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Monthly Safety Blast

Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education

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Hayride Safety

It's that time of year again, where we like to enjoy the cool, crisp weather, pumpkin patches and hayrides. According to Red River Mutual, hayrides are a common agritourism attraction. If done properly they can be a very enjoyable experience for children visiting the farm. However, they can be extremely dangerous if adequate safety precautions are not in place. The following recommendations can decrease the risk of injury or unintentional death.

- At the beginning of each day, inspect tractors and hay wagons for safe and efficient operation. Check the hitch and make sure safety chains are in use.
- The tractor pulling the hayride must weigh more than the gross weight of the heaviest wagon it will tow. This is necessary for adequate traction and braking.
- Check the hay wagon and repair loose boards and railings, sharp edges and exposed screws and nails.
- Have sturdy steps with handrails for easy loading and unloading of passengers.
- Have a responsible adult with a valid driver's license operate the tractor. Ensure rear view mirrors are installed to provide the operator a view of the passenger area. Because of the presence of children, have proper child-to-adult ratios on the hayride.
- Choose the route carefully. Make sure it does not have steep grades or other hazards that can affect the stability of the tractor or hay wagon. Ensure route is clear of tree branches or other low hanging objects that could strike passengers.
- Do not travel on or across public roads and highways. If offering sleigh rides in the winter, do not travel on or cross snowmobile trails.
- Drive slowly and do not tow more than one wagon.
- Never allow riders on the tractor.



- The hay wagon should have railings and seating. It is especially important to have sturdy railings in the front of the wagon to prevent riders from falling forward and being inadvertently run over. No one should be allowed to hang their feet over the edge of the wagon.
- Do not allow standing on or crawling around the wagon. Jumping on and off the moving wagon should be forbidden. The operator of the hayride should be prepared to stop at the request of passengers.
- Clearly state safety rules to passengers and children once they are seated and ready to begin the hayride. These should include:
 - 1.) No standing or crawling around the wagon.
 - 2.) No jumping on and off the moving wagon.
 - 3.) No hanging feet over the edge of the wagon.
 - 4.) No extra riders on the tractor.

Animals on the farm are unpredictable and can be more dangerous than machinery. Injuries commonly caused by animals include being stepped on, pushed over, pinned between the animal and a hard surface, kicked and bitten. If using horses to pull hay wagons, be sure to follow the safety tips below.

- Ensure the fencing or barrier between the animals and children is adequate and that children cannot climb over or under it.
- Horses should not be brought out of stalls for viewing. If the animal becomes startled while in the open it could trample those in the area.
- Keep children away from the front of the wagon and a safe distance from the horses at all times.
- Always harness and hitch the horses before loading passengers on the hay wagon.
- Horses should wear blinders to prevent distraction from passengers.
- Ensure horses are healthy and capable of carrying passengers along the entire route safely.



Take the [hayride safety quiz](#) to test your knowledge!

Resources:

- <http://extension.psu.edu/business/farm/marketing>
- www.redrivermutual.com

Disclaimer: The facts and information listed above are merely suggestions for your safety, but are in no way a comprehensive and exhausted list of all actions needed to insure your safety.

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