



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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*Extra Riders Mean  
Extra Dangers*



Extra riders, whether they are kids or adults, have no place on tractors or other motorized farm equipment. However, some manufacturers are installing a second seat on combines and other types of harvesting equipment. As I understand it, this second seat is solely for the purpose of training an operator. However, how many times have you been riding down a road and seen an extra rider on a tractor, sitting with his or her feet on the rear axle housing? How many times have you seen someone mowing with a small child sitting on his or her lap?

Several years ago, approximately seven or eight, a local doctor, who was my urologist, had recently purchased a farm. One afternoon, he was cutting a pasture with his 6-year-old son riding with him, sitting in the floor board of the tractor. The doctor obviously wasn't very familiar with the lay of his pasture. He suddenly ran through a depression. It jolted the cab and the door jarred open. His small son fell out of the cab and underneath the tractor. Before he could get stopped, the tractor had run over the child with the bush hog.

The child died instantly and the doctor continues to this day in a state of trauma. He doesn't practice his profession anymore and has a problem coping with his life.

## **TIPS THAT CURB THE NEED FOR EXTRA RIDERS-**

- Advance planning on work projects
- Alternate forms of transportation for 2<sup>nd</sup> rider
- Changing job assignments that augment the use of a 2<sup>nd</sup> rider

## **SUGGESTED TIPS to FOREGO SECOND RIDERS-**

- ✓ Only one person should be allowed on any piece of rolling equipment, including Lawn equipment. Decals with (One-Seat: One Rider) or (No Extra Rider Allowed) are available and should be affixed on all equipment (not designed for an extra rider).
- ✓ Farm and lawn equipment should not be used as a baby-sitting service.
- ✓ A program of orientation for new employees and present employees as a follow-up periodically is valuable time well spent and could possibly save a potential incident.
- ✓ When additional help is needed in the field or other related projects, arrange for extra transportation.

## **POTENTIAL PROBLEMS FROM EXTRA RIDERS-**

- Interferes with the operator's vision and ability to control the equipment's levers.
- Increases the rider's exposure to noise, dust and chemicals.
- Increases the potential for multiple injuries to the rider and the operator, in case of an accident.
- Causes operator distraction.
- Increases the risk of the rider contacting control levers.

We were writing this article with extra riders on rolling equipment in mind. But extra riders on wagons or in the back of pickups are just as dangerous as extra riders in equipment not designed for this purpose.

As mentioned earlier, some manufacturers have begun producing second seats for harvesters and combines and they specifically recommended them as a training device only. A second seat should be installed at the manufacturing site only. A farm owner installing a make shift seat for the above equipment can't guarantee total safety.