

ROPS

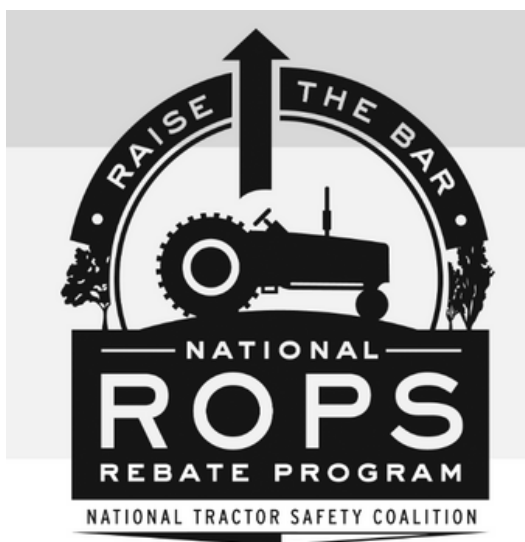
Tractor Safety

MEDIA PACKET

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*All information in this packet is able to be quoted and
used in news stories*

More info at: icash.public-health.uiowa.edu/programs/rops-rebate/




**I-CASH | Iowa's Center for
Agricultural Safety and Health**

The University of Iowa ■ Iowa State University
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Iowa Department of Public Health ■ Non-profits for Farm Health

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ROPS information

What is ROPS? A ROPS (rollover protective structure) is a metal bar or roof that attaches to a tractor and protects the farmer operating it. In the event of an overturn or rollover, ROPS prevents the operator from being crushed under the tractor. Commonly ROPS are referred to as "rollbars," but they also come in the form of a cab.

ROPS by the numbers



This graphic is from the National ROPS Rebate Program website, further info can be found at <https://www.ROPSr4u.org>

Videos: <https://www.ROPSr4u.org/videos.php>

Why ROPS are necessary

Tractor roll-overs affect the entire community

When a farmer dies or is injured due to a tractor roll-over, it impacts the social fabric of our small towns that are sustained by agriculture. There are ripple effects through the community, local economy, and generational knowledge is lost. In Iowa we value thriving rural communities in a time where this scarce resource is dwindling. Small towns are supported by generations of land stewards and neighbors who feel shared responsibility for the well-being of others.

Investing in prevention benefits health and the economy

We have to sustain our state's most important industry to insure the next generation of agriculture. Part of economic stewardship is helping farmers safely maintain older equipment. Older tractors without rollover protection contribute to numerous fatalities every year in our state. When a farmer dies or is injured, there is a considerable economic impact for the farm, family, and community.

*We know what works to keep people safe. We need to protect future generations in our communities by increasing access to proven safety strategies by providing **dedicated state funding for a ROPS rebate program in Iowa.***

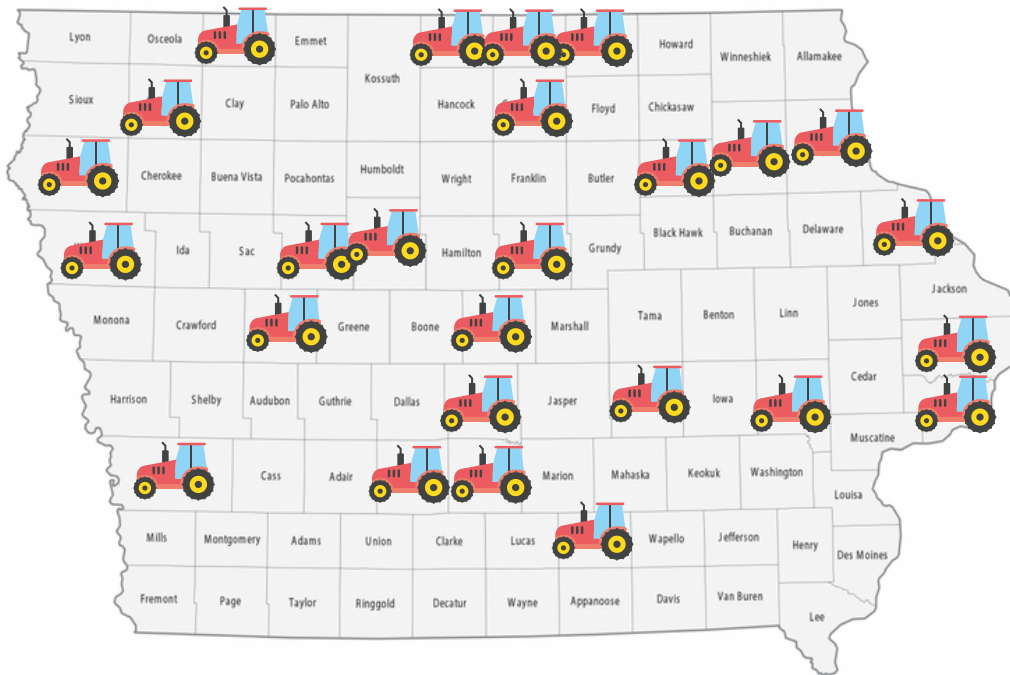
Iowa Facts:
According to data from the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health, Iowa leads the country in tractor overturn deaths, accounting for 12% of deaths nationally.

The ROPS program has retrofitted 33 tractors since 2020, tractors range from years 1961-1983. Given there are over 200,000 tractors in Iowa, this is a tiny portion of what can be done.



Tractor retrofitted with ROPS, courtesy of Iowa farmer, Easton Halverson

Counties that received one or more ROPS



"It's been my experience that farmers and their families are genuinely interested in taking steps, including ROPS retrofits, that increase safety on their farms. Unfortunately, the cost of retrofits, and the availability of retrofits for their oldest tractors, often create stumbling blocks. Rebate programs are a positive approach to providing support to farmers for 'doing the right thing.'"

Cheryl Tevis

Editor Emeritus, Successful Farming, I-CASH Advisory Board

"The rebate program motivated me a lot, but we also live on a farm with a lot of hills. My grandma rolled a tractor on our farm and was lucky to make it off in time. It was a no brainer to put the ROPS on our most used tractor to protect our lives as operators."

- Easton Halverson, Farmer and Iowa ROPS rebate participant

"My family and I would like to inform people by spreading the word of the loss of our Dad by a tractor roll over. If there was a ROPS on the tractor that he was operating he would still be alive today. After this tragic loss my family reached out to ROPS rebate program to retrofit our tractor with ROPS. This is a great program and I hope our family can tell our story to help save other lives from these types of accidents."

- Seth Last, Farmer and Iowa ROPS rebate participant

ROPS a proven strategy to keep old tractors safely running

By Brandi Janssen
Feb 14, 2022

https://www.agupdate.com/iowafarmertoday/news/state-and-regional/rops-a-proven-strategy-to-keep-old-tractors-safely-running/article_62b80302-8a85-11ec-97fd-eb663d2dc138.html



An International 1466 tractor in Plymouth County, Iowa, before and after ROPS installation. In addition to the ROPS, the owner added a canopy and steps with a hand rail.

Photos courtesy I-CASH

By Brandi Janssen

Despite what some outside the Midwest might think, there really is no “typical” farmer. You can find growers of crops ranging from paw paws to carrots to soybeans. Some farmers have a few head of heritage-breed livestock, others a few thousand hogs.

One thing they all share is tractors, and many likely have a pre-1985 tractor still in regular use. This commonality matters because it’s also likely that a tractor built before 1985 lacks a Rollover Protective System (ROPS), which includes a rollbar and a seat belt, that could save a life if the tractor rolls over.



Tractor rollovers remain a leading cause of deaths on farms in Iowa and nationwide. Data from the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health shows Iowa leads the nation in tractor overturn deaths, accounting for 12% of all rollover deaths.

The consequences of a rollover can be dire for both the farmer and the farm. One in seven operators involved in a rollover is permanently disabled and 70% of farms that lose a farmer to a tractor overturn go out of business within five years.

However, when used correctly with a seatbelt, ROPS are 99% effective in preventing injury or death in the case of a rollover. The protective frame of the ROPS stops the operator from being crushed, and the seatbelt keeps the operator from being thrown from the tractor.

Starting in spring 2020, Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) dedicated a limited amount of funds to partner with the National ROPS Rebate Program, based in Cooperstown, New York.

The program funds about 70% of the cost of purchase and installation, with an out of pocket maximum cost of \$500 for the farmer. Those who work with the hotline receive guidance on the program and where to find a ROPS for their tractor. After final receipts and proof of installation are submitted, the farmer receives the rebate by direct deposit.

When we started in 2020, there were more than 50 Iowa farmers on the waitlist for funding. When funding was offered to them, many had already used their own finances to retrofit, had sold the tractor, or no longer needed the funding for other reasons.

Since we began, I-CASH has invested over \$30,000 in 27 counties to retrofit 34 tractors from the original waitlist with this lifesaving technology.

The farmers who have taken advantage of the program so far reflect the diversity of the state, including crop, livestock and produce growers. Sixty-five percent report being part-time farmers, and farm sizes range from 20 to 1,600 acres. Of the livestock farmers, most report having cattle, along with a couple of goat and sheep farmers. Herd sizes range from only 2 cattle to 200.

Most farms have more than one tractor, and two farms have 12. In addition, 15 already have at least one tractor with ROPS, and six of those have previously retrofitted another tractor.

Finally, five farmers report having experienced a serious incident on their tractor, and, I'm glad to note, 75% report that they will always use the seatbelt when operating the retrofitted tractor. These tractors will be put to use for an average of 14 hours of operation per week.

I'm not making any product endorsements, but the vast majority of the retrofits have been to John Deere tractors. The oldest reported machine is a 1961 3010, though an undated Ford 861 would have been built sometime in the 1950s. We've also helped retrofit a number of Internationals and a couple Oliver's.

Fortunately, ROPS can match your red, green or blue color scheme pretty easily.

Farmers who participate in the program can opt to install their own ROPS, or take it to a dealer for installation. While you're installing the ROPS, it's a good time to add other safety features such as a canopy for sun protection or steps with a handrail.

Older tractors without rollover protection contribute to numerous fatalities every year. We are glad to be able to make a proven, lifesaving strategy more accessible to farmers.

I-CASH will continue to keep at least some funding for the program available as long as there is demand. It will take some time, but I hope that we can make every tractor in our state as safe as possible.

For more information about the rebate program, visit www.ropsr4u.org.

Brandi Janssen, PhD, directs Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) at the University of Iowa College of Public Health.

https://www.agupdate.com/iowafarmertoday/news/state-and-regional/rollover-protection-a-critical-safety-strategy-for-small-farms/article_e93c06c8-5c69-11e9-b029-975fbed14006.html

FEATURED

Rollover protection a critical safety strategy for small farms

By Brandi Janssen 20 hrs ago 4/16/2019



With a new ROPS installed, this 1968 International 656 is ready for its first season at Grow: Johnson County, an Iowa project that produces fresh produce for 15 hunger-relief agencies on just 4 acres of public land.

Photo by Brandi Janssen

Operating a farm safely is a big job, no matter the number of acres. If you happen to run a farm that uses mostly volunteer labor and is located on public land, safety considerations become even more critical.

Grow: Johnson County is a project of the Iowa Valley RC&D that produces more than 40,000 pounds of fresh produce every year for 15 hunger-relief agencies on just 4 acres of public land. Located at the Johnson County Historic Poor Farm, the organization's three full-time staff members oversee volunteer and seasonal workers from spring to fall, producing fresh food for people who need it.



Last fall, the RC&D purchased a 1968 International 656 for the farm. The tractor will be used for all aspects of the operation — primary tillage, mowing, transplanting and hauling. With a 65-horsepower engine, the tractor has enough lifting capacity for the water wheel planter and a hydrostatic transmission that allows it to smoothly drive at a very low “creeper speed” for transplanting. Plus, its 40-inch wheel base and 15-inch tires fit their row spacing and bed size, and the loader can efficiently move pallets of produce after harvest.

The problem? The tractor was manufactured well before 1986, the year that Roll-Over Protective Structures (ROPS) were mandated for all tractors over 20 horsepower, and it lacked this critical safety feature.

Jake Kundert, food system director at the RC&D, sees the Grow project not only as supporting the local emergency food supply, but as a public demonstration farm. Ensuring that the farm is always adopting best safety practices for staff and volunteers is important.

“I also realized when I first got up on it how much higher it is than our other, smaller tractors,” he said. “The ROPS definitely seemed like a good idea.”

The RC&D received a grant from the Johnson County Emergency Flex Funding program to purchase a ROPS. But finding and installing a ROPS and seatbelt for an older tractor is not as easy as stopping by your local dealer and picking one up.

Kundert, along with Jason Grimm, who farms in North English and is deputy director of the RC&D, first checked with dealers, but none were able to help.

Next, they called the National ROPS Rebate Program, based in New York, which provides rebates of up to about 70% of the cost of most rollover protection systems. There is no funding available for Iowa farmers in the program, but the staff put Kundert and Grimm in touch with a Canadian company, Laurin, that could manufacture a foldable ROPS specifically for their tractor.

Kundert called Laurin and “after that first awkward call where they answer in French” the staff quickly identified a ROPS package that would work.

The Iowans first had to determine whether their tractor had a “round” or “square” axle, eventually emailing a photo to Laurin to ensure they were correct.

“Even though the axle looked square to us, the fenders were attached with a round U-bolt that sits in a groove in the axle. That makes it a ‘round’ axle,” Kundert said.

In March, the tractor was hauled to Grimm’s family farm, where his dad, who has 30 years of experience in tractor and aviation mechanics, helped them install the ROPS in about two hours. The job requires a trusted mechanic and the right equipment.

“Figuring out that we had to take the fenders off and then figuring out how everything needed to be spaced from each other” took the longest, Grimm said.

They first thought the ROPS would sit beside the fenders; they eventually realized that the fenders would sit on top of the ROPS bracket, and the bolts that hold the ROPS also thread through the fender mounts.

The installation also required them to think about how hydraulic hoses should be routed as well as where to relocate an aftermarket toolbox and, most importantly, a radio. The toolbox didn’t make the cut and was removed. The radio was mounted on a post that bolted to the fender, so that the ROPS wasn’t drilled or compromised in any way.

Grimm noted that you need adequate shop space, as well as an A-frame to hoist the ROPS and mount it. He also used an impact wrench to tighten the bolts for the brackets.

“You could do that by hand, but it would take a lot longer,” he said.

He advises that any repairs to hydraulic systems or brakes be completed before the ROPS installation. The 656 was due for brake maintenance, which required that they open the brake cases on each side of the tractor.

“I wish we had done that before we put on the ROPS,” he said, because it was hard to access the cases.

Finally, take stock of your tractor’s seat before installation. A ROPS has two critical parts: the roll bar and the seat belt. Without a seatbelt, a ROPS is ineffective. Grimm said the seatbelt installation was easy because the tractor’s seat was in good condition and had an obvious place on the seat frame to bolt the seatbelt.

“Sometimes it’s hard to make an argument for investing in a ROPS if you’re cash strapped, so you should think about how to build it into the initial cost of purchasing your tractor,” Kundert said.

The ROPS for their tractor cost \$2,600 with shipping and tax.

“ROPS support should really be part of any beginning farmer program,” he said. “Having funding for a ROPS rebate program in Iowa would do a lot to show support for new farmers in the state who often purchase older equipment to fit their budgets.”

The safety investments at Grow: Johnson County won’t end with the ROPS installation. They will install a new shield for the tractor’s PTO and are working with Iowa’s Center for Agricultural Safety and Health to think through a whole-farm safety plan that includes resources for visitors and volunteers, signage and proactive solutions for new undertakings (such as hay rack rides or other agritourism activities.)

“As a working farm on public land, it’s important that we set a good example and make sure all workers and visitors are safe,” Kundert said.

Brandi Janssen, PhD, directs Iowa’s Center for Agricultural Safety and Health at the University of Iowa.

Op-ed published in the Spencer Paper, April 2022

By Kelli Ireland

Each season, Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety & Health (I-CASH) provides our office with information and materials focusing on one aspect of Iowa agricultural safety or health. The spring 2022 campaign focuses on spring planting and protecting yourself while operating a tractor.

"We hope that tractor operators will think about all aspects of prevention as they gear up for spring planting," said Brandi Janssen, Director of I-CASH. "Skin cancers are on the rise in Iowa, so sun protection is very important during spring's newly long and sunny days. Noise induced hearing loss affects many farmers; a tractor, with or without a cab, can cause exposure to noise levels that could cause irreversible hearing loss. Finally, a Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS) is the best way to reduce the risk of injury or death in the event of a tractor rollover."

- Tractors are the leading cause of death on a farm
- The most frequent cause of tractor-related deaths are side and rear overturns (96 deaths per year)
- 80% of deaths caused by rollovers happen to experience farmers
- Roughly ½ of US tractors do not have rollover protection
- ROPS are 99% effective in preventing injury or death in the event of an overturn when used with a seatbelt, and 70% effective when used without a seatbelt

Almost any tractor can be retrofitted with a ROPS. I-Cash has limited funding available to provide rebates for Iowa farmers to install ROPS on their tractors through the National ROPS Rebate Program. With this program, approximately 70% of the cost of purchasing and installing a ROPS will be covered.

If you are interested in a ROPS, call the NRRP at 1-877-767-7748 or visit www.i-cash.org or www.ropsr4u.com. For informational materials and free seasonal protective items provided by I-CASH, including hearing and sun protection, please visit our office.