

# UNL Extension: Acreage Insights

## Acreage eNews-April 2013

<http://acreage.unl.edu>

**Take Precautions To Avoid Serious Injury When Operating ATVs**  
Contact [Bob Meduna](#), UNL Southeast District 4-H Program Coordinator



All-Terrain Vehicle accidents are a major cause of Nebraska acreage and farm fatalities. From 1982-2010, 107 deaths from ATV accidents have occurred in Nebraska, with 26 of those deaths to children 16 or under. However, these tragedies can be avoided if appropriate precautions are taken.

### **Safety Training**

All ATV operators, both adults and children, should take an ATV safety course. Whenever anyone operates a new piece of machinery, he or she should have training about the characteristics of the machinery, how it operates normally and how it operates in unusual situations. No one is immune to accidents, but the increased awareness a safety course provides will help ATV operators navigate the unexpected situations that often cause them. Many ATV manufacturers offer a tuition rebate program to cover the cost of a safety course.

UNL offers two different ATV safety training courses. First, *Nebraska 4-H ATV Safety Program*, in collaboration with the American Safety Institute, offers three age-specific e-learning courses to address basic ATV safety principles. Adults, teens and children will learn how to apply the “golden rules” of ATV riding in an interactive setting. The course includes videos, pictures, and interactive games to make it a fun and effective learning experience for all age groups. After taking the course, users can take an ATV Safety exam and receive a certificate of completion.

The entire course take approximately 2-2.5 hours to complete. You can stop at any point and your progress will be saved so that you can return and pick up right where you left off. It’s free,

fun and a great learning experience for ATV riders of all ages. More information is available at: <http://southeast.unl.edu/atvsafety>.

Secondly, the *ATV RiderCourse*® is a fast-paced, half-day hands-on training that is exciting and fun. Sessions include 1) pre-ride inspection, 2) starting & stopping, 3) quick turns, 4) hill riding, 5) emergency stopping and swerving, and 6) riding over obstacles. Whatever your experience, you will come away a better rider.

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety Training is conducted by certified RiderCourse® instructors.

For more information about training sessions across Nebraska, contact [Robert Meduna](#), UNL Southeast District 4-H Youth Program Coordinator at 1-402-624-8064.

### **ATV Safety Tips**

Use extra caution when operating an ATV in risky situations. Many accidents occur when the driver is unfamiliar with the area and doesn't know about unpredictable conditions such as sudden drop offs or cattle trails hidden by overgrowth. Slow down when riding in unfamiliar areas. Consider walking a proposed route before riding in rugged terrain to identify potential hazards.

Carrying equipment also can pose a risk. In particular, spray tanks and other liquid-filled containers can cause balance problems for ATVs when they're going up hills, sometimes tipping them over backward or sideways. Never exceed the capacity posted on luggage and equipment racks. Current ATVs are heavy enough that if they roll on top of someone, they will cause very serious or fatal injuries.

Always wear safety gear when using an ATV. It's essential to have an ATV helmet and vented goggles. Also wear full-length pants and boots and consider wearing long-sleeve shirts and gloves, which will protect the operator when riding in tall, heavy vegetation or brushy areas.

Finally, never allow passengers to ride the ATV along with the driver. Most ATVs are designed to carry only one person, and the driver must be free to shift their weight in all directions to effectively steer the vehicle. Carrying passengers makes this difficult. Parents should not allow children to ride along on the ATV, and children under the age of 16, who have not completed an ATV safety training course, should not be allowed to drive by themselves.

Follow all warning labels on the ATV.