



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Jolene Holgate | 928.308.4174  
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603  
nrlb.communications@gmail.com

**Resources and Development Committee receives report  
regarding awareness of agricultural-related injury risk to Navajo youth**

**BÁÁHÁÁLÍ, N.M.** – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee received a report on a project entitled, “Diné Parents and Community Leaders Perceptions of Agriculture-Related Injury Risk to Youth: A Social Narrative,” presented by Michael L. Pate, a former high school agriculture teacher.

The project’s initiative is to educate Navajo community members and youth about agricultural-risk related injuries and to seek solutions to prevent injuries.

“We wanted to do a formative needs assessment as far as parents and community members and what they would like relating to farm safety and health issues. We want to provide training to prevent injuries to youth and what the parents are engaged in such as farming or ranching needs,” stated Pate.

According to the report, Navajo people are engaged in livestock production but very little is understood about the perceived risks to their youth and agricultural safety training needs. Particularly in the southwest, livestock production is important, but along with that comes the risk of injury by animal, whether thrown, kicked, or bucked.

“When it comes down to livestock safety, there are a lot of injuries that occur with our livestock that doesn’t get reported. If I got injured, it was my fault for not being safe,” stated Gloria Skeet de Cruz, Bááháálí Chapter manager.

Currently, the project is limited to areas near Farmington and the Shiprock, but Pate hopes to reach more agencies as it seeks involvement from more communities.

“One of the biggest challenges facing youth is issues with the language barrier amongst elders, lack of a consistent learning environment and social pressures within the youth communities which pose at risk behaviors such as peer pressure,” stated Pate.

According to surveys from 96 community members, the majority of their farming operations included tending to sheep or goats, followed by horses and beef cattle. Another finding indicates that the most concerning injuries involving youth are broken bones and head injuries associated with horsemanship.

“An important thing that would be good to show the youth and community is a video about injury prevention dealing with livestock during our summer youth programs. There’s a lot of opportunity out there and we need to partner up with the Navajo Office of Diné Youth,” stated Skeet de Cruz.

The project is funded by the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Safety.

“Do you have any base information as to the current number of injuries to be used for monitoring livestock injuries and is there any other organizations that are able to contribute to this cause?” asked RDC member Council Delegate Roscoe Smith(Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill).

Pate said that data pertaining to Diné youth injuries is very limited and there are very few researchers that are able to pinpoint the exact number of injuries related to livestock. Pate proposed that hospitals implement a log book to record individuals who have been treated for traumas related to livestock activity.

“There is a need for safety training and this project would like to be able to provide that to their youth. We would like to provide access to youth programs that would develop horse and livestock safety practices. We can do that by developing user-friendly networking that involves the internet, Youtube, and Facebook,” stated Pate.

According to Pate, more funding can be generated through a number of programs that are willing to work with issues that are not solely geared toward agricultural safety but interweaving education, technology, safety, and health initiatives. Once all relationships conjoin, educational opportunities grants will hopefully expand, added Pate.

“Shiprock is the worksite where the research was funded and this program is asking for more funding for more research to expand across the [reservation],” stated RDC chairperson Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta).

The RDC will vote on whether to accept the report at their next scheduled RDC meeting.

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