

CFFO Concerns around the Road Safety Rules that apply to Agriculture

The CFFO is concerned that the road safety rules in the farm guide are falling out sync with the reality of the farm equipment that is on the road today. Tractors and equipment are larger, they are moving faster, and are travelling greater distances.

The danger that has been identified is that the potential for a tragic accident is on the rise. The industry needs to respond to this issue in a responsible manner. The bottom line for CFFO members is that our farm equipment needs to be safe when it hits the road.

Concerns and Recommendations:

1. **Tractor Speed:** Many tractors that are routinely active on today's road are capable of reaching 60 km/h. This is vastly different from the 40 km/h limit on vehicles using the slow-moving vehicle sign. The rules of the road need to reflect the speed of business.

Recommendation: The CFFO recommends that the slow moving vehicle sign retain its current definition. A second sign should be developed that indicates that the equipment on the road has an upper limit of 60 km/h. In addition, the CFFO recommends that the technical standards of vehicles and equipment (i.e. air or hydraulic braking) travelling at these increased speeds be reviewed in relation to the new limit to ensure they are adequate.

2. **Adequate Driver Training:** A number of gaps have been identified. For example, the current rules allow a 16-year old without a license to drive on the road. Another example is that there are many seasonal workers that are required to operate heavy equipment on the road. The status quo represents a serious risk. On one hand, with increased speeds and much heavier loads comes the need for increased training, yet, on the other hand, there is often the need on the farm for 16-year olds or undertrained individuals to operate this equipment on the road.

Recommendation: That a brief, voluntary training program be developed in consultation with general farm organizations, insurance agencies and the appropriate government ministries, and administered by the Farm Safety Association (or another body as deemed appropriate). Completion of the training program would provide a certificate for the driver. Furthermore, an incentive for farmers through reduced insurance rates needs to exist. On-line and foreign language services (i.e. Spanish) should be considered.

3. **Length of Rigs:** The CFFO is concerned that the length of rigs being towed by farm equipment at higher speeds could create dangerous passing situations.

Recommendation: That farm vehicle rigs that are pulling more than TWO pieces of equipment, OR the length of the rig exceeds 25 meters in length, use a sign similar to the “Long Commercial Vehicle” sign used by tractor trailers with double trailers. This would communicate to other vehicles that a long pass is required.

4. **Lighting and mirrors:** The CFFO is concerned that there are many older tractors and equipment that do not feature adequate lighting.

Recommendation: The CFFO believes that increasing farmer awareness of the importance of lighting to be seen by others to avoid accidents is the best approach to this situation. Furthermore, the CFFO recommends that farmers ensure they have adequate mirrors on their vehicles if possible.

Adopted by
CFFO Provincial Council
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