



BE ALERT, BE AWARE, BE ALIVE

As we all know, spring and fall are very busy times for farmers. When driving down the rural roads of central Illinois, you will encounter farm equipment. Farmers are allowed to operate their equipment on public roadways, just as the public is allowed to drive their vehicles on the public roadways.

BE ALERT----Upon seeing farm equipment, SLOW DOWN. Most farm vehicles travel 25 mph or less, so it takes only 5 seconds to close a gap the length of a football field if the driver of the vehicle is traveling 55 mph. Even though farmers take safety precautions to ensure that their machinery is easily visible, motorists should take initiative and drive carefully, and not assume that they are visible to the farmer. If motorists are too close behind some of the farm vehicles, they are obscured from the farmer's view.

BE AWARE----Farmers use large pieces of equipment. As farmers continue to increase their size of farms, so does the equipment size as a rule. Most equipment is larger than the travel lanes, and drivers of vehicles cannot pass safely at fast speeds. Stop and let the equipment pass, then continue on your way. Do not assume if the farmer pulls to the right side of the road, that they are going to make a right-hand turn. Due to the size of equipment, the farmer must move to the right before making a wide left turn. When meeting farm vehicles at or on a bridge, the motorist needs to give the farmer enough room to completely exit the bridge before they begin to cross the bridge. There is not enough room for both.

BE ALIVE----Be patient! Farmers will attempt to pull off the side of the road at the first opportunity so you can pass. Steep ditches, soft shoulders or being wet could cause a farm vehicle to tip over when pulling over to the side to allow drivers to pass. So that the farmer is able to see your vehicle or if the farmer has to come to a stop quickly, **DO NOT FOLLOW TOO CLOSELY!**

Remember farmers are not operating equipment on rural roads to slow you down intentionally. They also have a job to do and are working to provide a safe food supply for everyone. When possible, farmers will pull off the road at the first safe opportunity so you can pass.

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. A collision with a slow-moving vehicle versus a fast-moving vehicle will more than likely be a fatal accident. So please:

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Vera Bunting
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