



News Release

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Farm Advocacy Group Steps-Up Efforts to Protect New York Farmers **NYCAMH Tractor Rollover Protection Rebate Increases 17% for 2008**

Cooperstown, N.Y. —The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) has increased the amount of the rebate available to New York farmers who retrofit their tractors with a rollover protection (ROPS) kit, from the maximum of \$600 last year to \$703 for 2008. This amount matches the average increase in cost of ROPS kits from manufacturers in the past year. Tractor rollovers are a significant cause of injury and death to farmers and their family members. In fact, rollover fatality rates in the Northeast are the highest in the country. Studies have shown that the use of a rollbar in combination with a seatbelt could prevent virtually all of these tractor rollover deaths, yet half the tractors in New York state are unprotected.

In the past year, NYCAMH's ROPS program has facilitated the retrofitting of more than 350 tractors, including a tractor owned by Newfield, N.Y. farmer Dan Kaiser. "I was pulling a silage wagon and the tractor began sliding down the hill out of control," says Kaiser, a 30-year farming veteran. "I was wearing my seatbelt at the time and the only reason was because I had installed the rollbar. It's amazing that I didn't roll over, but I probably would have been thrown from the tractor if I hadn't been wearing the seatbelt. I wear it all the time now." The ROPS kit includes a rollbar and seatbelt.

The rebate is available to NY farmers who call 877-ROPS-R4U. The program is facilitated by NYCAMH and supported by State Senators James L. Seward and Catharine M. Young, both members of the New York State Senate Agriculture Committee., as well as Farm Family Insurance, the New York Farm Bureau and the Northeast Equipment Dealers Association. It represents a pioneering effort to prevent fatalities and disabling injuries due to tractor rollovers, the leading cause of occupational deaths in farming.

"Our goal is to keep ROPS as accessible to NY farmers in the coming year as they were last year. To do this, we had to adjust for the increases in prices," says John May, M.D., director of NYCAMH. "Two of the most important aspects of the program are keeping ROPS affordable and retrofitting easy for New York farmers. Spring brings a combination of many farmers in the field and soft ground, a potential recipe for a rollover. If your tractor is not yet protected, now is the time to order a ROPS kit."

For many farmers, the price of retrofitting a tractor after rebate has been about \$250. "I wouldn't have been able to retrofit my tractor without this program," notes first year program- participant Ed Simonsen, a farmer from Kinderhook, N.Y. "ROPS are essential, especially on hilly ground. Several people in our area have been hurt or killed in rollovers. I'm so appreciative this program exists."

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A program of Bassett Healthcare, NYCAMH has worked since 1983 to enhance agricultural and rural health by preventing and treating occupational injury and illness.
For information, call 1-800-343-7527

New York Farmers interested in retrofitting a tractor should call toll-free 1-877-ROPS-R4U (1-877-767-7748).

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