

**Nero & Ashcan  
on the farm**

**FARM & FIRE SAFETY  
FOR CHILDREN  
AGED 9-13**

**LESSON  
PLAN**

**An education program developed in partnership by:**

- **Imperial Oil Canada Limited**
- **Manitoba Labour Office of the Fire Commissioner**
- **Manitoba Labour Workplace Safety and Health**

# **Nero & Ashcan Fire & Farm Safety Program**

This lesson plan accompanies a kit for the instruction of children aged 9-13. The complete kit includes:

- A five-minute video, **Nero and Ashcan on the Farm**
- A supply of comic books with the same title
- A two-sided activity poster for classroom use, with stick-on labels.

## **Requirements**

- **TIME:** about 40 minutes
- **EQUIPMENT:** A VCR and monitor; an easel or cork board for hanging the activity poster.

## **Learning outcomes**

- Children will learn specific strategies for safety in three areas: around farm machinery, in a chemical storage shed, and in grain storage.
- Children will learn, in a class activity, to recognize 22 safety and fire prevention “don’ts” in everyday farm work.
- Children will learn, in a class activity, about the proper placement of fire extinguishers around the farm.
- Children will learn that they can take a role in safe farming by observing safety rules, by taking precautions, and by influencing adults.

## **Background**

Farm safety is a vital concern. Each year, dozens of people are fatally injured on Canadian farms. Hundreds more are disabled, and thousands of other injuries require hospitalization.

Many farm children have first-hand knowledge of a relative, family friend or neighbour who has suffered from fire, injury or occupational disease. The men and women (and sometimes children) at work on Canadian farms are in the highest risk categories, with rates of injury comparable to police and rates of occupational disease comparable to miners.

Many farm injuries and deaths are related to fire. Others are caused by exposed machinery, livestock, chemicals and other hazards. Farmers often work arduous hours in hazardous situations with little formal training in safety procedures. To meet the need in peak workload periods, it is sometimes necessary to recruit casual workers or family members to do jobs for which they are only briefly trained.

## **Children at risk**

One disturbing phenomenon in farm injuries and fatalities is the incidence of children who are victims. Undersized and undertrained, they can be highly vulnerable.

## **Audience tips**

Children 9-13 are already becoming involved in farm work, using machinery and helping out with chores. As a result, they are keenly interested in the right way to do things and they are responsive to safety information.

## **ACTIVITY ONE.**

Show five-minute video **Nero and Ashcan on the Farm.**

### **Teaching points:**

There are three principle episodes in the video. One concerns children using farm machinery; another concerns proper storage, labelling and handling of farm chemicals; and the third concerns fire prevention and proper grain handling and storage.

## **ACTIVITY TWO**

Discuss the first story: Nero's encounter with the dream tractor.

### **Teaching points:**

Ask the children to recall episodes in the story. Ask the children to give their opinions of the way different characters acted in the story. Ask if they have ever encountered similar hazards on a farm. Encourage discussion of who is responsible and what could be done to prevent the hazards shown.

## **ACTIVITY THREE**

Discuss the second story: hide and seek in the chemical shed.

### **Teaching Points:**

Ask the children to recall episodes in the story. Ask the children to give their opinions of the way different characters acted in the story. Ask if they have ever encountered similar hazards on a farm. Encourage discussion of who is responsible and what could be done to prevent the hazards shown.

## **ACTIVITY FOUR**

Discuss the third story: the 'ghost' in the grain bin.

### **Teaching points:**

Ask the children to recall episodes in the story. Ask the children to give their opinions of the way different characters acted in the story. Ask if they have ever encountered similar hazards on a farm. Encourage discussion of who is responsible and what could be done to prevent the hazards shown.

## **ACTIVITY FIVE**

Ask the children what they can do about farm and fire safety.

### **Teaching Points:**

Do they have any responsibility when they see situations where safety is a concern? Are they ever able to make it safer, to prevent a fire? Or is it all a matter for adults to worry about?

## **ACTIVITY SIX--Positioning the fire power**

**Display** the poster to show the side titled 'The Extinguisher'. Call for suggestions on how to guard the farm against fire by setting up extinguishers. **Ask** the children to tell you where the extinguishers should go. Mark in their suggestions on the wall chart using the Avery labels supplied. **Challenge** the children to find six places where an extinguisher must be positioned. **Develop** a discussion of the principle places which should always have a fire extinguisher.

### **Teaching Points:**

There are generally three areas where extinguishers should be placed: nearby any refuelling installation, at the entrance to every farm building (installed so anyone can reach it and never where obstacles will be put in front of it), and on every tractor and self-propelled machine (e.g. swather, combine). Explain why every farm should have extinguishers in these positions. Suggest that the children check out their own farms for extinguishers in these areas.

## **ACTIVITY SEVEN: Check It Out!**

**Display** the side of the poster titled 'Check it out'. **Ask** the children to make suggestions on what might be the dangerous practices or situations visible in the picture. **Challenge** the children to identify 22 'wrongs' in the picture. **Conduct** a discussion of whether any of these examples of carelessness ever occur on the farms known to the children. Which ones? Why do they think people do these unsafe things? What can children do about it? **Suggest** that the same 'what's wrong here?' game might be fun for family members.

### **Teaching Points:**

The hazards in the drawing are listed on the next page. Discuss as many of the hazards as you wish, depending on the time available

## **ACTIVITY EIGHT**

**Distribute** the comic book. Draw students' attention to the activity pages, particularly 'The Extinguisher' and 'Check it out'. **Suggest** they test their families.

### **Teaching Point:**

Children can be very influential in motivating their parents and other adults to be safety-conscious.

## **Answers to Check It Out!**

1. The tractor is going too fast.
2. The tractor driver is not watching where he is going.
3. A boy is riding on the tractor fender.
4. A man is smoking near gasoline tanks.
5. The loader bucket is up, not down, during refuelling.
6. A child is playing alone near open water.
7. Chemical containers are left to drain and contaminate surface water.
8. A man is spilling chemicals into a sprayer tank without a funnel.
9. The same man is handling chemicals without wearing protective gear.
10. A man is lifting bales with his legs straight, putting all the strain on his back.
11. The power takeoff is not shielded.
12. A man is working too close to the power takeoff.
13. The same man is wearing long clothing near exposed machinery.
14. A child is riding the bale elevator.
15. Machinery is set close to power wires.
16. A man on the barn is dropping boards.
17. The ladder is set too steeply.
18. Rungs are broken on the ladder.
19. A man is climbing with both hands full.
20. A lightning rod ground wire is broken.
21. The bull is on a loose lead.
22. A small child is leading the bull.