

Post Rock Extension District Column

Week of September 21-25, 2020

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National Farm Safety and Health Week, September 20-26, 2020!

Well, the 2020 harvest of our fall crops is underway in parts of the Post Rock Extension District and north central Kansas! Stay tuned and I will share about the importance of SAFETY first and foremost!

Each year since 1944, the third week of September has been recognized as National Farm Safety & Health Week. So for 2020 the dates are September 20-26. This recognition has been an annual promotion initiated by the National Safety Council and has been proclaimed by each sitting U.S. President since Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the first document. The 2020 theme for National Farm Safety & Health Week is “**Every Farmer Counts**”.

The theme is to acknowledge, celebrate, and uplift America’s farmers and ranchers who have encountered many challenges over the past couple of years, yet continue to work hard to provide the food, fiber, and fuel that we need. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there are about 3.4 million agricultural producers in America, which is only about one percent of our population. These farmers and ranchers not only provide the essentials that we need, but they do wonderful things for their families and friends, their communities, and beyond. That is why “Every Farmer Counts” and now is the time to prioritize their safety and health.

The most recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows the agricultural sector is **still** the most dangerous in America. As we recognize National Farm Safety & Health Week this September, join us in promoting safe and healthy practices on our farms and ranches as producers enter the harvest season across Kansas!

Farmers are at very high risk for fatal and nonfatal injuries, and farming is one of the few industries in which family members, who often share the work and live on the premises, are also at risk for injuries.

Harvest season can be a very stressful time for farm families, so it is important to remember these simple guidelines to keep everyone safe.

- Make sure that anyone operating the combine and other harvest machinery, has been trained to use it and is aware of potential hazards.
- Before approaching machinery for maintenance or inspection, make sure it is shut down with the engine off, the key removed, and all moving parts stopped completely.
- Keep bystanders away from harvesting equipment and never allow extra riders. One seat means one rider.

- Remember for everyone to share the road! When it is necessary to move heavy, slow-moving equipment on public roads, try to pick a time with light traffic flow to minimize contact with traffic.
- Make sure all the appropriate safety lights work properly and safety reflectors are visible to other motorists.
- Always use a Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblem on vehicles that travel less than 25 miles per hour.
- Be sure and take breaks often to prevent fatigue and stress which can prevent accidents.

Contact me if you have further questions on harvest safety in your crop fields at any of our Post Rock Extension District offices in Beloit, Lincoln, Mankato, Osborne or Smith Center.

Post Rock Extension District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Osborne, Mitchell and Smith counties. Sandra may be contacted at swick@ksu.edu or by calling Smith Center, 282-6823, Beloit 738-3597, Lincoln 524-4432, Mankato 378-3174, or Osborne 346-2521. Join us on Facebook now at “Post Rock Extension” along with our blog site at “postrockextension.blogspot.com. Also remember our website is www.postrock.ksu.edu and my twitter account is @PRDcrops.