



## Farm Equipment Out During Harvest Season

**September 15, 2020** - Frederick County Farm Bureau (FCFB) urges motorists and farmers to share the road this harvest season. Fall has arrived and farmers will be using combines and other large, slow moving equipment during the harvest period. As motorists travel highways and rural roads alike, they can expect to see an increase in farm equipment from one of Frederick County's 1,300 farms over the next several months.

Many farmers will be out overnight working as harvest is a very busy and stressful time. The harvest season extends between September and the beginning of November, and even reaching into December in recent years.

Sam Roop, FCFB President, said, "Frederick County farmers work tirelessly to provide food, fuel, and fiber. During harvest season please be mindful if you see combines or other slow-moving equipment on the roads. Farmers want to make sure all motorists as well as themselves are safe on the road".

Rural road safety is more important than ever as we start the fall harvest. With 55% of the nation's roadway fatalities occurring on rural roads, this is a major concern farmer's face each year. Farmers follow special practices to keep themselves and other drivers safe while on the road.

If you encounter farm equipment, a farmer understands that your trip is being delayed, so he or she will pull off the road at the first available safe location to allow you to pass. Do not assume that the farmer can immediately move aside. Road shoulders may be soft, wet or steep, and this can cause a farm vehicle to tip, or the shoulder may be unable to support a heavy farm vehicle.

The following tips will help ensure the safety of motorists, passengers, and operators of slow-moving equipment:

- If a farmer has pulled off the road to allow you to pass, or if he or she cannot pull off the road and you feel you must pass, do so with caution.
- Be watchful of vehicles behind you that may also try to pass.
- If you must enter the oncoming lane of traffic, do not pass unless you can see clearly ahead of both you and the vehicle you will pass.
- If there are any curves or hills ahead that may block your view or the view of oncoming vehicles, do not pass.
- Do not pass if you are in a designated "No Passing Zone" or within 100 feet of any intersection, railroad grade crossing, bridge, elevation structure, or tunnel.
- Do not assume that a farm vehicle that pulls to the right side of the road is going to turn right or is letting you pass. Due to the size of some farm implements, the farmer must execute wide left-hand turns. If you are unsure, check the operator's hand signals and check the left side of the road for gates, driveways or any place a farm vehicle may turn.

So out of safety for the farmer and yourself, please use caution this fall when encountering machinery on the roads to help ensure everyone gets home safely.