

EXTENSION COLUMN

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June 9, 2011

Avoid Carrying Passengers on Tractors

With spring comes field work, busy schedules and at times safety is compromised. The most dangerous place on your tractor is not in the driver's seat, it's on the fender, inside the cab, holding onto a grab bar or anywhere else a passenger might sit or stand while catching a ride.

Riders are not safe on tractors. They can be bumped off during a rough ride, or crushed, run over or impaled in an overturn or accident. An enclosed cab can't protect passengers, either. There are numerous reports of accidents in which passengers fall out of the cab and are run over by the tractor. Riders also can block the operator's vision or become a distraction.

New-model tractors are designed to protect only the operator, not passengers, when the tractor overturns. Tractor manufacturers and safety experts suggest a "no rider" rule for most farm equipment, especially tractors.

It's best to avoid situations in which others need tractor rides to a field or remote area. If a person needs a ride, use a pick-up or car to take them to the field or work area. Remember that tractors are designed for work, not recreation.

Take Steps to Store Pesticides Safely

Here are some tips for storing your pesticides safely:

- Storage requirements for pesticides vary depending on the product. The best way to learn proper storage procedure is to re-read the product label. The label should list minimum storage temperatures and other guidelines.
- Some pesticides should be kept from freezing in order to remain effective, but that doesn't mean they should be stored in a house or other location where they would be in contact with humans or livestock. Instead, consider using a small light or heater to keep the temperature in the storage area above freezing. Be sure the heat source is installed properly so that it's not a fire hazard.
- If possible, store pesticides in an area that can be locked.
- Consider having a spill kit handy, consisting of absorbent material, heavy plastic bags, plastic pails or open drums, and chemical resistant clothing.
- Take an inventory of what pesticides you're storing and how much. It could prove invaluable in clean-up efforts if a fire or other disaster destroys your storage area.
- Only purchase what you need. This alleviates carrying extra product from one season to the next. With a new crop year use the old product first and then closely monitor this year's purchase according to the actual needs.