



Farmers Can Finally Get in Fields; Don't Let Rush to Harvest Lead to Tragedy

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MADISON – Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary Sheila Harsdorf is asking farmers to put safety first when they hit the fields this week for a long-delayed harvest.

“With the delayed harvest and extensive rains, I know farmers are eager to get the crops off the fields, but remember to put everyone’s safety first – yourself, your family and your employees,” Harsdorf says. “Don’t take risks. If you have equipment breakdowns or other things that slow you down, don’t let frustration take over and lead to rash actions. Take a breath and think before you react. Let’s have a safe harvest.”

Hopefully, the downtime this fall has given farmers plenty of time to prepare their equipment, so safety features should be in place and breakdowns should be reduced. Other basic safety steps they can take:

- Take care of yourself and your workers. Be sure to get enough sleep, eat regularly, and take regular breaks. Wear appropriate safety gear. Make sure tasks are age-appropriate and workers are trained.
- If you do have a breakdown, pause before you dive in to fix it to be sure the power is off and safety features engaged.
- Keep a dry chemical fire extinguisher on all machines, including trucks.
- Keep a first-aid kit and other safety supplies in field vehicles and farm buildings.
- If possible, avoid driving farm equipment on highways in early morning and early evening, when commuters and school buses are on the road.
- Check headlights and warning lights daily.
- Follow rules of the road, and exercise caution even when signaling turns.
- Avoid entering grain bins, instead using a long pole to break up crusted grain or clear clogs. If you must enter, first shut off and lock unloading equipment, wear a harness attached to a secured rope, and have at least one other person stand outside the bin.

“So as you put in long hours harvesting the crops this fall, take time to be careful! Let’s have a safe harvest!” Harsdorf says.

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