



Stay Safe, Take A Break Bags from Washington County

General Description: This project targets farmers/farm families in the fall during the busy and long hours of the harvest season. The 4-H County Council youth select, purchase, collect and deliver bags full of goodies that can help promote safety to farmers. Combined, all of the items encourage general farm safety, however, the special one on one delivery of these bags to farmers in the fields while they are working is what makes the project unique. It gives the farmers five minutes to stop, stretch, have a snack, talk to young people and then take the bags for long term safety as well. The bags often sit in their combine as a reminder to be safe. It's been a great time for our 4-Hers to get to know their neighbors and people they pass on the roads many times but don't actually ever really talk to.

Timeline:

- **August:** Send letters to agri-businesses county-wide who would have an interest in our farmers being safe explaining the project and levels of giving. Options for them include:
 - Donate cash directly to the project and then we purchase safety items for the bags
 - Donate safety items they purchase independently
 - As a sponsor of a certain value they also can put in items with their business logo. Some donate koozies, pens, gloves, note pads, business cards, etc.
 - Our project has grown in size immensely. We started with little brown gift bags and now give the reusable bags that many businesses have also wanted to donate with their logo on the outside.
- **September:**
 - **Shop:** based on the sponsor dollars available we shop for safety items. We have found that shopping at our local Ace N More store has given us the best deals. They have matched any price we've found in safety magazines and even done better sometimes. We select a variety of items but neutral enough that almost all farmers will be able to make use of them. We have gotten requests from farmers in the past that we take into consideration. Sometimes they don't seem like safety items (like a sharpie marker) but then when they write chemical labels etc – it really is for safety. We also put a few safety brochures or handouts from Extension resources and/or promotion of safety meetings we have scheduled. Items for the bags may include ear plugs, slow moving signs, chap stick, equipment flashers, flashlights, dust masks, goggles, protective gloves, reflector tape, bandaids, sunscreen, hitch pins, and hand warmers. The bags are recycled shopping bag styles and are donated by local sponsors. Farmers VERY MUCH enjoy the small treats too. We have tried to include healthy treats but small candy bars are always a favorite!
 - **Pack:** Based on the number of items you are putting in the bags, it can take a huge amount of space to set up the assembly line of packing the bags. Our county council of 25 normally does this at their September meeting.
- **October or during the heavy harvest time:** deliver the bags. What is unique about this project is that they youth deliver to farmers as they see them working in the fields. County Council divides the county up in several sections and then each small group claims a section. They are in charge of travelling those roads on the look out for farmers in action. We prep the kids ahead of time about safety in approaching farm vehicles, using field entrances, etc. The farmers are always very excited for this free gift.