Sixth Annual Gold Star Growers Meeting:
Light and Reflect!

At Gold Star luncheons, held February 11 in Kernersville and February 18 in Smithfield, growers enjoyed good food and the company of others. Commissioner Harry E. Payne, Jr., was on hand to present each grower with a certificate of appreciation in Kernersville. Deputy Commissioner and Occupational Safety and Health Director Bob Andrews congratulated growers at the Smithfield event.

These growers, who had received a perfect score on their housing inspections for two of three consecutive years, were given the opportunity to conduct their own housing inspection in 2000. They also were provided with an update on the workplace safety hazard that they rate as the most dangerous—driving their farm vehicles on their rural roads.

Vanya C. Jones, a graduate student in Health Education and Health Behavior at the School of Public Health, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, joined the Agriculture Safety and Health staff in May 1999 as an intern. She brought her expertise in highway safety issues to the N.C. Gold Star project. And after many trips to Forsyth, Guilford, Alamance, and Caswell Counties, multiple visits with Gold Star Growers in those areas, and long nights pouring over N.C. crash data and the N.C. statutes pertaining to highway safety regulations, she became the NCDOL rural highway safety expert. “I’ve had many good teachers on this project,” Vanya confided. “But most important to me was that this idea, this concern, was not imposed on the Gold Star Growers by anyone or anything else, but was a project that they identified as most important to their workplace safety. I’ve been interested in public health issues for a while now, and that sort of project doesn’t come around just every day. Lots of projects are what I call ‘outside-in’—the major ideas and interest come from outside the people who will be affected. This was definitely a ground-up effort. And we’ve all been learning together!”

Vanya documented her findings with a slide presentation, entitled “Light and Reflect,” illustrating important N.C. rural road safety facts. The slide presentation,

Continued on back page
Workplace Safety Symbol

Are you ready to do a little flag waving? Does your farm qualify for a North Carolina Department of Labor Gold Star seal of approval? If you have received a star certificate for your housing in the past, you may want to expand your horizons. Consider all the other health and safety issues on your farm—field sanitation, pesticide application, tractor safety, and machine guarding are but a few. Have you or your employees devised ways to ensure a safe workplace? Do you have safety plans and document results? Is workplace safety a personal goal? Can you meet the requirements listed below?

1. Owned or operated Gold Star Housing for a minimum of two years.
2. Knowledge of and use appropriate field sanitation.
3. Certification of all personnel handling pesticides.
4. Written and oral safety program governing: the use of pesticides, injury prevention, and a worker training program.
5. Injury and accident free workplace for the past two years.
6. Orderly and lawful storage of equipment and farm chemicals.

The Agricultural Safety and Health Section (ASH) and the Agricultural Safety and Health Council will honor those North Carolina growers who provide a safe workplace. ASH inspectors will visit the farms that are nominated. They will observe safety procedures and discuss conditions with the operator and with farm employees. They will review their findings with the council. The council will select the nominees, after reviewing the eligible candidates.

Commissioner Payne will make the final selection and will award the flags to those Gold Star Growers who have shown excellence in workplace safety issues on the farm. The winning candidates will receive a flag at an awards ceremony, scheduled for the fall of 2000. The winning candidates will be able to conduct their own housing inspections in 2001. The winning farms will be featured in The Cultivator and mentioned in the Farm Bureau News. And, most important, the successful candidates will know that their hard work and many efforts to provide a safe workplace have been recognized and respected.

Agencies, such as the NCSU Cooperative Extension, County Public Health Departments, the Farm Bureau, and the North Carolina Growers Association, and commodity groups, will be asked to submit names of growers who they feel are eligible candidates. ASH inspectors will make nominations as well. If you feel that you would qualify for this award, or if you know a grower that you feel would be the best candidate, use the form above to submit your entry. Send it to Agricultural Safety & Health Section, 4 West Edenton Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-1092.

Gold Star Flag Award

Name of Farm Operator:_____________________________________
Name of Farm:_____________________________________________
Mailing Address:__________________________________________

I recommend that this farm operation be awarded the Gold Star Flag because (use additional sheet as necessary)
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Signature:__________________________________________________
Date:______________________________________________________

Survey Results:
“Driving on Rural Roads Can Be Hazardous to Your Health!”

The Agricultural Safety and Health section, working with Gold Star Growers and the North Carolina State University Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services (CUACS), developed a survey in order to better understand the highway safety problems identified by Gold Star Growers in 1998 as the number one workplace safety issue. Survey questions sought answers to these questions:

- What do growers see as the most serious rural traffic problems?
- What state roadways are the most hazardous?
- What do growers see as possible solutions?

Demographic questions included the crops raised, the number of years in farming, the age of the grower, years of education, and interest in continuing to farm. Survey questions and responses are contained in the insert.

In November 1999, 1,357 surveys were mailed to all N.C. growers who had registered their migrant

Continued on back page
Traffic Safety on North Carolina Rural Roads Survey

All of the information you provide will be strictly confidential. Please make a check [✓] when selecting your answers and print all numbers and letters clearly in the spaces provided. (Do not write or make any marks in the shaded area.)

1. How many years have you been operating a farm?
   Mean 27.6  Median: 27 Years  Mode: 30 Years
   Years ___

2. What crops do you grow or what livestock do you raise? List each crop and the number of acres planted OR list each type of livestock and the number of animals raised per year. List these items in the order of importance to your farming income.
   Most important crop/livestock: Tobacco
   Number of acres / animals: 50 acres
   Next most important crop/livestock: Soybeans
   Number of acres / animals: 100 acres

3a. Do you plan to continue farming during the next three years?
   94.2% Yes  (PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 4)
   5.0% No

3b. [IF NO:] Why not?
   39% (1) no profit / economic reasons
   36% (2) retiring

EDITOR CODE: ___

4. What safety precautions have you taken with your tractor?
   Do you ...
   A. Have roll-over bars? ................................................................. 80% Yes
      17% No
   B. Use a seat belt? ................................................................. 73% Yes
      22% No
   C. Make sure that tractor drivers on your farm have a valid driver’s license? ....... 58% Yes
      39% No
   D. Use signal lights and flashing lights to warn others you are on the road? .......... 92% Yes
      6% No
   E. Have a “slow moving” triangle symbol (LIKE THE ONE PICTURED IN QUESTION 20) on the back of your equipment? ............... 88% Yes
      10% No
5. Please name hazardous roadways in your area. Identify each hazardous road by providing the county, nearest city or town, the exact name of the road, and the nearest intersection.

**HAZARDOUS ROAD:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County: ..........</th>
<th>Name of road: (OR COUNTY ROAD NUMBER) ..........</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wake, Harnett, Rockingham, Caswell, Guilford, Stokes</td>
<td>Hwy 158, Hwy 55, Hwy 58, Hwy 96, Hwy 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearest town: ..........</td>
<td>Names of nearest intersecting roads: (OR COUNTY ROAD NUMBERS) ..........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford, Yanceyville, Reidsville, Roxboro, Henderson, Angier, Dobson, Fuquay V.</td>
<td>Hwy 158, Hwy 55, Hwy 210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hwy 581, Hwy 42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Briefly describe problem: Too much traffic; speeding; can’t see/ narrow, winding roads; can’t pull off the road; lack of respect/ knowledge of farm equipment.

6. Are you aware of any unreported traffic crashes or collisions involving farmers while they were driving farm equipment on public roads?

**CHECK ONE BOX**

| 5% Yes | 94% No [PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 11] |

7. **[IF YES:]** How many incidents of this type are you aware of? NUMBER:

8. **[IF YES:]** For the most recent incident, what type of farm equipment was involved?

**CHECK ALL BOXES THAT APPLY**

- 9% Farm truck
- 91% Farm tractor
- 0% Combine
- 0% Some other farm equipment

**SPECIFY TYPE OF FARM EQUIPMENT INVOLVED, ON THE LINE BELOW**

9. **[IF YES:]** Why do you believe these accidents were not reported?

- 29% no damage/ minor damage
- 11% no injuries
- 9% left scene of accident

10. **[IF YES:]** Did any of these accidents result in injuries? 

**CHECK ONE BOX ONLY**

- 17% Yes
- 74% No

11. Which of the following three signs do you think would be the most effective in getting other drivers to slow down on your rural roads?

**CHECK ONE BOX ONLY**
For each of the next statements, please respond by selecting only one of the following answers: "strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree" to best indicate your response to each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Traffic on my rural roads is much more dangerous than it was 5 years ago.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I feel safe when driving my tractor on local highways.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Most rural residents know and understand highway safety rules.</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I know the regulations about driving a tractor on public roads.</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The farmworkers working for me understand the highway safety rules and regulations.</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Most farmers comply with the lighting requirements for farm equipment traveling on public roads.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Most farmers know the lighting requirements for farm equipment traveling on public roads in North Carolina.</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Most farmers know the safety markings for farm equipment recommended by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers.</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Most farmers would support a law requiring the &quot;slow moving&quot; triangle symbol (like this one) to be placed on the back of their farm equipment, visible to the traffic following them.</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Most people would comply with N.C. requirements for traffic safety on rural roads... If they knew the laws.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Most people would comply with N.C. requirements for traffic safety on rural roads... If it was less expensive to comply.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Most people would comply with N.C. requirements for traffic safety on rural roads... If the penalties and citations for non-compliance were greater.</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rank each of the statements in the questions below in order of their importance from 1 to 4, with 1 the most important and 4 the least important. Record a number, 1 through 4, only once in the blank beside each item. Here's an example:
My favorite ice cream is...

RECORD A NUMBER 1 - 4 IN EACH BLANK

A. The biggest problem with roadway safety in my area is...
   4. Difference between posted speed limit & speed of my tractor
   3. City folks don’t understand farming & farm equipment
   2. Increased speed of other drivers
   1. Lack of respect of other drivers

B. Traffic accidents on rural roads would be less frequent if...
   1. All farm vehicles had blinking or flashing lights
   3. Anyone who drives a farm vehicle is trained to do so
   2. All farm vehicles were adequately marked with a “slow-moving” sign
   (LIKE THE ONE PICTURED IN QUESTION 20)

C. The biggest everyday stress I have in farming is...
   4. Economic - I’m worried about finances
   2. Weather - the drought, heat, flooding, something I can’t control
   3. No one cares about farmers anymore
   1. Traffic - I’m worried that I will be killed or hurt driving my farm equipment on these rural roads

D. The best way to fix the traffic problem would be...
   2. Widen the shoulders on given roads so I could get out of the way
   1. Post “slow moving” signs so folks understand and slow down
   3. Have N. C. Highway Patrol monitor certain roads for violators
   4. Post additional lights or signals on my tractor so folks would see me

E. The laws governing tractors on rural roads are...
   2. Adequate
   4. Not strong enough
   1. Not well known enough by city folks
   3. Not well known by farmers

And, finally, we’d like to know...

25. How many years of schooling have you completed?

   CHECK ONE RESPONSE

   2% Less than 8 years
   6% 8-11 years
   42% Completed high school or equivalent
   20% Attended college or vocational school
   5% Completed a vocational training program
   22% Completed a college degree
   3% Completed a graduate or professional degree

26. In what year were you born?

   BIRTH YEAR: 1948

Thanks for your help on this very important project! Please fold this survey and place it in the envelope provided and return it right away!
Many of the issues illustrated in "Light and Reflect," the presentation mentioned in the previous article, concern N.C. laws governing traffic safety on rural roads. Several questions and the answers from this presentation are included below:

What lighting is required when I drive my tractor at dawn or dusk?

Farm tractors operated on a highway at night must be equipped with at least one white lamp visible at a distance of 500 feet. At least one red lamp, visible at a distance of 500 feet, should be mounted to the rear of the farm equipment (NCGS 20-129).

What is the exact meaning of the bright orange triangle sign—sometimes I see it on farm vehicles and sometimes I don’t. And sometimes it’s used to mark the entrance of driveways. Is that appropriate?

The orange triangle outlined with red reflective tape is a slow-moving vehicle sign, and should be placed with one point of the triangle facing upward on the rear of slow moving vehicles. It needs to be placed on the vehicle at a height of two to four feet above the ground. This sign alerts other drivers to the fact that the vehicle bearing the sign may be moving at 15 to 25 MPH on roads where the posted speed limit may be 55 MPH.

And no, this sign was never meant to be used to mark the entrance to a driveway. No wonder you’re confused!

Is the slow-moving sign required on farm vehicles driving on N.C. roads?

No, it is not. Of the top ten agricultural states in the United States, only Arkansas and North Carolina do not mandate that the slow-moving sign be posted on farm vehicles.

The slow-moving sign is required by OSHA standard 1910.145(d)(10).

When I use hand signals, the drivers behind me think that I am flagging them to go around me. Doesn’t anyone know hand signals anymore? What is the law on hand signals?

Hand signals, given from the driver’s window using the left hand and arm, are a very acceptable way to communicate to other drivers what you intend to do. In fact, turn signals are not required on farm machinery in North Carolina, but all motor vehicle operators on public roads are required to signal when stopping or turning (NCGS 20-154).

So, hand signals are the most appropriate way to communicate to others when driving farm equipment. Hand signals are discussed in the most recent edition of the N.C. Driver’s Handbook.

What’s the best way to allow those drivers who are in such a big hurry to pass me on my rural roads?

We suggest that you do not wave other drivers around when you are on your tractor. This waving motion is too similar to a left hand turn signal. Pull off the road at a convenient spot and let the traffic pass.

Is our farm machinery required to be equipped with mirrors?

No. Farm tractors or other pieces of farm machinery are not currently required to be equipped with rear view mirrors (NCGS 20-126).

I have the feeling that some folks think that I have no right to drive my tractor on public roads. How do folks think I’m going to move from one field to another?

Farm equipment is legally entitled to travel on most roads in North Carolina (except interstates). The Driver’s Handbook, 2000 edition, cautions drivers to be patient when driving with farm machinery, and, above all, to be cautious when passing. The only advisable time to pass farm equipment is when the tractor operator has moved off the road at the nearest practical location.

There are just too many cars on my road. Who is going to do something about this problem?

Talk with your local representatives, or phone the N.C. Department of Public Transportation to discuss transportation solutions. You can reach them at 1-877-DOT-4-YOU (1-877-368-4968).

The current Driver’s Handbook can be obtained at your local Division of Motor Vehicles, or you can read about it on the web at www.dmv.dot.state.nc.us.
and a script to accompany it, are available to those who would like to make this presentation in their communities. In addition to her work with the slide presentation, she worked with the Department of Motor Vehicles. A page of information, written while working on this project, has been added to the Driver’s Handbook, published in February 2000. Her goal was to educate all drivers who share the road with farm equipment. The text in the handbook cautioning “the key to safety when sharing the road with farm equipment is to be patient.” Three questions dealing with farm vehicles have been added to the driver’s test. After concluding her slide presentation, Vanya presented the Gold Star Growers with the new version of the Driver's Handbook and a slow-moving sign for their farm equipment that would be used on rural roads.

If you would like to show the rural safety slide show to a group in your community, phone the Agricultural Safety and Health section at 1-800-LABOR-NC or (919) 807-2923 to get a copy of the slide presentation and the script.

Sponsors of the Gold Star luncheons included the N.C. Farm Bureau, the North Carolina Growers Association, Student Action for Farmworkers, N.C. Farmworker Health Project, and the Winston-Salem office of Farm Credit.

The sponsor of the grant funding the rural highway research is the Governor’s Highway Safety Council. If you have questions or comments, you may reach the director, Joe Parker, at (919) 733-0383.

Survey Results—continued from second page

housing with the N.C. Department of Labor. The surveys came back, filling the NCSU center's mailbox. By late December, 656 growers had returned a complete survey, a 49 percent response rate. Dr. Yvonne Brannon, director of the center commented, “We were not expecting such an enthusiastic response. A lot of well-thought-out surveys were returned. It proved to me that the people involved and dealing with a particular problem are the best source of solutions. The surveys contain many effective and creative suggestions, and I look forward to viewing the results of their efforts.”

Respondents called for a law that would mandate the use of slow moving triangle, a symbol placed on the back of their farm equipment to warn other drivers to slow down. The majority of respondents felt that traffic accidents on rural roads would be less frequent if all farm vehicles were equipped with blinking or flashing lights. The cause of the current roadway safety problems is a combination of two factors: the increased lack of respect of other drivers and the increased speed of other drivers. The biggest stress for the respondents? Economic worries.

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents do not feel safe when driving their tractors on local highways. The best way to fix the traffic problem, according to respondents, would be to post slow moving signs on the roadway and to widen the shoulders on given roads so that the drivers of slow-moving farm machinery could pull to the side of the road. Ninety-three percent of the respondents plan on farming during the coming years.

WANTED
REWARD OFFERED FOR SAFETY SLOGAN

We need a safety slogan—a motto to use when we discuss the safety issues involving farm vehicles on rural roads. The Agricultural Safety and Health Council will award $200 to the person or persons who submit the winning entry. An additional award will be seeing your slogan used on billboards, vehicle bumpers, and in future news bulletins. Contest deadline: June 1, 2000. Submit your entry now to the Agricultural Safety and Health Section, N.C. Department of Labor, 4 West Edenton Street, Raleigh NC 27601-1092.