

# Take time to transport equipment safely

KEWANEE, II. — With a busy harvest season coming up, this is a good time to review safety precautions for transporting farm equipment. Often farmers become pressed for time and try to move equipment without taking proper precautions. They believe they'll save time, but this is when accidents most often occur.

Ron Birr, Kewanee Machinery Division Manager of Engineering Administration, and Howard Hadler, Kewanee Division Engineer, suggest that awareness is a vital factor in preventing equipment transport accidents. "Be especially aware of

equipment width and height when transporting," says Birr. "Towing a tall auger or grain elevator is dangerous unless the equipment is lowered and locked into transport position. The taller the equipment, the more unstable it is likely to be.

"It is also important to watch for overhead obstructions such as wires, low overpasses or bridges and tree branches," he adds.

"The most common obstacles to towing wide machinery are gates, narrow driveways and bridges," says Birr. "Wide winged implements such as disks, cultivators or mulchers can be unstable and a hazard if transported in the open

position. Folded, they give the farmer a narrower, more compact piece of equipment to tow."

"Never use makeshift arrangements to tow or transport equipment," warns Hadler. "Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for transport and be sure equipment is under control at all times.

"In any move, on or off the road, loads should be carried as low as possible for stability. Before taking off with a tow, make sure that the hitch pin is secure and can't accidentally work out of the hitch," Hadler states.

When moving machinery on public roads or highways, Birr reminds farmers to note all posted clearance heights and widths. "Knowing ahead of time that your 16' disk won't make it across a 15' wide bridge can save a lot of time and trouble," remarks Birr.

"Remember to use safety warnings that alert other motorists," he adds. "This includes displaying a slow moving vehicle (SMV) sign on the back and using flashing lights to warn of slow movement."

"Keep your eyes open for holes and bumps in the road that could throw you or tip the machine," adds Hadler. "It is very important to use the seat belts in a tractor with ROPS (Roll Over Protective Structure)." In case of an accident, the operator will remain safe inside the protected cab.

"Be award of how much space

you are taking up on the roadway. Don't interfere with other motorists and watch for obstructions on the side of the road when traveling close to the edge," Hadler warns.

Hadler also warns against allowing anyone to hitch a ride on a piece of towed equipment, even for a short distance. "There are no provisions for riders on equipment that is being towed. But a rider could be severely injured or killed if he falls or is jolted off the machinery."

"The key to preventing accidents is taking the time to be careful and being award of possible problems, says Birr. "By following manufacturers instructions, paying attention to details and avoiding 'short cuts', we can protect ourselves and our equipment from injury," summarizes Birr.

## Lou Moore looks at the 1981 grain harvest

UNIVERSITY PARK — The first corn crop report of the season reveals a surprisingly low prospect for the 1981 harvest this fall. The harvest forecast of 7.12 billion bushels is about 7 percent above last year's drought reduced harvest but much below earlier expectations, reports H. Louis Moore, Penn State ag economist.

It was estimated that a crop of about 7.7 billion bushels was needed to relieve the tight supply situation which has existed for the last year. The current estimate was based on conditions that existed on the nation's farms on July 1.

Many of the major corn states expect their yields per acre to be below a year ago. Substantial drops are expected in Ohio and Indiana where planting was delayed by extremely wet weather during the planting period. Ohio expects an average yield of 85 bushels per acre compared to 113 a year ago and 115 in 1979. Indiana expects an average yield of 82 bushels per acre compared in 96 in 1980 and 112 in 1979.

The National average yield is expected to be about 96 bushels compared to only 91 last year as a result of the drought. The record harvest was 109.7 bushels per acre

in 1979.

The nation's farmers expect to harvest about 74 million acres, up about 1.5 percent from 1980. Pennsylvania's acreage for grain harvest, up about 50,000 acres or 4 percent, is projected to reach a record 123.7 million bushels, up more than 27 percent from a year ago. Pennsylvania farmers expect corn yields to be about 93 bushels per acre.

However, weather conditions may cause substantial revisions in monthly crop reports during the remainder of the growing season.

While there is a concern about whether there will be adequate supplies of corn and soybeans in 1981, wheat will be abundant. The nation's farmers expect to harvest 80.7 million acres of wheat in 1981, up 14 percent from last year.

Excellent growing conditions in most wheat growing areas will result in the biggest wheat crop the

nation has ever harvested. The 1981 harvest is forecast at 2.81 billion bushels, up 19 percent from last year and up 32 percent from the 1979 crop. All but 7 of the 41 wheat growing states expanded wheat acreage for the 1981 harvest.

Pennsylvania farmers planted 270,000 acres to wheat last fall, up 20,000 from the previous year. The harvest, now underway, is expected to reach 10.3 million bushels, up 1 million bushels or 11 percent from 1980.

If corn crop conditions do not improve from the July estimate, sizable amounts of wheat are likely to be utilized as livestock feed during the coming year. The U.S. is anxious to increase wheat exports in the months ahead but the increase will not come easily. Other major wheat producing nations are harvesting bumper crops, too.

## Financial picture

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remain relatively high and current returns low.

Many small farmers are in a similar situation. Debt will probably increase fastest for small poultry, tobacco, and cotton farms. The concentration of these farms in the southeast may make that regional particularly vulnerable to income fluctuations.

However, new and small farmers with dependable outside income sources might find the next few years a good time to get started or expand — before accelerating returns attract additional competition and further spur land values.

As a group, the largest farms typically carry the highest debts in relation to assets, and some may face short-term cash flow problems. Nevertheless, they'll again be the big winners in the next decade.

Economists foresee substantial further concentration of wealth on established farms with large real estate holdings. Small farms may account for only about 10 percent of total farm sector equity by 1990, half their current share.



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