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## **Youth grain handling safety resources more important than ever**

The recent death of a 16-year-old South Dakota boy in a grain bin incident is a grim reminder of the hazards of grain handling.

“Tragedies like this motivate safety people to work even harder,” said Marsha Salzwedel, M.S., Agricultural Youth Safety Specialist with the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, part of Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation, Marshfield, Wis.

On the same day that Salzwedel presented a grain handling safety talk in Indianapolis during the National FFA Convention, Taylor Watzel, an FFA student from Winner, S.D., became trapped in a grain bin. He died from his injuries the next day, Oct. 19.

“If we can get people to use these resources, we can prevent incidents like the one with Taylor from happening in the future,” Salzwedel added. The resources highlighted in her talk are available at <https://www.marshfieldresearch.org/nccrahs/grainsafety>.

Salzwedel shared information about youth agricultural work guidelines, as well as the curriculum she developed with the Grain Handling Safety Coalition, during a general session of the National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education, held in conjunction with the FFA Convention.

“The work guidelines can be used in supervised agricultural experiences or by anyone supervising young workers to determine if a youth is able to perform a job safely,” Salzwedel said. “When working with grain, adding the curriculum enhances youth safety. We want to educate youth about flowing grain hazards, but we also want the adults supervising the youth to make sure the young people are doing age appropriate work.”

Salzwedel and Education Outreach Specialist Tammy Ellis staffed the National Farm Medicine Center exhibit at the convention, where they engaged more than 2,700 students and FFA advisers, discussing safety resources and strategies that prevent agricultural injuries and fatalities.

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