

Fall driving requires extra caution for farm vehicles

By Bonnie A. Coblenz
MSU Extension Service



Farm vehicles take to the roads more commonly in the fall than other times of the year, so drivers should be prepared and drive carefully around them.
(Photo by CanStock/rjfiskness)

Fall brings a surge in the number of farm machines travelling on the state's roads, and drivers everywhere need to be cautious when near them.

State laws allow farm vehicles on roadways but place limits on driving them on roadways during daytime hours. This authorization is necessary to allow farm vehicles to reach all parts of the often very large farms to which they belong.

Drivers must remember they share the road with these large, often unwieldy vehicles. Most importantly, drivers must stay alert and allow time to act safely when approaching one.

Alex Deason, an agent in Sunflower County with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, said spring and fall are busy times for farm equipment, but fall tends to be busier.

"Most of the slow-moving equipment is moved first thing in the morning to allow for a day full of operations, but once a farm or tract of land has been covered, farm managers may choose to move to another location midday," Deason said.

While it is legal and necessary for farm vehicles to use roads, the large machines can block a driver's view of traffic. Deason said it is even harder for the operator

to keep attention on the road, look for obstacles in front and keep an eye on what is behind.

"Operators are required to always use warning lights and display slow-moving vehicle placards," Deason said. "Avoid peak traffic times such as when people are going to or from work and school or lunch, and when able, the farm vehicle should slow down and move to the shoulder to allow traffic to pass safely."

Meeting a farm vehicle head-on is easiest because there is generally time to slow down and for both vehicles to move close to the shoulder. Deason said most fatalities occur when a distracted driver collides with slow-moving machinery

from behind.

"Never overtake farm equipment at highway speeds," he said. "Always slow down to safer speeds. Don't assume when passing a piece of equipment that it is alone. There could easily be a pickup, combine and two tractors with grain carts in succession moving to the next field."

Fall also sees more trailers towed behind vehicles on the roads, including hunters towing off-road vehicles and farmers moving equipment.

Leslie Woolington, Extension risk management and loss control agent, said trailers present a unique danger when they are used improperly or not well maintained.

"If you pull a trailer, it's your responsibility to ensure

DURANT NEWS

by Rowena Hill

Shirley and Sammy Higginbotham of Clinton drove its safety for you and others on the road," Woolington said. "Trailers have the potential of becoming unguided missiles if they are not properly hooked up or cared for."

She said those planning to tow a trailer should inspect the tow vehicle for loose bolts, deformation and damaged. Also ensure the ball on the tow vehicle matches the coupler size on the trailer. Use a trailer coupler connection with a pin to ensure it cannot disengage from the ball. If there is a trailer coupler with a tension bolt, ensure it is properly adjusted.

"Connect the trailer electrical plug and breakaway cable to the tow vehicle and ensure all are working correctly," Woolington said. "For a bumper-pull trailer, cross the safety chains underneath the coupler with enough slack to permit turning, but not dragging the ground. This will help to hold the tongue up if the trailer comes loose."

Once the trailer is safe and attached correctly, make sure the load is ready for transport, she said. Tie down or tarp the load, and make sure the trailer deck is free of any loose tools or debris mud.

"During long hauls, stop periodically to do a quick walkaround ensuring trailer is still in good shape and the load is secured," she said.

up Saturday to get son Jay after a two week visit with this writer. He is to return here after being home with them for a while. Jay is a special boy and is very special to this grandmother.

The First Baptist Church congregation regrets to lose Rev. and Mrs. Ed McDaniel. they have been with us at First Baptist for several weeks but now we are glad to have Rev. and Mrs. Lyn Nations back. Now Libby and Bro. Ed can relax a little. We sure enjoyed them. Come worship with us at First Baptist Church.

It will be good to get settled in for a regular life again but God has surely blessed us. Thank God from whom all blessings flow.

We visited Jodi, Derek May and family Saturday at their new resident. Derek is pastor of a church there and also teaches school in the area. I don't know the school or church names, but it's near the Christian school at French Camp. They are very special and will surely be a blessing to those in the area.

The old homes that have been a part of our town for a very long time have been torn down. Sure hope they will be replaced with new ones.

Prayers are for Ray Dunn. He will be undergoing major surgery in the immediate future. He is a friend to all, a former resident of our

town. May God bless as he undergoes the surgery for complete success.

We are thankful Mrs. Betty Faye Hathcock Edwards is feeling better after a time on not being well. We sure have missed them at church.

*Judy and Donald Broyles, and friend Lloyd Conley enjoyed a trip to Branson, Missouri, for about 4 days. Judy shopped while the men sat and waited on her. Judy said Branson is a beautiful place and made her mind up she wants to move to Branson.

*News submitted



September 4 - Brett and Terri Atkinson, Jason and Christi Richmond

September 6 - Paul Warren and Kim Winstead

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September 8 - Mac and Brianna Cain

September 9 - David and JuliAnna Wynne, Michael and Charlene Smith, Tim and Jackie Turner

To add your birthdays and anniversaries to our list, please send your information by mail to P.O. Box 60, Lexington, MS 39095; fax 662-834-1074; email hcherald@gmail.com; or stop by our office at 308 Court Square in Lexington. No phone calls, please.

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