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## **AG SAFETY S.T.A.T. – SAFE TACTICS FOR AG TODAY**

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### **THOUGHTS from the EDITOR - ON FIRE SAFETY**

#### **Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader**

The fall season has arrived, and the harvesting has begun. Much emphasis is placed on equipment safety, grain storage safety and personal health and well-being, including getting enough sleep and eating a balanced diet. However, this year more than ever, fire safety may be a hot topic ~ no pun intended!

Fires are common in the fields and around the grain bins. Dried plant material and crop dust are highly combustible. Even the slightest heat source can cause ignition.

To prevent large-scale fires, it is important that combines, tractors, grain trucks, and pick-ups carry an ABC fire extinguisher. Combines should carry a 10-pound unit, while tractors are recommended to have a 5-pound unit. These extinguishers should be in EACH vehicle in the field. Nothing is worse than watching the combine go up in flames while you're running to the end of the field to retrieve the fire extinguisher on the grain cart. Having an extinguisher on each piece of equipment ensures you will be ready to react on the first signs of smoke.

*Don't get caught with a false sense of security.*

If you follow the recommendations and own enough fire extinguishers, then you must also follow the maintenance recommendations. Check the pressure gages periodically, making sure the needle remains in the "charged" zone. If a unit has been partially discharged, it must be fully recharged before using it again. Even a slight discharge can create a gap in the internal seal of the extinguisher valve, causing the pressure to leak out. The pressure needle may linger in the charged zone; however there may not be adequate pressure to expel the contents.

Extinguishers should also be inspected periodically by a fire professional. Fire service companies can be found in the yellow pages of most phone books. Your local fire department or insurance company can also point you in the right direction for service companies. Some extinguishers are not designed to be refilled, or are too old to be refilled. These units should be replaced when they expire. Having these old extinguishers around does no good when the time comes to pull the pin.

Being prepared to handle field fires is important for all workers and transport drivers. Having machinery equipped with a trustworthy fire extinguisher is one of the first lines of defense.

Be fire smart, and safe harvesting.

### **PUMPKINS, CORN MAZES & HAYRIDES - THE HIDDEN SAFETY HAZARDS**

Another agricultural arena that is big and growing bigger is the agritourism type of activities, such as hayrides, haunted farms, corn mazes, and u-pick harvest farms. Because these involve farm activities, they are usually full of farm hazards. Safety messages apply to the operators and visitors.

A 40-page color publication is available at [http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/nccrahs/default.aspx?page=nccrahs\\_ag\\_tourism](http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/nccrahs/default.aspx?page=nccrahs_ag_tourism). This pdf contains very important safety messages for these agri-entertainment operations.

Other hayride and haunted house activity safety is provided by the International Association of Haunted Attractions. Their website is [http://www.hauntedhouseassociation.org/safety/hayride\\_safety\\_and\\_common\\_sense.php](http://www.hauntedhouseassociation.org/safety/hayride_safety_and_common_sense.php).

## **SUN SAFETY HATS - BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!**

We have been asked about ordering Sun Safety hats with the OSUE logo. We did this earlier in the spring, and sold hundreds of them to our OSUE friends and colleagues. And now they are out there, and even more people want them!!

These sun safe hats are great for Master Gardeners, field researchers, golf enthusiasts, local farmers, OSU Alumni, etc. The hats have a wide brim and are a lightweight, quick drying, mesh. They are available in two colors, sage (light green) and fossil (lighter khaki) and have a black OSUE logo embroidered on the front brim.

If you or any of your organizations are interested in purchasing sun safe hats, please contact Kathy Henwood, to request an order form. The cost of each hat is \$25. The deadline to return orders is October 29, 2008. There is a 4-week processing time. You can expect your hats to arrive in Columbus the first week of December. Contact Kathy Henwood directly at [henwood.13@osu.edu](mailto:henwood.13@osu.edu) or 614-292-0622.

## **MONTHLY ARTICLE: DRIVING SAFE in the COUNTRY DURING HARVEST SEASON**

### **Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader**

Harvest season generally is a time when there are an increase in collisions between farm equipment and other vehicles. Therefore road safety is a common problem that should be emphasized.

Vehicle collisions are often the result of the speed differential between slower-moving farm equipment and passenger cars and trucks. Many times the passenger vehicle driver simply doesn't have enough time to react if they do not recognize the farm equipment soon enough. It is critical for SMV operators to do their part to be seen. Steps for farmers to take to enhance farm machinery visibility are listed below.

However, passenger vehicle drivers can help too. Drivers in rural areas should always be alert to the possibility of encountering slow moving farm vehicles and be prepared to slow or stop to avoid a rear-end collision or striking a farm vehicle turning into a field or driveway. Safety reminders for rural drivers are also included below.

Rural road rage can be negated if everyone takes the responsibility to have extra patience, careful driving habits, and use high-visibility markings and lighting. Drive safe, and enjoy those beautiful county roads this fall season.

### ***Sharing the Road with Motorists - Things every SMV operator should know***

#### **Before traveling on public roads remember:**

- Lock brake pedals.
- Adjust mirrors for good vision.
- Make sure that all warning flashers, lights, and SMV emblems are in proper operating condition, clean, and easily visible. If they are covered with field dust, wipe them off before leaving the field.
- Check tire inflation pressures. Inflate the tires to the maximum recommended pressure for long distance travel.

#### **When traveling on public roads:**

- Watch for potholes or obstacles that could tip tractor.
- Listen for cars. Often vehicles will rapidly approach from the rear at 3 to 4 times the speed of the tractor.
- Stay alert at all times to avoid a serious accident. Do not use the cell phone or two-way radio while operating equipment on public roads.
- Keep a constant lookout for pedestrians, animals, mailboxes, steep ditch embankments, and other roadway obstacles.

- Slow down for sharp curves or when going down a hill.
- Consider using an escort vehicle to follow behind.
- Be cognizant of high traffic times, usually mornings and late afternoons. While it is impossible to avoid operating on the roads during these times, it may be possible to limit road transportation during these high flow times.

**Safety Signs and Lighting:**

SMV Sign - With the mounted point up, place the sign on the vehicle 2-6 feet above the ground. Place the perpendicular plane to the direction of travel (+ /-) 10 degrees. Place the sign as near to rear center as possible.

**Other ASABE recommendations include:**

- Two headlights.
- At least one tail lamp, mounted on the left side facing the rear of the tractor.
- At least two amber warning lights, visible from front and rear, mounted at the same level at least 42 inches above ground level.
- At least two red reflectors, visible from the rear and mounted on either side.
- Amber warning extremity lights, visible from front and rear, mounted over dual- or triple-wheeled vehicles.
- Speed Identification Symbol (SIS) on high-speed tractors and equipment.
- Sharing the Road with Farm Equipment - things every motorist should know
- Farm machinery has a legal right to use public roads just as other motor vehicles.
- Farm machinery can unexpectedly turn onto a public road from a field or driveway. It is important for everyone's safety to have patience and share the road.
- Farm machinery travels slower than normal traffic, often at speeds of 25 miles per hour or less. Automobile drivers must quickly identify farm equipment and slow down immediately to avoid rear end crashes.
- Farm machinery operators may not be able to see you because the large equipment or a load can block part of their rearward view. If you can't see the driver, the driver can't see you.
- Slow moving farm machinery traveling less than 25 miles per hour should display a slow moving vehicle emblem on the back of the equipment. This is a quickly identifiable sign to other motorists.
- Machinery that is half on the road and half on the shoulder may suddenly move completely onto the road.
- Extra-wide farm machinery may take up more than one lane to avoid hitting obstacles such as mailboxes and road signs.

**Before passing farm machinery:**

- Check to be sure the machinery is not turning left. Look for left turn lights or hand signals. If the machinery slows and pulls toward the right side of the road, the operator is likely preparing to make a wide left turn. Likewise, sometimes to make a right turn with wide equipment, the driver must fade to the left.
- Determine if the road is wide enough for you and the machinery to safely share.
- Look for roadside obstacles such as mailboxes, bridges, or road signs that may cause the machinery to move to the center of the road.
- Be sure there is adequate distance for you to safely pass.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TIP of the MONTH**

**Aletha Reshan, Emergency Management Planning and Education Program Coordinator**

Recently, extended power outages were the reality of many households and businesses throughout Ohio due to the windstorm damage initiated by Hurricane Ike. These outages led many families and businesses to utilize a generator to meet their power needs. The following are considerations that should be taken into account when deciding to utilize a generator.

**Selecting a Generator:** To select the proper watt-sized generator it is important to know the watts of standard household appliances. A good source for this information is <http://www.gohonda.com/sizing.html>. This site lists common household appliances and their wattage. It is important to remember that many appliances will use more watts when being started. Reading the watts information on individual household items is best for calculating needed wattage. Always use the start-up wattage when determining the total watts needed. Plug in appliances one at a time starting with the larger appliances and continuing in decreasing watt order. Do not exceed the capacity of the generator.

**Following Safety Precautions:** Because a generator is powered by gasoline it is imperative that the device never be operated indoors and this includes a garage. Generators produce carbon monoxide (CO), which cannot be seen or smelled and can be lethal. Therefore, always operate generators outside in a well-ventilated area and away from windows, doors, and vents. Ground the generator to prevent electrical shock. Use heavy-duty extension cords designed for outdoor use to connect appliances to the generator, ensuring that the wattage rating of the cord exceeds the total wattage of the appliances connected to it. Keep the generator in a dry location and have dry hands when touching the generator. Make sure a battery-operated CO detector is in operation when using the generator. To learn more about the safe use of generators, visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/portgen.html>.

While generators provide an alternate means of power, safety is of utmost importance. The best way to ensure the safe operation of a generator is to be prepared for an emergency or disaster by planning ahead. Know the wattage needed, select the appropriate size generator, and follow safety precautions for utilizing the generator.

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*Ag Safety S.T.A.T. - Safe Tactics for Ag Today* is an e-mail newsletter prepared by Dee Jepsen, Extension Agricultural Safety Specialist and team members from the State Safety Office, in the Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering at OSU. The primary goal of this monthly newsletter is to help you stay connected to everyday safety news and activities that may be used in your own newsletters or programs. If you have safety-related questions or program ideas that you would like to share, please contact Dr. Jepsen at [jepsen.4@osu.edu](mailto:jepsen.4@osu.edu)  
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