

### **It's Go Time: Stay Safe on the Roads!**

With the longer days now leaving more light into the evening, farmers are taking every opportunity to work later and get this year's crop in the ground.

This means greater activity on the roads from both farmers and the public as more events are held. It may be best to remind ourselves to be considerate of our neighbors and heed the additional traffic guidelines regarding slow moving vehicles.

I implore you to revisit the Frederick News Post article from September of 2022 if you would like a refresher on best practices for staying safe on the roads during busy times of the year for farmers.

So what happens if we're not careful? I was recently told a chilling story by a local farmer in which he recalled a near miss between his equipment and an impatient driver that illustrates this potential for calamity.

On a balmy evening at dusk, the grower had finished planting a field and was moving to the next farm. To do so, the grower had to use a frequently traveled county road for a distance no greater than one mile. In an effort to stay safe, the farmer explained that he followed behind the tractor and planter in his pick-up truck with both the hazard lights and a roof-mounted flashing safety light-bar on full display. "I had that thing lit-up like a Christmas Tree", he recalled.

His son, the one driving the tractor attached to the planter led the parade down the road to the next farm in "road-gear", the top-end range of the tractor. Though modern farm equipment is nothing short of an engineering marvel in regard to their astonishingly mighty power, many cannot travel faster than 20 to 25 miles per hour on the road by way of gearing and sheer weight.

With this, a few cars began to set up behind both the planting rig and the grower in the pick-up truck following closely.

As the procession neared the field entrance, both the tractor, planter, and truck signaled a left-hand turn into the lane. Fearing the inevitable, the grower made it a point to ease ever so slightly into the opposite lane as the tractor began to make its left-hand turn in an effort to signal that other drivers ought not pass even with the slow-down and slight rightward movement from the tractor and planter.

By now, I'm sure you see where this is going: a driver following behind the truck observed the beginning of the lightbulb turn from the tractor and assumed it was getting over to allow for traffic to pass. Large equipment may make arcing or lightbulb turns to make tighter turns. The grower's efforts to shift over to the left were thwarted as the driver misunderstood the circumstances and attempted to pass the equipment.

Tires squealed and tempers flared as the impending crisis was averted. "That car came within inches of hitting that tractor", the grower explained.

These events are unfortunately common, and some of which end in tragedy. These pieces of equipment are large, heavy, and expensive; and yes, they may cause short delays in our travel.

However, we must all do our part to ensure that near misses and their disastrous counterparts are not realized in this beautiful county. Please give grace and enjoy this gorgeous spring.

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