Agriculture Transportation Law Updates

The Minnesota Farm Bureau Foundation Agriculture Transportation Handbook will not be reprinted this year. There were a few minor changes in the laws that relate to agriculture transportation these will be reflected on the online version or an updated section that can be printed from fbmn.org/ag-transportation-handbook.

The first two changes are under the pink tab in the Agriculture Transportation Handbook labeled Special Ag Permits & Provision.

* The first was changing “raw and unprocessed” to “qualifying” along with a specific list of products. This change was made because the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Patrol were asking for clarity in the statute so they do not have to guess what “raw and unprocessed” means.

* The second change adds “feed,” “seed,” and “manure” to the list of qualifying products (numbers 5 and 6). These three items were not considered “raw and unprocessed” by MnDOT or the Patrol in the past but were incorporated into the new definition this year when discussing the specific list, so in that sense the addition of them is a change.

The third change in the law of interest to farm and ranch families is not part of the agriculture transportation handbook but is of interest - the farm permit distance There was a change in the law which increases the distance a 15-year-old can travel using a farm permit from 20 to 40 miles.

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Special Ag Permits & Provision

Minnesota law provides for several kinds of special hauling permits that allow certain agricultural products to be hauled in amounts greater than the legal limits described in the previous section. Effective October 1, 2012, the truck owner is responsible for paying the additional vehicle registration tax that represents the difference between the registered GVW and the amount of weight allowed in the special hauling permit.

NOTE: Permits are no longer available at district offices. All permits come from the St. Paul office by calling 651-296-6000.

A. 90,000 and 97,000 Pound Loads. The gross weight limits for trucks hauling agricultural products has been increased to allow up to 90,000 pounds on six axles and 97,000 pounds on seven axles. These two permits apply to the transportation of “raw or unprocessed qualifying agricultural products” only. The transportation of finished products or of non-agricultural products is not allowed. “Qualifying agricultural products” specifically include the following:

1. agricultural crops, including but not limited to corn, soybeans, oats, grain, and by-products of agricultural crops;
2. livestock, including but not limited to cattle, hogs, and poultry;
3. food crops, including but not limited to sugar beets, potatoes, carrots, and onions;
4. fluid milk;
5. seed and material used for or in livestock and poultry feed; and
6. livestock manure.

In addition, both trucks are subject to the following restrictions: 1) posted bridge limits must be followed (this may limit the routes these trucks can travel), 2) per-axle weight limitations must still be followed, 3) all wheels must have brakes, 4) spring road restrictions must still be followed, 5) the manufacturer’s gross vehicle rating must not be exceeded, 6) the 10% “first haul” allowance does not apply to either truck, 7) they may not be operated on interstate highways (except for trucks hauling fluid milk, which may be operated on interstate highways), and 8) a permit must be obtained from each road authority (e.g., a county) if required. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.865 subdivision 3]

The specifics of each are as follows:

90,000 on six axles. A six-axle truck can carry up to 90,000 pounds year-round and 99,000 pounds during the winter freeze period as set by MnDOT each year. The permit fee for this truck is $300 per year and is valid year-round. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.865 subdivision 1]

97,000 on seven axles. A seven-axle truck can carry up to 97,000 pounds year-round and 99,000 pounds during the winter freeze period as set by MnDOT each year. The permit fee for this truck is $500 per year and is valid year-round. In addition, the operator of this truck is not exempt from the age, medical card, and drug and alcohol testing requirements unless it is a Covered Farm Vehicle. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.865 subdivision 2]