



### Three ways for farmers and drivers to share rural roads

From field to table, there are many roads farmers use to bring their crops, produce, and livestock to market. This spring, tractors, planters, sprayers, and trailers will join cars, trucks, and motorcycles on two-lane highways and gravel roads.

Driving farm equipment on public roads is a top concern for farmers, yet some farmers have no choice but to use public road to get farm equipment to the field.

"Farmers are working an increasing number of acres," said Stacy Walton, director of farm casualty underwriting at Grinnell Mutual. "A farmer may use a brand new planter to do some custom farming and plant for other farmers, too. The equipment isn't just crossing the road to get to a field, it may be on that road for a couple of miles to get to that field. That can be a danger."

According to data from the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, more than 40 percent of all rural traffic fatalities occurred on rural roads with speed limits of 55 mph or higher. The Committee on Agricultural Safety and Health Research and Extension found crash fatalities in rural counties were nearly twice as high as urban counties.

Whatever and wherever you drive, Grinnell Mutual reminds you to show courtesy to all the vehicles sharing the road with you.

#### 1. **Inspect farm equipment, farmers.**

Before taking farm equipment on public roads, farmers should inspect their equipment to make sure motorists can easily see it.

"Make sure each piece of farm equipment has a slow moving vehicle sign and working lights," said Walton.

The Iowa Center for Agricultural Safety and Health recommends adding reflectors and reflective tape to farm equipment as well as mirrors that allow drivers to see traffic behind them.

#### 2. **Farmers and drivers, be aware.**

Even without farm equipment, the hills, bridges, and turns on rural roads can present unique challenges for motorists. Many intersections on gravel roads have no stop signs. Dry weather conditions may make roads dusty while wet weather may soften road shoulders.

"Drivers should be aware of where they are and use more caution on the country roads," said Walton. "Go slowly

both drivers have enough time to react and pass each other safely.”

### 3. Find a friend, farmers.

“In spring and fall, these rural roads will be used by farmers. It’s their living,” said Walton.

There are certain situations—hauling hay, crossing bridges, or traveling on hilly roads—where visibility for the motorist and the farm equipment driver may be limited. Having an escort vehicle may help to call attention to the farm equipment on the road so that everyone may share the road safely.

“Have someone precede or follow to create a buffer for the farm equipment,” said Walton.

### Caution and courtesy can prevent an accident

“An accident is the last thing farmers want. It’s the last thing drivers want,” said Walton. “In this time when everyone is busy and going places in a hurry, take that little bit of caution. It could save a lot of heartache in the long run.”

### For more information

This article is part of a series of articles for **National Farm Safety & Health Week**, “Safety Counts: Protecting What Matters.” Read the other articles in the series.

- Rural Roadway Safety: **Three ways for farmers and drivers to share rural roads.**
- Health: **Stay healthy during harvest with rest breaks.**
- Children: An **interview with Farm Safety For Just Kids Education Director Shari Burgus** about making safety count for children on the farm.
- Confined Spaces in Agriculture: **The habits of highly effective grain handlers.**
- Tractor Safety: **For farm equipment, it’s one driver. No riders.**

For more driving safety tips, visit “**Preventing Losses**” on Grinnell Mutual’s website, [grinnellmutual.com](http://grinnellmutual.com).

---

[Resource Center](#) | [Careers](#) | [Claims](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Manage My Account](#) | [Salvage Classifieds](#) | [Home](#)

©2009 – 2016 Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company. All Rights Reserved. [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

Connect     