

# Rural roadways can be danger zones for both farm machinery and those sharing the road if both aren't careful. Safety is a two-way street.

There are unique factors to driving on rural roads. Large, slow moving machinery are common. Gravel and soft shoulders can be challenging. Wildlife is a concern. It's critical for everyone to take an active role in safety on rural roads.

Farm machinery doesn't travel at highway speeds which can cause issues if another driver doesn't recognize the speed difference. Not to mention the size, weight, and power of farm equipment magnifies the destruction if an accident does happen.

In addition, a driver license is not required for youth to drive machinery on public roads if they are conducting farm operations. These youth may not have the skill that comes with experience. As a result, they may not be able to predict and prevent an accident.

Pickup trucks are a major form of transportation in rural settings and much concern has been expressed about the safety of occupants in these vehicles. The cargo area of a pickup truck has proven to be a source of numerous injuries and deaths of children and adults.

Listed below are ideas for machinery and vehicle operators to prevent rural roadway tragedies from becoming gruesome statistics:

### Farm machinery operators

- ▶ Train youth in safe operation of machinery
- ▶ Be a role model
- ▶ Make sure slow-moving vehicle signs are installed and easily seen
- ▶ Ensure the machinery is in good working order, including lights and brakes
- ▶ Wear seatbelts and equip all tractors with rollover protective structures (ROPS)

### Standard vehicle operators

- ▶ Always wear seatbelts and insist passengers do as well
- ▶ Drive cautiously and within the speed limit
- ▶ Exercise patience when behind a slow moving vehicle
- ▶ Pass only when certain the road is clear
- ▶ Teach youth defensive and safe driving
- ▶ Never let people ride in the bed of a pickup



Unique factors to driving in rural areas, like gravel roads, can be a safety concern.