its research and agricultural chemical businesses to its seed business. This has helped employees lead a global renaissance in agricultural safety, reducing injury and illness rates in that segment of the company's business by more than 85 percent since 1998.

“Safety is the first thing on everyone's mind in the manufacturing world, but that hasn't always been the case in agriculture,” said Emer O'Broin, vice



Agriculture may be America's most hazardous occupation, but it's getting safer.

president, environmental safety and health. “We're leading the transformation of safety in ag by establishing a safety culture that we believe can make a difference across the industry.”

One example of the company's dedication to workplace safety is its active participation in the OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program. This program awards a “Star” recognition to work sites that have implemented comprehensive, successful safety and health systems and have achieved injury/illness rates below their industry's national average. Seventy-two of Monsanto's sites have been Star certified since the program began in 1979.

In addition, the company has changed the way its employees think about safety outside the workplace. A vehicle safety program was launched in 2002 to reduce the safety risks that employees encounter on the road. Since then, vehicular accidents

have been reduced by approximately 60 percent—from nine accidents for every million miles driven in 2002 to less than four in 2003.

Monsanto is also bringing vehicle safety training to employee families, industry groups and community members. A teen driver program for children of employees has been launched, and the vehicle safety team developed an outreach version of the training program on CD-ROM. In addition, members of the team have acted as consultants for more than 20 other organizations that are developing their own driving programs.

Reaching out to the communities where it does business takes the company's safety message to its customers and others. For instance, Farm Safety 4 Just Kids (FS4JK) is a program that makes a difference in the lives of farm families by teaching rural children about safety. The company began collaborating with FS4JK in 2001. Since then, it has provided grants totaling tens of thousands of dollars to FS4JK, and the partnership has developed educational outreach programs for children and teens, and held safety events at seed sites in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Missouri.

Through efforts like these, companies are looking to bring a new mind set to agriculture and, in the process, help this vital industry become safer.

“Agriculture is central to the American economy and way of life, and we are active participants in the effort to ensure that the American farmer is safe and prosperous for years to come,” O'Broin said.