

## **Sharing the Road with Farm Equipment**

Harvest in Clinton County is in full swing. Almost 90% of soybeans have already left the fields, winter wheat has been planted, and farmers have begun shelling corn. This time of year, we see a lot of farm equipment on the roads, and it may be frustrating to be stuck behind a combine or grain cart driver when you are trying to get to your destination. Try to remember that farmers are just trying to do their job, and they deserve a safe work environment just like everyone does. A good strategy during harvest time is to leave for your destination at least 10 minutes before your usual departure. Making small changes to your commuting habits can help ensure less stress during harvest, and a safer environment for you and the farmers.

### **Here are some things to know about sharing the road with farm equipment:**

Farm machinery has a legal right to use public roads just as other motor vehicles.

- Farm machinery can unexpectedly turn onto a public road from a field or driveway. It is important for everyone's safety to have patience and share the road.
- Farm machinery travels more slowly than normal traffic, often at speeds of 25 mph or less. Automobile drivers must quickly identify farm equipment and slow down immediately to avoid rear end crashes.
- Farm machinery operators may not be able to see you because the large equipment or a load can block part of their rearward view. If you can't see the driver, the driver can't see you.
- Slow moving farm machinery traveling less than 25 mph should display a slow-moving vehicle emblem on the back of the equipment. Look for this sign and adjust your speed accordingly.
- Machinery that is half on the road and half on the shoulder may suddenly move completely onto the road.
- Extra-wide farm machinery may take up more than one lane to avoid hitting obstacles such as mailboxes and road signs.

### **Before passing farm machinery:**

- Check to be sure the machinery is not turning left. Look for left turn lights or hand signals. If the machinery slows and pulls toward the right side of the road, the operator is likely preparing to make a wide left turn. Likewise, sometimes to make a right turn with wide equipment, the driver must fade to the left.
- Determine if the road is wide enough for you and the machinery to safely share.
- Look for roadside obstacles such as mailboxes, bridges, or road signs that may cause the machinery to move to the center of the road.
- Be sure there is adequate distance for you to safely pass.

With this information in mind, please make sure to be patient and careful around farm equipment on the road. And remember to thank a farmer.

Information used from OSU Extension Fact sheet "Safe Driving During Harvest Season"