



# Farm Tractor Safety

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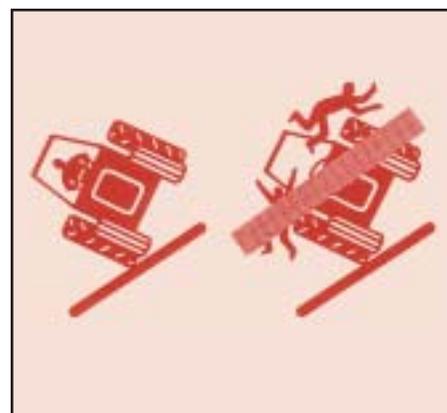
**A**utumn is fast approaching and like me, many of you are anticipating the upcoming hunting season. This means preparing and planting food plots, maintaining access roads, and mowing fields and trails. The use of a farm tractor is essential for many of these tasks and regardless of your skill level or experience we should always take the necessary time to ensure it is used safely. Here are a few safety rules that will help you prevent accidents and injuries.

**Know your tractor, its implements, their limits, and how they work.** Read and understand the operator's manual(s)

for your tractor and its implements before you operate them. Keep your equipment clean and in good working order.

**Use Roll Over Protective Structure (ROPS) and seat belt whenever and wherever applicable.** Most tractor fatalities are caused by overturns (*see Figure 1*). If your tractor is equipped with a ROPS, always wear the seatbelt. If your tractor does not have a ROPS, it is recommended to have one installed.

**Start the engine from the operator's seat only.** Never attempt to start the engine by shorting across the starter terminals. The machine will start in gear



*Figure 1 - As most tractor fatalities are caused by overturns, always wear a seatbelt.*



Figure 2 - Never attempt to start the engine by shorting across the starter terminals.

and cause serious injury or death to anyone in the vicinity of the tractor (see Figure 2).

**Be familiar with your work area and terrain.** Walk the area first to check for hidden obstacles and drive safely. Use special caution on slopes, slow down for all turns, and stay off the highway whenever possible.

**Never get off of a moving tractor or leave its engine running.** Shut it down

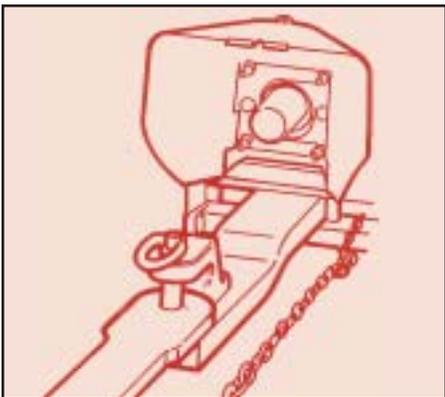


Figure 4 - Keep hitches low and always on the drawbar.

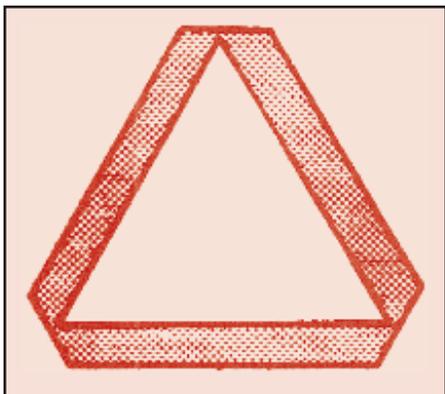


Figure 5 - Make sure your tractor is equipped with "slow-moving vehicle" signs before operating on a public road.

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before leaving the seat and engage the parking brake. A runaway tractor can be extremely dangerous.

**Always keep your Power Take-Off (PTO) properly shielded.** Never stand or allow anyone else to stand between the tractor and the implement unless the engine is turned off, the PTO shaft has stopped turning, and the parking brake is engaged. Make a habit of walking around your tractor and PTO-driven implement — never over, through, or between the tractor and implement. The PTO rotates with enough speed and strength to kill you. (See Figure 3.)

**Keep hitches low and always on the drawbar.** Otherwise, your tractor might flip over backwards. (See Figure 4.)

**Never refuel while the engine is running or hot.** The possibility of a fuel spill resulting in fire is high. Additionally, do not add coolant to the radiator while the engine is hot; hot coolant can erupt and cause a scalding injury.

**Before operating your tractor on a public road:** Familiarize yourself with



Figure 3 - Never stand or allow anyone else to stand between the tractor and the implement unless the engine is turned off.

local laws that might apply to your tractor. Make sure it is equipped with "slow-moving vehicle" signs (see Figure 5), and lock the brake pedals together to ensure proper braking.

**Never be in a hurry or take chances about anything you do with your tractor.** Think safety first, then take your time and do it right. 🛑



Landowner Neil Martin performs a safety check before working on his wildlife food plots.