NE Extension Tractor Safety Courses

With planting season right around the corner, there will be a lot of tractors out on the roadways. As a reminder, any 14 or 15 year old who plans to work on a farm other than his/her parents’ needs to participate in Nebraska Extension’s Tractor Safety/Hazardous Occupations Course. This course will be offered at seven locations in Nebraska during May and June.

Federal law prohibits youth less than 16 years of age from working on a farm for anyone other than his or her parents or guardian. Certification through the course grants an exemption to the law allowing 14- and 15-year-olds to drive a tractor and to do field work with mechanized equipment.

The most common cause of death in agriculture accidents in Nebraska is overturn from tractors and all-terrain-vehicles (ATVs), according to farm fatality surveillance data. Tractor and ATV overturn prevention are featured in the class work. Instilling an attitude of ‘safety first’ is a primary goal of the course, according to class instructors, where youth have the chance to learn respect for agricultural jobs and the tools involved.

Classes consist of two days of instruction plus homework assignments. Classes are from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. each day. Dates and locations include:

- May 23-24, Fairgrounds, Kearney
- May 26-27, Fairgrounds, McCook
- June 2-3, Fairgrounds, Valentine
- June 13-14, West Central Research and Extension Center, North Platte
- June 16-17, Legacy of the Plains Museum, Gering
- June 20-21, Fairgrounds, Wayne
- June 23-24, College Park, Grand Island
- July 6-7, Fairgrounds, Gordon

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged at least one week before a location's start date to the Extension Office at the course site. Cost is $60, which includes educational materials, testing, supplies, lunches and breaks. For more information, contact Aaron Yoder at (402) 552-7240, aaron.yoder@unmc.edu or Ellen Duysen at (402) 552-3394, ellen.duysen@unmc.edu.

The first day of class will consist of intensive classroom instruction with hands-on demonstrations, concluding with a written test that must be completed satisfactorily before students may continue driving tests the next day. Classroom instruction will cover the required elements of the National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program. Homework will be assigned to turn in the next day.

The second day will include testing, driving and operating machinery. Students must demonstrate competence in hitching equipment and driving a tractor and trailer through a standardized course as well as hitching PTO and hydraulic systems.