

UNL Extension Tractor Safety courses offered across Nebraska

Written by Wauneta Breeze
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By Sharry Nielsen,

UNL Extension Educator

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Tractor Safety/Hazardous Occupations Courses will be offered at seven locations in Nebraska during May and June. Any 14 or 15-year-old teen who plans to work on a farm other than their parents' should plan to attend.

Federal law prohibits youth under 16 years of age from working on a farm for anyone other than their parents. Certification through the course grants an exemption to the law allowing 14- and 15-year-olds to drive a tractor and to do field work with mechanized equipment.

The most common cause of death in agriculture accidents in Nebraska is overturn from tractors and all-terrain-vehicles (ATVs), said Sharry Nielsen, UNL Extension Educator. Tractor and ATV overturn prevention are featured in the class work.

“Instilling an attitude of ‘safety first’ is a primary goal of the course,” Nielsen said. “where youth have the chance to learn respect for agricultural jobs and the tools involved.”

Classes consist of two days of instruction plus homework assignments. Classes are from 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. each day. Dates and locations include:

May 23-24, Fairgrounds, Kearney.

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June 3-4, Farm and Ranch Museum, Gering.

June 6-7, Fairgrounds, Valentine.

June 13-14, West Central Research and Extension Center, North Platte.

June 17-18, College Park, Grand Island.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged at least one week before a location's start date to the Extension Office at the course site. Cost is \$60, which includes educational materials, testing, supplies, lunches and breaks. For more information, contact the Extension Office or Sharry Nielsen at (308) 832-0645, snielsen1@unl.edu.

The first day of class will consist of intensive classroom instruction with hands-on demonstrations, concluding with a written test that must be completed satisfactorily before students may continue driving tests the next day.

Classroom instruction will cover the required elements of the National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program. Homework will be assigned to turn in the next day.

The second day will include testing, driving and operating machinery. Students must demonstrate competence in hitching equipment and driving a tractor and trailer through a standardized course as well as hitching PTO and hydraulic systems.