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## PRESS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### ATVS: DO YOU RECOGNIZE OPERATING DANGERS?

ATVs (all-terrain-vehicles) are a convenient way to move around a feedyard. Since their design differs greatly from other motorized vehicles, operators may not realize how a combination of speed, sharp corners, potholes, etc. can quickly lead to rollovers or other serious ATV accidents.

Each year, more than 135,000 people are injured and 700 are killed due to ATV accidents. The majority of the incidents are work related.

Identifying ATV safety principles is one of the aims of Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH). This University of Nebraska Medical Center group (<https://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/feedyard/>) is conducting two research projects (funded by National Institutes of Occupational Safety and Health) that are designed to make a positive impact on the sustainability of cattle feedyards through increased safety and health efforts.

ATVs are motorized, off-highway vehicles designed to travel on four low-pressure pneumatic tires. They are commonly referred to as four-wheelers. ATV seats are designed to be straddled by operators and the handlebars are used for steering control. Type 1 ATVs are intended by manufacturers for carrying a single operator, no passengers. Type 2 ATVs are suitable for carrying a passenger because they are equipped with a designated passenger seat located behind the operator's seat.

ATVs are designed to turn quickly and operate in tight spaces. Safely using an ATV requires operators to have good balance in making turns or driving on uneven terrain since ATVs do not have rollbars or seatbelts to help protect operators.

UTVs are larger than ATVs and are designed to haul equipment and gear. They accommodate multiple passengers and are a more comfortable form of transportation. They are equipped with a roll cage and their auto-style bench seats include seat belts.

In an ATV case study, a feedyard employee was repairing a fence and requested help to support one of the fence rails. A co-worker hopped on an ATV and began speeding over to provide assistance. As the co-worker rounded a corner, the right front wheel of the ATV hit a small pothole. The ATV rolled, leading to a broken arm and serious concussion for the rider.

After analysis of the accident, the feedyard manager learned that the absence of several ATV safety principles contributed to the incident.

The employee driving the ATV had not been trained to operate it and understand all ATV safety issues. Due to their open configuration, ATVs are inherently dangerous because operators are not protected in the event of a rollover or collision.

Before operating an ATV, riders should thoroughly review the operator manual to gain knowledge of hazardous ATV scenarios and the limitations of the model. Each ATV manual outlines which attachments and equipment are appropriate in using that specific model. Manuals also include operation guidelines to help operators avoid dangerous activities when riding the ATV.

Prior to using an ATV, operators should confirm that they are not tired or in any way impaired. All guides for the machine must be in place to prevent accidental contact with hot or moving ATV parts. The machine's tires should be fully inflated. All tools must be firmly secured to the ATV cargo rack. The machine should be in neutral or park and the break should be locked prior to starting the ATV.

Protective clothing for operators includes gloves, non-skid shoes, goggles or a face shield, long pants and long sleeves. Be mindful of any aspect of clothing – such as bootlaces – that could become entangled in a spinning axle or other moving parts of the ATV. Wearing a reflective vest will help increase visibility.

When it comes to helmets, a bike helmet does not give ATV operators adequate protection. Feedyard managers should supply a helmet suitable for ATV operator protection.

The center of gravity on an ATV differs from a car or tractor. Operators should have a good understanding of how to maintain the center of gravity, especially when approaching an incline or turning a corner. A large percentage of ATV rollovers and deaths occur when speed is excessive, and operators go into a turn or ride along uneven terrain.

To help maintain the center of gravity, ATV operators should always sit on the seat and never stand or kneel on the seat. Doing so raises the center of gravity and greatly increases the risk for a rollover.

When operating an ATV, speed should be appropriate to terrain, visibility conditions and operator experience. Regardless of an operator's skills, care should be taken when approaching hills, turns and other obstacles. Drivers should always be alert to unmarked hazards along terrain, which include holes, stumps, ruts, culverts, wires, fences, large rocks, etc.

ATVs should never be operated with excessive speed. An ATV designed for one rider should never carry more than one person. Horseplay, such as attempting wheelies, jumps or other dangerous stunts, should never be allowed.

The best way to develop skill in operating an ATV is to drive it. Getting behind the wheel allows the operator to learn how to control balance and safely use the machine.

Feedyard managers are encouraged to post ATV speed signs – 20 mph maximum – on the yard. They may consider installing a governor on ATVs to help keep speeds within a reasonable range. They may also consider changing out ATVs for UTVs, since the latter is much safer for operators. In either case, reasonable speeds are a main safety practice.

Some of the best safety ideas come from those who are involved in tasks where hazards exist. Feedyard managers are encouraged to support an atmosphere where employees feel comfortable in suggesting improved safety measures and practices.

Terrain issues, such as the pothole involved in this case study, should be reported and repaired in a timely manner to reduce potential for contributing to a major incident. Whenever appropriate, feedyard managers may consider reviewing maintenance practices to help improve an existing reporting and repair process.

With proper training and a thorough understanding of ATV safety practices, feedyard employees can greatly reduce the potential for ATV accidents.

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