

Tractor/farm safety courses available

Written by Gothenburg Times
Wednesday, 14 April 2010 21:19 -

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Tractor/Farm Safety Courses will be offered at seven locations across the state in May and June.

Federal law prohibits youth under 16 years of age from working on a farm other than that owned by their parents. Course completion grants an exemption to the law allowing 14- and 15-year-olds to drive a tractor and to do field work with mechanized equipment. The course also is available for just the safety training if room permits.

To standardize the training, courses were moved to seven locations across the state this year instead of many local classes such as has been offered annually in Dawson County.

The most common cause of death in agriculture accidents in Nebraska is overturn from tractors and all-terrain-vehicles (ATV), said Bill Booker, UNL Extension educator in Box Butte County. Tractor and ATV overturn prevention are featured in the class work.

“There is an obligation to teach safety, and these courses allow us to do that,” Booker said. “These classes will teach respect for the job and the tools involved.”

Classes consist of two, eight-hour days plus two, four-hour homework assignments. Classes are from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. each day. An optional third day of training is available for ATV safety. Dates and locations include:

May 26-27, Panhandle Research and Extension Center, Scottsbluff

June 1-2, West Central Research and Extension Center, North Platte

June 4-5, Fairgrounds, Kearney

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June 8-9, Tractor Test Lab, UNL East Campus, Lincoln

June 11-12, North Central Research and Extension Center, Norfolk

June 15-16, Niobrara Valley Equipment, Ainsworth

June 22-23, Southeast Research and Extension Center at the Agriculture Research and Development Center, near Mead

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged two weeks before a location's start date. Cost is \$60 to cover expenses. For more information, contact Bill Booker at (308) 762-5616, wbooker2@unl.edu, Sharry Nielsen at (308) 832-0645, snielsen1@unl.edu or the local UNL Extension office in the county in which the training is offered. To register, call (308) 762-5616.

The first day of class will consist of intensive classroom instruction with hands-on demonstrations, concluding with a written test that must be completed satisfactorily before the student may continue the driving tests the next day. The classroom instruction will cover the required elements of the National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program. The program was developed to offer this exemption training. Homework will be assigned to turn in the next day.

The second day will consist of testing, driving and operating machinery. Students will have to demonstrate competence in hooking up and then driving the tractor and trailer through a standardized course. They also will have to hook up PTO and hydraulic systems.