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Teens on Farms

UNMC and Nebraska Extension offer tractor safety course to teens in Nebraska

Do you have a teenager working for you on the farm? Maybe you are a parent of a teen who works for a farmer. Farming has the highest fatality rate of any occupation out there, and the sobering statistic goes beyond working adults. Every three days, a child dies on a farm or ranch.

Federal law prohibits children under 16 years of age from using certain equipment on a farm unless their parents or legal guardians own the farm. However, certification received through a course offered by Extension and UNMC grants an exemption to that law. Upon successful completion of the course, 14- and 15-year-olds are allowed to drive a tractor and do field work with certain mechanized equipment.

Partners from Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health at UNMC and Nebraska Extension will provide the courses, May through July of 2020, at 11 sites across Nebraska. The course provides extensive training on tractor and all-terrain vehicle safety, other hazardous equipment, and first aid, with a variety of hands-on activities that emphasize safety as a priority.

Anyone under age 14 is not eligible to take the class. Cost of the course is \$60 and includes educational materials, instruction, supplies, and lunch.

The first day of class will cover the required elements of the National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program, with hands-on participation, concluding with a written test which students must pass to attend the second day of training.

The second day of training will include a driving test with equipment operation. Students must demonstrate competence in hitching and unhitching equipment and driving a tractor and trailer through a standardized course. Instructors will also offer education about 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, Ph.D., Ellen Duysen, MPH; UNMC graduate student Alyssa Damke; and Nebraska Extension Educators Troy Ingram, Randy Saner, Chandra Giles, and John Thomas.

Classes begin at 8 a.m. or 9 a.m., depending on location, and end times vary depending on the number of participants. If classes do not fill to the minimum of 10 participants, an option will be offered to do Day 1 training online and Day 2 in person.

Dates, training site locations, and site coordinator phone numbers are below:

May 26 & 27 – **Ord** at Fairgrounds (308) 728-5071; May 28 & 29 – **Wayne** at Fairgrounds (402) 375-3310; June 1 & 2 – **O'Neill** at Plains Equipment (402) 336-2760; June 3 (first day is online) – **Gordon** at Fairgrounds (308) 327-2312; June 4 & 5 – **Ainsworth** at Evangelical Free (402) 387-2213; June 9 & 10 –

Geneva at Fairgrounds (402) 759-3712; June 11 & 12 – **North Platte** at West Central Research, Extension and Education Center (308) 532-2683; June 16 & 17 – **Kearney** at Buffalo County Extension Office (308) 236-1235; June 18 & 19 – **Hastings** at Adams County Extension Office (402) 461-7209; June 29 & 30 – **Gering** at Legacy Museum (308) 632-1480; July 1 & 2 – **Weeping Water** at Fairgrounds (402) 267-2205.

For more information or to register, contact the appropriate Extension office number above. The registration form is located at go.unl.edu/tractorsafety. Nebraska Extension cares about you. Stay safe and healthy this winter! For more information on health and safety, contact susan.harris@unl.edu.