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Kentucky Partnership for Farm Family Health & Safety

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The Kentucky Partnership for Farm Family Health and Safety

***Linking farm women, their families, and their communities together
for health and safety on the farm.***

★ **WHAT IS THE KENTUCKY PARTNERSHIP FOR FARM FAMILY HEALTH AND SAFETY?**

- ☛ The Kentucky Partnership is a new community coalition in Warren County focused on improving the health and safety of Kentucky's farm families.
- ☛ Through the Partnership, farm women will take the lead as they work with friends, families, and local businesses and organizations to build a community partnership for farm family health and safety.
- ☛ Farm women — the experts on their families' health — will identify risks on their farms, provide support to other farm women, and create innovative solutions to the hazards that their families face daily on the farm.
- ☛ The first Chapter is beginning in Warren County, where farm women are developing local action plans to reduce risks to their families' health and safety on farms.

★ **WE *NEED* THE KENTUCKY PARTNERSHIP.**

- ☛ Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in Kentucky and the nation.
- ☛ There are more deaths and injuries to men, women, and children in farming than in mining.
- ☛ Through the Kentucky Partnership, farm women are taking action to protect their families.

★ **WE NEED *YOU* IN THE KENTUCKY PARTNERSHIP.**

- ☛ ***Read on for exciting details!***

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I am Susan Jones and I hope you had a wonderful time with friends and family this holiday season. With a new year beginning, I would like to tell you about an exciting new program that farm women have begun in Warren County — *The Kentucky Partnership for Farm Family Health and Safety!*

The Kentucky Partnership is founded on two things that just about all women share — the special quality of their friendships with other women and their role in taking care of their families' health.

You know, the friendships among women are very special. Through these friendships, we share stories of our families, support each other in times of need, celebrate each other's joys, and, yes, we even gossip with each other once in a while.

But for too many farm women today, stories among friends are stories of grief — tractors rolling over and crushing husbands and children, fingers and arms mutilated from unguarded machinery, breathing problems caused by inhaling toxic substances for years. The friendships among farm women are strong enough to provide the needed shoulder during these stories of grief. Now, through the Kentucky Partnership, *the friendships among farm women are strong enough to take action to eliminate the hazards on their farms that lead to these stories of grief.*

COMMUNITY COORDINATORS. The Kentucky Partnership will grow from a small beginning of 12 farm women in communities throughout Warren County. These women are dedicated volunteers. They are farm women with the characteristics of community spark-plugs — women with that spark of enthusiasm and drive that will create and grow the Kentucky Partnership. For now, we're calling these farm women *Community Coordinators*.

This small group of farm women will meet together for the first time in early February and then monthly. At these

meetings, they will establish goals for the Kentucky Partnership and identify health and safety issues that they want to work on. They will write local action plans to begin building community coalitions for farm family health and safety.

THE STRENGTH OF WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIPS.

After each meeting, each Community Coordinator will take her ideas and plans back to her community. She will talk with her farm-women friends — her daughters, women on neighboring farms, farm women in her Sunday school class. Maybe she will talk with only four or five friends about farm family health and safety. But these friends then talk with their friends, and their friends talk with four or five more friends.

Imagine . . . farm women talking with a few of their friends over coffee about their families' health and safety. Those friends talking with other friends, who talk with still more friends! *The strength of women's friendships will be brought together to act on the sources of grief — hazards to their families on their farms.*

WHAT FARM WOMEN WILL DO. In the Kentucky Partnership, all farm women will be able to identify the health and safety issues they want to address on their farms. With the help of people from Western Kentucky University, the University of Kentucky, and the Cooperative Extension Service, farm women will produce a farm-safety video, a discussion manual, and a worksheet that women can take to their farms to evaluate hazards to their families.

Farm women will be able to use video cameras and a portable video Walkman to record and view videos of their own farms. They can use these tapes to talk with their families and with other farm women about steps they can take to reduce risks to their families' health and safety. They may send the videos to the Farm Safety Specialist with Cooperative Extension, who will make color prints of hazards and make suggestions on how

to minimize the risks. They will also be able to use an instrument that they can take to their farms to measure the noise from farming activities and equipment.

All of these things — the discussion course, the video cameras, and the noise-measuring instrument — are ways that farm women in the Kentucky Partnership will be able to collect their *own* information to plan their actions to reduce hazards and risks to their families.

A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP. A successful Kentucky Partnership depends on building *local* partnerships between farm families and their communities. In Warren County, there are many community organizations and businesses that are affected every time someone is injured or dies from a farm hazard. Farm family health and safety is not just a problem for farm families — *it is a community problem!* We know that many community organizations — churches, Farm Bureau, Southern States, farm-equipment dealers, Chambers of Commerce, insurance companies — will join farm women in the Kentucky Partnership. Local partnerships — acting with a *sense of community* — can reduce hazards to farm family health and safety.

HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS. Local health-care providers will be a part of the Kentucky Partnership. Physicians, nurses, and others need to know more about agricultural health and safety and they need to be sensitive to these issues from the perspective of farm women. Health-care providers will reinforce and encourage farm women's increasing action on agricultural health and safety issues. Farm women will help the Southcentral Kentucky Area Health Education Center develop a continuing education program for physicians, nurses, and emergency response personnel in Warren County.

FARM MEN AND OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS. And we have not forgotten about farm men and community members who do not farm. As neighbor talks with neighbor, as

wife talks with husband, as farm women talk with each other, farm men and many other community residents will be brought into the Kentucky Partnership. Then, we will truly have a *community partnership* for farm family health and safety.

THE FUTURE. These are some of the highlights of the Kentucky Partnership for Farm Family Health and Safety. Many of the details cannot be described right now, because they depend so much on farm women themselves. The women of the Kentucky Partnership will develop the program to meet the needs of their families, neighbors, and communities. You will receive a newsletter every other month to share the growing strength and successes of the Warren County Chapter of the Kentucky Partnership.

And now, a word about me. I am the full-time Regional Coordinator for the Kentucky Partnership for the next three years. I am a Registered Nurse, an Associate Professor in the Department of Nursing at WKU, and past-President of the Kentucky Board of Nursing. My husband, Gordon, is a Professor of Agriculture at WKU and a swine producer. I am the mother of two children.

In the March newsletter, we'll introduce the Community Coordinators and tell you about their February meeting. We'll describe the levels of membership and the benefits to be had from joining the Kentucky Partnership. We'll also describe a contest for children to design a logo for the Kentucky Partnership.

Please, join us in this exciting new program. Farm women and men, businesses and community organizations, Warren County residents — call or write me as soon as possible at the phone number and address on the back page. The Community Coordinator for your area will call you in February. Together, we can begin to take action on our farms to end farm families' stories of grief.

The Kentucky Partnership for Farm Family Health and Safety is partially funded for three years through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan.