

Illinois harvest quickly approaching; motorists advised to slow down

By Katie Zelechowski
Illinois Farm Bureau

As the daughter of a truck driver, high school ag teacher Kaity Spangler knows the dangers that come with operating farm equipment but knows not all of her students do.

“My biggest thing is making sure our students know that their classmates – the people they see in the hallway – are the people they are sharing the road with,” said Spangler, who teaches at Macomb High School.

Putting names and faces to farm equipment operators in the community makes students more responsible and

respectful drivers, she said. “I tell my students ‘Blaine is driving the tractor, Duncan is in the combine’ to really drive home that their classmates are the ones in those slow-moving vehicles,” Spangler said.

The focus on farm safety will go well beyond Spangler’s classroom this month during National Farm Safety and Healthy Week.

This year, the theme of the week, recognized Sept. 19-25, is “Farm Safety Yields Results.” Daily topics include tractor and rural roadway safety, youth in agriculture safety and overall farmer health and safety.

Illinois State Police (ISP) Sgt. Tracy Lillard has seen the devastating consequences of vehicle accidents while on the job. As the manager for ISP’s social media pages, she shares her experiences to educate motorists about roadway safety. During harvest, her advocacy efforts ramp up to focus on keeping drivers safe around large, often slow-moving equipment including tractors and semis.

“The trucking community is something that I really hold close to my heart,” Lillard said. “My husband is a police officer as well (and) both of our parents were

farmers. We really see the need for people that are driving this machinery, and then also the grain haulers (that are going) back and forth, to be safe.”

Lillard has seen many rear-end crashes result from motorists who follow farm equipment and semitrailers too closely. She encourages drivers to leave more room for others.

One of the most frequent questions Lillard gets is why farmers can’t use different routes when moving equipment. She said it comes down to the size of the vehicle, road conditions and whether or not they have

safer, better options.

“These farmers are out on the road just like everybody else and they have the right to be there,” she said.

Road safety is not limited to adhering to speed limits. It’s also about drivers showing courtesy to one another, staying alert when behind the wheel and practicing caution when navigating new situations – all of which should be done year-round.

Rodney Knittel, Illinois Farm Bureau assistant director of transportation and infrastructure, said the health and safety of farm families impacts more than those who work on the farm.

“Every single person relies on agriculture for food and the transportation industry to deliver the goods they need,” Knittel said.

“Driving behind agriculture equipment may add on five, 10 or 15 minutes to your commute,” he said. “But at the end of the day, what’s most important is that every family gets home safely.”

This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.

Carle Health launches community flu clinics September 21-October 7

Drive thru and walk-in clinics available throughout central Illinois for convenient access to flu vaccine.

Carle Health kicked off its community influenza (flu) vaccine clinics on Sept. 21 through Oct. 7 at various clinic locations throughout central Illinois.

A popular option for those looking for a convenient way to get their annual shot, Carle’s drive thru testing is coming to a commu-

nity near you. For more information, please call (217) 326-5000. Patients can also receive their flu shot at their Primary Care provider’s office.

As we continue to fight COVID-19 in our communities, Carle Health officials encourage patients to protect themselves against other illnesses and viruses, especially influenza. For those with underlying health conditions, compromised immune

systems, or who are above six months old, vaccine is available and strongly encouraged.

“We know that this is a time where we see the flu make its way across our community, and COVID-19 continues to be a challenge,” Sally Salmons, MD, associate chief medical officer, Carle Ambulatory Care said. “To keep our patients and community healthy, we continue to expand our flu

vaccine clinics and make it easier than ever to protect yourself and your family from illness.”

In an effort to accommodate social distancing and anticipated demand, a walk-in clinic will also be available at Kohl’s Plaza, 1901 N. Market Street, Champaign. This option is available to eligible patients Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Sept. 21 through October 7.

Throughout the fall and winter months, Carle encourages everyone to take additional precautions by increasing hand washing and limiting contact with anyone displaying flu symptoms. Carle facilities require patients to wear a mask at all walk-in or drive thru flu shot clinics, unless medically unable to do so or children un-

der the age of two.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends flu vaccines for persons age 6 months and older.

Carle will offer the following community flu clinics:

Drive-thru Clinics: Carle Outpatient Services at The Fields

3105 Fields South Dr., Champaign, IL 61822
September 25: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
September 26: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
October 2: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
October 3: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
*Drive-thru will close

for lunch from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. First dose COVID-19 vaccinations will also be offered at this drive-through opportunity. Second

doses will need to be scheduled at your preferred Carle location.

Carle Danville on Vermilion

September 25: 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
October 2: 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Carle Mattoon on Hurst

September 30: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
October 1: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Carle Tuscola

October 2: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Walk-in CL

Kohl’s Plaza in Champaign
September 21 - October 7
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Visit carle.org/flu for more information.



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