

Harvest Time in Indiana

Its harvest time in Indiana and that means the roads will contain more slow moving vehicles, the roadsides will become vacant, and many farmers and farm families will be putting in long hard hours of work. As the hustle and bustle of harvest occurs, remember that there is no room for forgetting the importance of safety or of sleep.

When traveling down the road, remember to be a good citizen. Farmers should make sure their equipment has working lights (front, rear, and turn signals) and that they have a slow moving vehicle (SMV) sign posted where everyone can see it. Any vehicle that operates at less than 25 miles per hour is required to have a SMV sign on it. If you come up on a vehicle that has a SMV sign (red triangle with orange edges), keep a safe distance between you and the farm equipment so you are able to stop quickly if the need arises. Farmers should be reminded to make sure their SMV signs are in good condition, can easily be seen, and replace them if they are damaged. When traveling on the road, farmers should try to remember to turn on their hazard lights to help notify other drivers that they are there. If possible, farmers should have a family member drive in front of them and behind them with their flashers on to help keep all motorists safe.

With all the hustle and bustle going on, it is easy for farmers to get distracted and not pay attention to the small things. However, by not paying attention, a tragedy can occur. Farmers need to ensure that all safety locks and safety equipment are present before starting up the tractor or combine. Safety locks are there for a reason and it isn't to slow you down. Additionally, make sure your rollover protective structures are on your tractors and that all equipment shields are in place. If you break down and have to remove the shield to make the repair, remember to put it back in place before starting the machine up.

Not all farm accidents occur when operating or working on equipment. Accidents can occur when a farmer is working in or around a grain bin. In instances like that, a farmer can become entrapped by the flowing grain. Therefore, it is important that when working with flowing grain that you have someone else with you who can contact emergency personal if needed. Similarly, children and teenagers should not be allowed in grain bins where they are exposed to that dangerous atmosphere. Grain entrapment is a serious issue that has been publicized heavily in the state in recent years and it is important that individuals take precautions to prevent this from happening.

This harvest season, remember to take time to rest and look over your fields prior to harvesting. Before switching from one field to the next, it is important for farmers to make one last assessment of stalk quality in all of their corn fields and prioritize harvest so those fields with the weakest stalk quality get harvested first. By harvesting fields with weak stalks first, you prevent the corn being flattened by potential heavy storms this fall.

Farming is a dangerous occupation but one that is needed to help support the world. By having patience, farmers and non-farming individuals can help improve the safety of our roads this time of year. Additionally, farmers need to ensure that someone is aware of where they are working and what they are doing, that they have a first aid kit with them at all times, and stop working when they are tired so they can help improve their chances of experiencing a safe harvest season.

Visit our homepage at www.extension.purdue.edu/putnam or you can contact the local Purdue Extension Office by calling 765.653.8411 for more information regarding this week's column topic or to RSVP for upcoming events. It is always best to call first to assure items are ready when you arrive and to RSVP for programs. While many publications are free, some do have a fee. Purdue University is an equal access/equal opportunity institution. All times listed are Eastern Time.

Upcoming Events:

October 6 – Putnam County Master Gardener Association Education Program & Meeting

October 12- Columbus Day- Extension Office Closed

October 18-21: Indiana Extension Homemakers Week

October 22 – Forest Management Twilight Tour, Hillsdale, IN, 5:00 PM, RSVP to 765-492-5330

October 22-Putnam County 2nd Annual Career Fair, Putnam County Fairgrounds,
 10:00am-2:00 PM

October 23 – Healthy Hay & Grazing Workshop, Bloomfield, IN, 8:00 AM, RSVP to
 812-659-2122

November 1 – Putnam 4-H Member Achievement & Volunteer Recognition program, 2 PM,
 Putnam County Fairgrounds