

Marks Remarks by Mark Rowen Lincoln County Educator 5-3-07

Planting season is here, and with it comes the increase of farm accidents.

If tractor operators adopted the same attitude as airline pilots, it would save thousands from injury each year. Here are some well-grounded recommendations:

- 1) Walk around and do a visual inspection before operating machinery
- 2) Fields are loaded with ditches, embankments, steep slopes. Be aware of these; they can flip the tractor over.
- 3) Drive at a safe speed, whether you're in a field or on a highway. Excessive speed causes many accidents.
- 4) Not many tractors are designed to carry more than one person. Riders don't belong on tractors.
- 5) Don't carry loads higher than recommended in your tractor's Operator's Manual.
- 6) Do not hitch an implement designed for the draw bar to anything other than the draw bar for pulling. Hitch it low, pull it slow.
- 7) Keep shields and guards in place. Exposed PTO shafts and belts can easily entangle your clothing or your limbs. A hot radiator or hydraulic line can cause serious burns.
- 8) Turn off the engine whenever you get out of the driver's seat or cab. Take the key with you anytime you dismount.
- 9) Use common sense: turn off the engine when filling the fuel tank. Don't smoke while fueling, and wipe up any spills.
- 10) Make sure hired hands, spouses, and teens are trained to operate the tractor safely.
- 12) Take short breaks at a reasonable interval. Just a walk around the implement for inspection or for a cup of coffee or a pop makes a big difference.
- 13) Keep a cell phone or other communications device close should an emergency arrive.

If you don't think safety is important-just think of where you would be without it.

Some information for this article was obtained from University of California, Davis.