

## Views from VanDeWalle

Brandy VanDeWalle, Extension Educator in Fillmore County

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### Tractor and farm equipment safety course

Classes are being offered in several locations throughout state for teens 14 or 15 years old who work on farms. Teens 14 or 15 years of age who work on farms, or others interested in learning about tractor and farm equipment safety practices, can register for a safety training course offered at locations across Nebraska in May and June.

The course is sponsored by the University of Nebraska Extension and the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health. Students will complete the first day of the course by attending a hands-on event at one of two locations or online through the eXtension Foundation Campus website. The hands-on events will occur on May 22 in North Platte and May 30 in Grand Island. After completing the hands-on event or the online course and testing, the required driving test will be offered at locations across Nebraska in May and June.

Federal law prohibits children under 16 from using specific equipment on a farm unless their parents or legal guardians own the farm. However, certification received through the course grants an exemption to the law allowing 14- and 15-year-olds to drive a tractor and do field work with specific mechanized equipment.

Aaron Yoder, PhD, associate professor at the UNMC College of Public Health, reports that a common cause of agricultural-related injuries and deaths in Nebraska is overturned tractors and ATVs and equipment entanglements. He emphasized that this course trains students to avoid these incidents and many other hazards on the farm and ranch.

The hands-on event and the online course will cover the required elements of the National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program, including quizzes that students must pass to attend the driving portion of the training. Once a student is registered, the coordinators will send instructions, materials, course paperwork and a link to the online course if they do not attend one of the two hands-on events.

The onsite driving training and exam will include a driving test, equipment operation and ATV safety lessons. Students must demonstrate competence in hitching and unhitching equipment and driving a tractor and trailer through a standardized course. Instructors also will offer education on emergency preparedness, personal protective equipment, and safe behaviors and laws for ATVs, utility-task vehicles (UTVs) and other off-road vehicles (ORVs).

Instructors for the course are members of the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health: Aaron Yoder, PhD, Ellen Duysen, Risto Rautiainen, PhD, and graduate student Sarah Tucker; and Nebraska Extension educators Randy Saner, Ron Seymour and John Thomas.

The course costs \$35 and includes educational materials and supplies. Participants can pay at the time of registration or before the driving exam. Only checks and cash are accepted. The closest hands-on training, driving dates, site locations and site coordinator contact information are below.

**Hands-On Safety Days** (If not attending a Hands-On Safety Day, online course must be completed).



May 30 – Raising Nebraska, 501 East Fonner Park Rd., Grand Island

Contacts: Randy Saner ([randy.saner@unl.edu](mailto:randy.saner@unl.edu)) and Vicki Neidhardt ([vicki.neidhardt@unl.edu](mailto:vicki.neidhardt@unl.edu)) at 308.532.2683

### **Tractor Driving Days**

May 31 – Raising Nebraska, 501 East Fonner Park Rd., Grand Island

Contacts: Randy Saner ([randy.saner@unl.edu](mailto:randy.saner@unl.edu)) and Vicki Neidhardt ([vicki.neidhardt@unl.edu](mailto:vicki.neidhardt@unl.edu)) at 308.532.2683

June 6 - Adams County Extension, 2975 South Baltimore Ave., Hastings

Contact: Ron Seymour ([ron.seymour@unl.edu](mailto:ron.seymour@unl.edu)) at 402.461.7209

Registration form located here: <https://go.unl.edu/2023tractorsafety>

If you have questions, please contact the administrator listed above at your driving site or contact Ellen Duysen at [ellen.duysen@unmc.edu](mailto:ellen.duysen@unmc.edu).

### **Progressive Agriculture Safety Day**

Current 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to attend Progressive Agriculture Safety Day on Thursday, May 25, 2023 at the Fillmore County Fairgrounds in Geneva, NE. Early registration forms and \$5 are due April 28<sup>th</sup>; forms can be [downloaded at fillmore.unl.edu](#). After April 28<sup>th</sup>, registration is \$10/youth. For more info or to register, call 402-759-3712 or email [brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu](mailto:brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu).