

Segment for Week of 28 June 2021

Equipment and Road Safety

This is Pauline Milbourne bringing you information on shore friendly living and gardening from the Eastern Shore Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension. This week I will be talking to you about farm equipment and road safety.

It's summer time and harvest season on the Eastern Shore. The longer days are allowing for more time spent on the farm and slow-moving equipment is making its way to Rt 13 to travel from one field to the next. Motorists will find themselves more often sharing the road with large, slow-moving equipment and if not prepared or aware, a collision may occur. To avoid an accident with farm equipment, heed this advice:

- 1. Be aware of and recognize farm vehicles early.** Per the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' Driver's Manual, any farm machinery or equipment that travels less than 25 mph must display a slow-moving vehicle sign on the rear of the vehicle. Once you see this sign, slow down. The slow-moving vehicle sign is a triangular sign with a red reflective border and a florescent red-orange center. Some farm machinery or equipment may also display other signage or flashing lights that would help motorists to identify the machinery as slow-moving.
- 2. Watch for left-turning equipment.** Do not assume that a farm vehicle that pulls to the right is making a right-hand turn or is letting you pass, they may be turning left. This left-hand turn requires a wide swing to line up with the driveway and if not prepared or aware, the motorist behind may intend to pass on the left and cause a collision. To avoid this collision, look for access roads or gates to the left before passing that may indicate a left-hand turn. Some newer machinery may be

equipped with signal lights, equipment operators will use them in these cases.

- 3. Do not pass farm equipment unless it is safe.** A motorist may pass a slow-moving vehicle if the roadway is clear of oncoming traffic far enough to safely complete the pass. Do not pass in a designated “No Passing Zone.”
- 4. Safely passing equipment.** When passing, be extra-cautious and patient; be watchful of other vehicles. A driver understands he is moving very slow and will move to the side to let you pass. Please be patient as there may be some soft, wet shoulders that preclude the immediate movement of equipment but the driver will move to the side as soon as possible.
- 5. Equipment on a backroad.** When a motorist encounters a large piece of equipment on a backroad, the farm equipment may be too large to move off the road. In order to keep the flow of traffic moving, please find the nearest driveway to pull into and let the equipment pass.

In your travels this month you will see tractors, sprayers, potato harvesters, soybean planters, bush hogs, snap bean pickers, combines, grain headers and so much more. If you are interested in learning more about agriculture here on the Shore, call your local Accomack or Northampton County Extension Office. Here on the Shore call either 678-7946 or 787-1361.