



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

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Farm Machinery Road Safety

Hardin County – Planting season is always crunch time for farmers. They know that research says that early planted corn and soybeans has the best chance for large yields. However, field conditions may only allow planting for a few days because of wet weather.

As a result, farmers put in long hours to get the crop planted on these few days suitable for planting. To get these tasks done, a large amount of farm equipment will be on the roads.

Road traffic in general increases on sunny spring days, maybe more so in years of limited pleasant and sunny days in April. The combination of non-farm people driving in the country and farmers moving equipment can sometimes cause problems on rural roads.

Drivers need to realize that farm equipment is much larger today than ten years ago. Tractors are larger and faster. Drivers need to slow down when they see the slow-moving vehicle sign and flashing lights on equipment. They need to be patient before passing these vehicles.

Some equipment will be moved to fields by trucks pulling trailers loaded with planters and tillage equipment. Drivers need to be careful when passing large tillage equipment, sprayers, and planters, which may move in an unsuspected manner.

Be prepared for left turns by farm equipment. Large equipment needs to make a wide turn to line up with driveways or field entry points. Be extra cautious at times that vision is impaired such as dusk, sunrise, and glaring sunshine. Be aware that traffic behind you may be attempting to pass.

The agricultural community has established rules and recommendations for farmers to encourage safety on our rural roads. The highlights of these rules are listed below:

- At all times, a "slow-moving vehicle" emblem is required.

- Headlights and taillights are required until 30 minutes after sunrise, and 30 minutes before sunset.
- Headlights and taillights are required during day hours in inclement weather, including fog and rain.
- Additional extremity lighting is required on dual-wheeled tractors.
- Amber flashers and turn signals are recommended at all times.
- Ideally, towed implements should have reflectors, lights, and a slow-moving vehicle emblem. Law requires these items when the implement blocks the lighting/marking configuration on the tractor.
- Safety cables or chains should be used in any towing situation.
- Lock tractor brakes together.
- Wear seat belt while operating tractors with rollover protective structures (ROPS).
- Ohio law states that only one wagon/implement may be towed behind any vehicle with two exceptions:
 - 1) Towing with a tractor: More than one wagon/implement may be towed. While no maximum is indicated, common sense and safety should play a role.
 - 2) Towing with a pickup or straight truck: A truck designed by the manufacturer to carry a load of not less than one-half ton and not more than two tons may tow two wagons/implements.
- Use an escort vehicle when possible.

Be especially careful on the roads the next several weeks. Be aware of farm equipment. All of us will be sharing the roads. Let's drive safely out there.

Article written by Ed Lentz, OSU Extension-Hancock County, and edited by Mark Badertscher, OSU Extension-Hardin County.