Watch the Road

Ahhhhh! Spring is finally here, and while there will no doubt be some cold and blustery days ahead, the warming sun and longer days will soon chase them away. This time of year always puts me in the mood to be in the field and prepare some ground for a summer crop…alas, lingering feelings of a former dairy farmer!

The crop I miss the most is our corn crop. Dad and I had a good system. We had fertile ground, good equipment and our fields were either contiguous to the dairy or just down the road. Those long days in the field were hardly a burden. I have fond memories, even as I staffed the fertilizer tender (our tender consisted of a 16 foot dump truck and a grain scoop) for our old 400 Cyclo corn planter. A great deal has changed even in the short time since we grew our last corn crop.

For one thing, a great many corn growers hired a custom harvester to plant their corn. Because the size of the harvesting equipment is much larger than before, the supporting equipment has grown as well.

One thing that has not grown is the width of many of our county back roads. I snapped a photo of my neighbors’ mower going to the field Monday. As you can see, there isn’t much room for an oncoming vehicle to pass the machine. The only advantage that is to found is the bigger, taller tractor allows the operator to see farther ahead, giving the tractor more time to react.

The neighbors’ mower isn’t the only piece of machinery that is a “road-full.” My 15 foot culti-mulcher is not only just as wide but it has a rigid frame that would likely shred the car that hit it. When I pull it over the road, I have to watch that I don’t accidentally take out mailboxes as I drive down the road.

The saving grace is that these machines only need to travel a short way over the road between fields. Still, fifty feet may be all that is needed for a fatal accident, so this season, keep an eye and an ear out for farm machinery being transported over the roads.

A good friend and colleague in Tennessee, Alan Galloway ran for Treasurer of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents using the campaign slogan “Watch the Road.” The saying originated from this parents and family telling him to be careful in life and the same mentality applied to managing the Association’s funds.

Likewise, that is my advice to you this growing season, Watch the Road….for farm machinery!

Upcoming Events

May 23 Last Day of School in Smyth County

May 26 Memorial Day Parade, Marion

May 30 Deadline to consign VQA calves for July 8 sale

June 10 Evergreen 3rd Annual Good Growth Outreach Program, Scott Waddle Farm 5:30 PM

June 12-14 OGATA Summer Show, 908 Hillman Hwy, Abingdon VA

June 23 Deadline to consign VQA calves to Aug sale

June 24-28 VA 4-H Congress, Blacksburg

July 7-11 Smyth County 4-H Camp

July 8 VQA Sale

July 14 VQA Steer Take-Up

July 16 VQA Heifer Take-Up (depending on numbers…. Could be a one-day take-up)

July 21-23 Virginia Beef Cattle University, The Inn, VA Tech Campus

July 29 Youth Day at Rich Valley Fair… stay tuned for more information

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Andy Overbay or Pam Testerman at (276) 783-5175/TDD (800) 828-1120) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.

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