



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
KENOSHA COUNTY

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Kenosha/Racine/Walworth Youth Tractor Safety Program marks another successful year

An annual program that teaches teens how to safely operate farm equipment recently wrapped up for 2020, graduating 19 local youth ages 12 to 15.

The Kenosha/Racine/Walworth Youth Tractor Safety Program covers the fundamentals of farm safety, including safe tractor and machinery operation, fire safety, first aid, and best practices for safely driving tractors on public highways.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension coordinates the program in partnership with CNH Industrial, which provides tractors and driving instruction. Support is also provided by Burlington High School, the University of Wisconsin Division of Extension and Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties.

This year's program was modified in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with online learning added to the curriculum and social distancing emphasized at in-person events, said Extension Agriculture Educator Leigh Presley. The program culminated July 8-10, with in-person driving and testing at Burlington High School.

“This year's program was pretty unique — we had to make a lot of changes in order to make it all work,” Presley said. “After eight hours of online classroom instruction, we were able to bring

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small groups together to get them some time on the tractors, which is an important part of the program.

“We always have some participants who have never driven a tractor, so it’s really cool to watch them take their first lap around the driving course — we even had some parents watching at a distance and recording their kids as they drove.”

As a partner in the program, CNH Industrial loaned three tractors for the students to use, and several Racine-based employees of the company volunteered their time to instruct the students on safe operation and to serve as mentors as students completed their final exams.

“CNH Industrial has supported this program with equipment and employees to ensure the next generation of agriculture equipment operators can do so in a safe manner,” said Peter Steiner, manager of technical training operations for CNH Industrial Racine.

Presley said parents were pleased that the program was able to move forward this year, amid the pandemic.

“For many kids, it was one activity they could actually participate in this summer while so much else has been canceled,” Presley said.

The program is offered each summer and is open to youth ages 12 to 16. Parents who would like to learn more or enroll a child for the 2021 program may contact Presley at 262-857-1948 or leigh.presley@wisc.edu.

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