**This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/2022/08/agriculture-road-safety.html**

Released: Aug. 5, 2022

**K-State official urges drivers to be alert in rural areas**

Planting, harvesting means more farm vehicles likely to be on roads

*K-State Research and Extension news service*

MANHATTAN, Kan. – The leader of a program that promotes safety on the farm and in rural areas is encouraging drivers to remain alert in areas where farm equipment is likely to be on the roads.

Tawnie Larson, the state’s coordinator of the Rollover Protection Structure (ROPS) program at Kansas State University, said accidents between vehicles and farm machinery is more likely to happen during planting and harvesting time because more equipment is likely to be on the roads.

“Most accidents are preventable,” Larson said, noting that a 2016 study administered by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration found that human error accounts for 94% to 96% of all auto accidents.

Collisions between farm equipment and passenger vehicles can result in pricey repairs to vehicles and equipment, but in a worst case, also result in loss of life. According to the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, there have been more than 10 fatalities and 30 serious injuries since 2012 on Kansas roadways involving passenger vehicles and farm equipment.

“Many accidents include passenger vehicles rear-ending machinery as it travels on the roadways or misjudging the width of equipment,” Larson said. “Farmers do not like to drive machinery on the roads, but sometimes it is required to get equipment from one field to another.

To prevent accidents, CS-CASH’s recommendations include:

- Never pass farm equipment while in no-passing zones.
- Slow down and be patient when encountering farm equipment on roadways.
- Use turn signals so the equipment operator knows that you are passing.
Larson notes that rural roads are often narrow, hilly, steep and curvy with little to no shoulders. When driving on a two-lane road, she says:

- Be alert and avoid distractions.
- Watch ahead for large equipment and trucks entering and exiting the road.
- Slow down as soon as you spot a piece of equipment on the road.
- Be aware of the orange triangular slow-moving vehicle (SMV) signs.

Kansas Farm Bureau publishes additional safety tips for drivers of non-farm vehicles:

- Give tractors and combines plenty of room to operate. Expect them to take wide turns and even travel into both lanes to properly turn.
- Don’t pull in front of farm equipment and suddenly slow down. The tractor may be towing heavy machinery, making quick stopping impossible.
- Be aware of slow-moving vehicles. Expect farm equipment and tractors to travel at a much slower rate – between 5-15 miles per hour.
- Watch for hand signals and other ways a farmer or rancher may try to communicate with you.

Those who operate farm equipment should make sure lights and flashers are working properly; know the height of the vehicle they’re driving; take care when traveling on public roads; and communicate with fellow motorists using whatever signals possible.

More safety topics and information on the Kansas Rollover Protection Structure program is available online.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Rollover Protection Structure program, https://www.ropsr4u.org

Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health,


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