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OSU Extension News

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### **Visions of Springtime....Driving Through My Head**

On my drive to work this morning, I came upon a track tractor with a winged turbo till tool driving down a two-lane U.S. route. As I passed by this vehicle, I thought to myself, “It is springtime and more agricultural equipment will be sharing the roadways with us. Guess this would be a good time to remind everyone to be more vigilant in their safety on the roads.”

The OSU Ag Safety team wants us to consider, “What are the chances that you will be involved in a farm machinery collision on a public road?” These factors increase the odds:

- Motor vehicle traffic increases yearly.
- Fewer people have farm backgrounds and know to use caution when approaching farm equipment on the roadway.
- Farms are larger than in the past, so operators are forced to travel greater distances on the roadways between fields.
- Farm equipment has become larger and can extend into the opposite lane of traffic beyond the tractor.

There may be little you can do to change these factors, but others are directly under your control. For example, lack of visibility is a major cause of many crashes. It makes a big difference by making sure your equipment has a visible slow-moving vehicle emblem, proper lighting, and enhanced reflective material.

As a driver on the roadway, be cautious of agricultural equipment when you approach them. Slow-moving vehicle signs are reserved for use on the rear of slow-moving vehicles only, 25 MPH or less, including farm machinery. It is triangular and is colored bright orange with a red border. The slow-moving vehicle sign indicates that special care must be taken when sharing the road with such a vehicle. In addition, indicator lights should be on and flashing, but not always as visible with larger equipment attached.

Extra time, patience, and caution must be exercised when passing slow-moving vehicles. When you are approaching the rear of a slow-moving vehicle, “*Drive with caution; pass with care.*” Pass with proper signaling when it is a safe zone to pass them. This could even be pulling in a driveway to get out of the way on smaller township roads. Our world is a place in a hurry, but this is not the time to be in a hurry. Honestly, I thought that myself this morning, but then took a breath and said, it will be fine.

Peggy Kirk Hall, Asst. Professor, OSU Extension Agricultural & Resource Law, states that spring planting season brings increased agricultural traffic on Ohio's rural roads, including the use of All-Purpose Vehicles (APVs), All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Gators, Mules, and other four-wheeled utility vehicles. Laws on these vehicles have changed in recent years and there is still confusion over the new provisions. Farmers who plan to use an APV, ATV, or utility vehicle on the roadway for farm work should take a few minutes to review the applicable laws and ensure compliance. This information can be found at <http://ohioaglaw.wordpress.com/category/roadway-laws/>.

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