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**First aid, body mechanics course highlights ag safety week**

* Farm Bureau partners with local businesses to bring awareness to ag safety week
* Participants learn CPR and lifting, carrying techniques

CLINTON, ILL. – DeWitt County Farm Bureau members and member families learned CPR techniques, along with ways to prevent common lifting and carrying injuries at a special workshop on March 7 in Clinton.

The featured speakers were Warner Hospital & Health Services specialists Deb Ertl, registered nurse (RN); Erin Barger, emergency medical technician (EMT); and Cheryl DeMent, physical therapist (PT).

The presenters provided lessons on administering basic first aid, CPR on adults and infants, choking relief, and ways to protect your body while lifting, carrying, and climbing.

The program was made possible by a COUNTRY Financial and Illinois Farm Bureau Farm Safety Grant. First National Bank & Trust Company donated space for the event and offered free first aid kits to attendees.

While the demonstrations focused on activities that are common on farms, the lessons and techniques also applied to the non-farming members in attendance.

Ertl, who has served as a trauma nurse at Warner Hospital and Health Services for 25 years, shared techniques for hands-only CPR. This is a technique that is now used in lieu of mouth-to-mouth, and Ertl said it’s easier to learn and retain.

The technique keeps blood pumping throughout the body, even if a victim has gone into cardiac arrest. Ertl, along with Barger, also demonstrated an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) device, which provides automated prompts to deliver electric shocks, hopefully returning a victim’s heart rate to a regular rhythm.

“Many people are scared of AEDs,” Ertl said, “but the prompts make them easier to use – they’re actually quite bossy and tell you exactly what to do.”

Barger instructed participants on first aid basics as well, walking them through how to use the items provided in the first aid kits. She also explained how to use tourniquets to stop bleeding.

Fritz Robinson, volunteer with the Kenney Fire Department, explained what the first responders in rural areas can and cannot do when responding to first aid situations.

“While we have many of these important tools to save people on our trucks, if a victim is immediately administered CPR before we even get there – and while the ambulance is on its way – that helps us a lot,” he said.

Cheryl DeMent, PT at Warner Hospital’s Physical Therapy wing, shared ways farmers and non-farmers can protect themselves from physical injuries.

DeMent shared the importance of facing your body towards the object you’re planning to lift. “Farmers want to reach over fences and grab things, then turn their body while lifting,” she said, noting that it’s best to first plant your feet in the direction of the object, lift, then turn.

Some issues arise when climbing, too. There’s a lot of injuries when people come down from tractors or ladders and “jump” off, she said, which isn’t advised. But especially, she said, “don’t be landing on one foot!”

The program took place during National Ag Safety Awareness Program Week, March 3-9, 2019. The week brings awareness to health issues affecting the agriculture workforce, both mental and physical.

The American Farm Bureau Federation is an industry partner on National Ag Safety Awareness week, as are County Farm Bureaus. More information on Ag Safety week can be found at www.Agrisafe.org.

For more information regarding DeWitt County Farm Bureau and programs offered, call the office at 217-935-2126 or visit www.dewittcountyfarmbureau.com.

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Deb\_Ertl 1 : Deb Ertl, RN at Warner Hospital and Health Services, center, explains CPR techniques on an infant dummy during the first aid and body mechanics course, March 7 in Clinton.

Erin\_Barger: Erin Barger, EMT at Warner Hospital and Health Services, standing right, explains hands-only CPR on a dummy during the first aid and body mechanics course, March 7 in Clinton. Dan, Terry and James Ferguson, seated left to right, and Caden Deerwester and Jim Stoutenborough, seated right, listen in.