



Agricultural Services

38106 Rge Rd. 275
Red Deer County, AB
T4S 2L9

Phone: 403.342.8654

Email: agriculture@rdcounty.ca

Why's of Agriculture: With more farm vehicles are on the road, how are farmers keeping our roads safe?

By Aimee Delaney, Ag Relations

Living in Red Deer County you're no stranger to driving rural roads, and more often than not we're sharing the roads with farmers – this is farming country. Now that the spring is here and we're all excited to get out and enjoy this nice spring weather, field work can start to begin. When farmers aren't in the yards fixing and preparing equipment, they're on the roads transporting goods and equipment before they get too busy with spring seeding work. Both the process of transporting tools and supplies and getting equipment to and from fields is often done through the use of large, heavy, powerful equipment.



Because of this, farmers and the County work together to make things safer on our roads. Farmers do so by carefully choosing a time for moving heavy loads (ex. in the early morning when the ground is frozen or hardened by overnight low temperatures), transporting responsibly (ex. reducing weight across the equipment whether by not overloading, using bigger machinery with more axels, or using wider tires), removing large amounts of soil from their vehicle when able to manage against mud build-up and hazards on the road, and postponing poor condition road use when able. Red Deer County, along with other road authorities, implement seasonal weight restrictions to protect and preserve road conditions – these are called Road Bans. Especially at a time when the roads are most vulnerable to damage (like spring, from thawing and water run-off) while the farmers are doing their part to keep the roads safe it's important that we do too. If you live, work or commute through rural areas drive with caution:

- Be patient. Farm equipment moves slowly.
- Be alert. Keep an eye out for farm vehicles, watch their lights and turn signals (and/or hand signals from the driver) and be cautious of their need for wide turns.
- Don't assume the farmer can see you. Blind spots in equipment can be much different than blind spots in a small car or truck.
- Slow down as you approach and pass, and only pass when you're positive it's safe to do so for all
- Don't expect them to move over or drive in the ditch – soft or steep road shoulders are hazardous and may cause roll-overs or other accidents.
- Be respectful. Driving is a team sport and we're all teammates.

Road safety boils down to the quality of the roadways and the quality of the drivers skills while using the roads. Rural roads are no exception. While the farmers continue to do their best to maintain our roads during their use, let's do our best to keep our roads safe for all as well.

Each month we'll dig into a new 'Why?', or in this case 'How?', of agriculture. If you have an agricultural question you'd like me to dig into let me know at adelaney@rdcounty.ca