

Tractor Companies Unite To Promote ROPS, Seat Belts On Older Machines

ITASCA, Ill. — In an unprecedented joint effort, North America's five leading tractor companies are working together to encourage tractor owners to have their older machines equipped with rollover protective structures (ROPS) and seat belts in an effort to help reduce deaths and injuries associated with rollovers and run-overs.

As an incentive to owners, AGCO Corporation, Case Corporation, Deere & Company, Kubota Tractor Corporation, and New Holland North America, Incorporated are making it possible to purchase ROPS and seat belts at the companies' cost.

This joint effort is aimed at reducing the two leading causes of death and injury to tractor operators. Statistics compiled by the National Safety Council show 55 percent of all tractor-related deaths in 1995 were associated with rollovers and 26 percent involved people who were run over by tractors. Approximately one-half of the people run over were operators who were thrown from tractors.

A recent study of 76 tractor rollover fatalities by Iowa State University and the University of Iowa Center for Agricultural Safety and

Health (I-CASH) showed all 76 victims were operating tractors without ROPS and seat belts.

"If a tractor rolls over and it doesn't have a ROPS, there's a 75 percent chance of dying," said I-CASH Director Dr. Kelley Donham. "If you put a ROPS and seat belt on the tractor, and wear the seat belt, you have a 95 percent or greater chance of walking away from the situation."

Donham stresses that wearing a seat belt is important, because it ensures the operator remains in the protection zone of the ROPS.

ROPS and seat belts were adopted as standard equipment by all major tractor manufacturers in 1985. However, according to a 1994 survey by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, more than 2.9 million, or 62 percent, of the estimated 4.7 million tractors in use on farms were not equipped with ROPS and seat belts.

To encourage owners to have ROPS and seatbelts installed on their older tractors and to reduce the effect that price may have on the decision, AGCO, Case, John Deere, Kubota, and New Holland are offering kits at cost to their dealers and asking them to sell these kits without markup. For tractor owners concerned about low overhead clearance, such as

barn doors, folding ROPS kits are also available for some tractors. Depending on the tractor model, most ROPS kits cost less than \$600 (U.S.), plus freight and installation. Kits are available for most tractors manufactured in the mid/late 1960s up to 1985 (when ROPS and seat belts became standard).

In addition to the price incentive, the companies plan to place co-sponsored announcements in various farm media, including company-produced communications, to promote ROPS and seat belts on older tractors. At the same time, each company will continue its individual educational and promotional programs to encourage owners to have their older tractors equipped with ROPS and seat belts.

Tractor owners should contact their local dealer for more information and to set up an appointment to have ROPS and seat belts installed on their older tractors.

The National Safety Council encourages all farmers and ranchers to take the first step and put an emphasis on safety during National Farm Safety and Health week and throughout the year. It will take a team effort to prevent tractor rollover deaths and other farm and ranch injuries.

Rice Is Just A Click Away

HOUSTON, Texas — Rice is just a click away. Welcome to the '50s-themed *Have a Rice Day Cafe*, a new, interactive web site where rice eaters around the world can congregate to learn the latest news on the rice industry, pick up some tips for cooking the perfect pot of rice, download recipes with the click of a button, check out festivals and events happening in the rice growing areas, and a whole lot more.

The site, sponsored by the USA Rice Federation, features black-and-white rice industry photos from the '50s along with a menu which includes more than 100 rice recipes (photos and nutrition content included), a bibliography of

rice cookbooks, trivia, and an interactive forum where guests can play games, ask questions of the rice experts, submit favorite rice recipes, or search for recipes that contain a particular ingredient.

In addition to fun graphics, the site (located at <http://www.usarice.com>) is designed to entice guests to visit again and again. "We're updating the site weekly to feature a seasonal recipe-of-the-week and include the latest news about the rice industry. It will continue to expand and evolve, keeping visitors of the *Cafe* entertained and informed," said Kimberly Park, manager of national consumer education programs for USA Rice.

On Being a
Farm Wife
(and other
hazards)
Joyce Bupp



Sometimes you can spot trouble a mile away.

This wasn't quite a mile, but the trouble ahead was obvious.

There on the steps of a local bank was a familiar face. As I got closer, a second familiar face came into view. Uncle Donnie. And Lindy, whose family are special friends. There would be some sort of grief from these two, and it came the moment I rounded the corner.

"Hey, look at the size of that handbag," they harrassed, knowing I was headed up the steps to the door and insinuating that it was stuffed with a bunch of deposit potential. Yeah. Right.

"Well, it's certainly not full of checks," I laughed in defense, "though I wish. No way. It's full of...of...uh, pens and cosmetics and stuff."

Fact is, the handbag is full of "stuff." But, for a split second there, I couldn't for the life of me recall what all the stuff was causing my worn purse to look like it was going to have puppies.

This was a wake-up call. Because, parked on a closet shelf back home was a brand new handbag, one I had purchased just a few weeks ago. The intent was to replace the worn, aging one, with its fraying sides and threadbare strap attachments, with one of more respectable appearance. At least for a little while, I might not look as though I was hauling around something that might have passed as a well-used saddlebag lingering from the Pony Express era. Stuffed with...good question.

But the replacement had remained parked on the shelf for at least three weeks. I'd forgotten about it, to be honest. Maybe because I hate to switch handbags.

A handbag is your life. A handbag is — essentially — you. Let a woman browse through another woman's handbag for three

minutes and she can probably piece together a life story. And we all have our own personal filing systems in our heads for using the various compartments provided by the most useful of well-designed handbags.

Men — who often make fun of our handbags — delight in having fishing, hunting, tool, etc, vests sporting about 23 pockets, each filled with some vital necessity. Like squirmy, squishy Jello-consistency colored artificial worms or bugs. Or real, live bullets neatly arranged, for goodness' sake. And they laugh at what we carry around?

Debating that gender gap nudged me to get the handbag retirement and transfer process under way. Or maybe it was curiosity? What all was in there? I lugged the new purse down from upstairs and embarked on this adventure.

Relocated to a new home in a black, faux-leather, four-sectioned shoulder bag were the usual: wallet, datebook, checkbook, sunglasses, comb and brush, notebook of phone numbers and addresses, contact lens solutions, emergency glasses in case I lose a contact lens, and cosmetic case bulging with miscellaneous makeup and one rubberband. Source of rubberband, undetermined.

Tucked into another section was my "sundries" department, a small plastic case stuffed with tiny scissors, mini-sewing kit, bandages, emory boards and miscellaneous pain-reliever sample packs, which I rarely ever use but frequently lend to fellow meeting attendees. Found at the bottom of that section was a retracting tape measure periodically used while shopping to measure potential household purchases. Also borrowed by a male stranger in a discount department store a few months ago — because he had forgotten his.

More interesting were the flotsam and jetsam: one name tag, three dairy-related lapel pins, a scrawled drawing on a pink piece of paper gifted me by a five-year-old church friend, seven ball point pens, eight fine-line marker pens, one pink highlighter, two paper clips, two safety pins, three pieces of wrapped chocolate, four pieces of assorted hard candy, one restaurant courtesy breath mint, and two slightly misshapen pieces of chewing gum. I struck paydirt on the the very bottom: one dime, two nickels, and six pennies.

Know what? I transferred most of it. Except for a handful of crumpled tissues and a few scrap grocery lists. And the chocolate, which promptly disappeared.

Alas, the new handbag now looks like it's going to have puppies. But, guys, I did find something I can deposit in the bank: Twenty-six cents.

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