

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

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Dropping the Most Deadly Industry Title by Improving Tractor Safety

AMES, Iowa – Agriculture continues to be the most deadly industry in the United States based on the number of deaths per 100,000 workers. The leading causes of these agricultural fatalities are tractor overturns, runovers and collisions. The tragedy is that the majority of these agricultural tractor fatalities are preventable with the addition of rollover protective structures, using safe tractor practices and adequate marking.

Charles Schwab, farm safety specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and other safety professionals maintain that many tractor-related deaths can be prevented. Rollover protection structures (ROPS) keep the tractor operator in a safe area when the tractor overturns. Without ROPS, the entire weight of the tractor can crush the operator during an overturn.

The good news is modern tractors built since 1985 are required to have ROPS. The bad news is there are a significant number of older tractors without ROPS in Iowa. Choosing to operate a tractor without ROPS could cost you your life.

“Using only tractors with ROPS is a smart and safe decision,” said Schwab “Tractor rides for kids are risky and potentially a deadly activity.”

Many of the tractor runovers fatalities occur when an innocent tractor ride turns tragic. Other tractor runovers occur when young children are not seen by operators as the tractor approaches high traffic area of the farmstead.

“Have firm rules about permitting extra riders and when it is safe for young children to approach a tractor around the farmstead” Schwab said.

If taking a tractor on a public road, make sure your Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblem is not faded or covered with mud. This is an important visible indicator to other motorists that your vehicle is traveling slower than other traffic and needs their full attention. The rapid closure speed between approaching vehicles and your tractor need the advance warning an SMV emblem provides.

Do your part putting farm safety into practice this fall by improving tractor safety. If Iowa could reduce the number of tractor injuries and fatalities this year, it could be the year when agriculture loses title of the most deadly industry in the United States.

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Links:

<http://www.abe.iastate.edu/extension-and-outreach/agricultural-health-safety/>

Related Publications:

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