



CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL SAFETY WEEK MARCH 11-17

SEMAINE CANADIENNE DE LA SÉCURITÉ EN MILIEU AGRICOLE mars 11-17

Tractor rollovers leading cause of farm fatalities

No time to think. No time to react. It takes about three-quarters of a second for a tractor to rollover. Accounting for one in five deaths, tractor rollovers are the leading cause of farm-related fatalities in Canada.

Equipping tractors with a rollover prevention system or ROPS and ensuring the operator wears a seatbelt has been proven to be 99 per cent effective in preventing death or serious injury in the event of a tractor rollover. Do all of your tractors have ROPS?

Rollover protection is one of the safety strategies in a new farm management tool called the Canada FarmSafe Plan developed by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA). A free download of the core Canada FarmSafe Plan is available at www.planfarmsafety.ca.

The Canada FarmSafe Plan supports the theme *Plan • Farm • Safety*, a three-year focus for the Canadian agricultural safety campaign. In 2012, emphasis is on "Safety" including assessment, improvement and further development of safety systems. Last year, the focus was on "Farm" including implementation, documentation and training. In 2010, the campaign promoted "Plan" featuring safety walkabouts and planning for safety.

The yearlong "Safety" campaign will be launched with Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW), March 11 to 17. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) and CASA deliver CASW in partnership with Farm Credit Canada (FCC) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through Growing Forward, a federal, provincial, territorial initiative.

"New tractors come with ROPS installed but virtually all makes and old models of tractors can be retrofitted with ROPS," says Marcel Hacault, CASA executive director.

Male tractor operators aged 50 and older account for the highest number of rollover fatalities, reports an article published in the June issue of *Chronic Diseases and Injuries in Canada*. The report says this is likely because many older operators use tractors that were made before manufacturers routinely installed ROPS, thereby increasing their likelihood of a fatality during a rollover.

"Having ROPS is only half of the equation," explains Hacault. "The operator must also be wearing a seatbelt to stay in the safe area and not be thrown in harm's way."

The most common cause of a sideways rollover is driving too close to the edge of a ditch or steep slope. Always drive at least 1.5 metres away from the edge of a ditch or steep slope.

Backwards rollovers usually occur when pulling-out or towing machines, dragging logs or implements, or removing stumps or trees. To avoid backwards rollovers, never hitch a tow chain above the draw bar of the tractor.

When it comes to farm safety, 'use ROPS and wear a seatbelt' are words to live by.

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