

# Here's Some Advice On Waving In The Country

Waving in the rural Midwest on the face of it seems like a simple, direct way of saying hello from a distance. The key word is seems, because although I've been waving for many years now, I still get caught in situations where I think a wave is called for, but am not sure how to wave or when to wave. So you can imagine what happens to a newcomer in the country.

First of all, waving from a vehicle to another person in a vehicle or on the ground (whether at home or in the field), is a rural act. People wave in the city, it's true, but it just doesn't mean as much, and besides that, it's a different kind of wave. I never feel right waving in the city.

Basically most waves occur when one or both persons are in vehicles. No waving situation develops when both people are out of their vehicles, because a wave definitely involves the passing process, where one or both are *going by*. Most of the waving situations involve two vehicles traveling in the opposite direction meeting and passing.

If you are on the ground - sawing down Elm trees, walking beans, changing the oil on the tractor - and a vehicle goes by on the road, the whole responsibility for starting the wave process is yours: You look up or don't look up. If you look up then you will wave if you know the person and they know you. You may wave if you don't know the person, *if the other person waves first*. On rare occasions, you may wave first at a perfect stranger going by in a Winnebago or a '64 Chrysler if they look like they need a wave. This is the "good will" wave, and is not to be discounted.

If you are filling the corn planter at the end of the rows, holding the sack with both hands, you do not look up or let go of the seed bag, in order to wave. If you do look up, the most you should do is give a short backward flip of the head. If you are in the car, simply reverse the above directions. We might as well stress here that honking is mostly forbidden and will get you into trouble or make people think you are a

stranger, unless the other person just got married, has a new tractor or pickup, or you notice oats leaking from the truck where the rags fell out. In any case a short toot is enough.

Never wave more than once if the same situation develops again in the same day. That is, if you drive by again and the person on the ground is engaged in the same activity, do not wave. He will probably not look up. But if he is doing something different, the wave is optional. You wave twice at a person only if on the second time by they have either changed vehicles (bigger tractor, tractor to truck), or changed grains (hauling corn first time, beans second). If they have only changed clothes or hats, you should not wave again, usually.

Now the rest of my remarks can be applied to all situations, but are particularly aimed at the vehicle to vehicle wave, as for

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instance, tractor to tractor, combine to swather, or - a not uncommon thing - motorcycle to tractor. Winter waving is the same as summer waving, except that snowmobiling is in a category by itself.

**SIGHTING:** Begin evaluating the vehicle approaching as far ahead as possible. Is it my neighbor, is it somebody I know, is that his Chevy or Allis? Once you are pretty sure, get ready for the wave, which in most cases means letting up the grip on the steering wheel with your right hand, or left if you are left-handed, although many left-handers use the right hand for waves. Be certain to clear a path for your hand or arm: Hitting the windshield or part of the vehicle during the wave is considered bad form. Do not

lose control of your vehicle. If a wave means driving into a power pole, assume the other person will understand.

**WHEN TO WAVE:** If you are both in fast vehicles, the waving situation develops and is over before you know it, so wave when the vehicles are about 10 yards apart. If you are both in slow vehicles - on tractors say, or driving by the crops real slow in the pickup - the time to wave is pretty important, otherwise the *wave vacuum* can occur: the wave comes too soon, and you are simply passing each other without anything to do. If you wave too soon, it's best to check the pin on the wagon or find out what is under your foot.

Sometimes you come up behind another vehicle, recognize it, and pass it. It's OK, then, to look in the rear-view mirror and wave without looking back, but you should continue looking in the mirror for the return wave from the vehicle behind you. I will say that timing is what distinguishes the professional waver. Getting it down is a matter of practice and maturity. In some ways nothing is sadder than a young person learning to wave and being rebuffed.

**KINDS OF WAVES:** The right wave is tied in many ways to the waving situation: For fast vehicles, the fingers lifted from the steering wheel will suffice: One to four fingers, never the thumb. If the neighbor has a new pickup and this is the first time you've seen it, then the whole arm and hand is called for, and if it's a 4-WD, a couple of toots on the horn would be OK. The tractor to pickup, tractor to combine, wave - when one or both vehicles are slow - commonly involves the hand and the forearm. The upper arm should not move. The elbow gets quite a bit of play here. The simple wave will take care of most situations, but if you just had 2 in. of rain, a longer wave - with the hand held poised briefly - is perfect. If it rains 14 in., make it a small wave and shake your head.

There's no way to deal with everything about waving, and so I leave you with the



rule that goes beyond the rules: Be yourself as much as possible. If your style is the almost invisible jerk of the arm and hand that leaves your shoulder hurting a little, then by all means wave that way.

If you feel uncomfortable in the country, are not sure how to get into waving, I suggest riding along with a veteran waver, learning as you go.

Reprinted courtesy Co-op Country News. Humorist Howard Mohr lives near Cottonwood, Minn., and is the author of "How to Talk Minnesotan".

## DISCOVERED IN RIVER BED

# They Restored Junked 1914 "Waterloo Boy"

Ten years ago, E.J. Siefker, Moran, Kan., discovered a "Waterloo Boy" tractor in a river bed in Missouri. Today the tractor sits on his farm, shiny and polished, and completely restored.

"The guy I got the tractor from said that when the river was up, it completely covered the tractor. It was in real sorry shape. That guy's father had purchased the tractor new in 1914. It hadn't been run since the early 1930s," says Siefker.

Siefker struck a deal, pulled the tractor from the riverbed, loaded it onto a trailer and transported it to his farm. There it sat for seven years, until he met Ken Kass of Dunkerton, Iowa.

Kass is a farmer who also restores three or four antique tractors a year. He restored Siefker's tractor, spending about 500 hours on the project. He completely disassembled

rusty parts, sandblasted them, rebuilt or remanufactured other parts, and reassembled the tractor for delivery.

By today's standards, the tractor sports many unusual features. For instance, the Waterloo Boy has only one forward speed (about 2 mph) and one reverse speed. The tractor has chain-driven steering and it uses kerosene for fuel. Steel-spoked wheels support the tractor's weight of about 4,000 lbs.

Siefker says the model was termed a "12-24". "It was a two-cylinder model with 12 horsepower to the drawbar for operation in the field, and 24 horsepower to the belt to operate other machines such as a thresher."

Kass himself owns eight Waterloo Boys. He says the tractors sold for around \$700 when built, and are probably worth \$20,000 apiece today. He estimates that 200 to 250

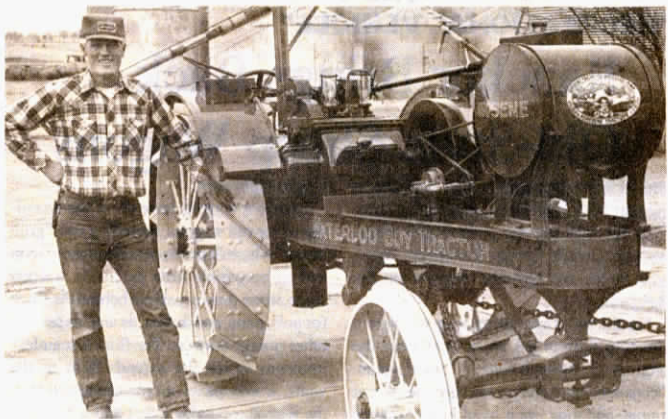


Photo by the Tupper

It took 500 hrs. to restore Siefker's Waterloo Boy which he pulled from a riverbed.

Waterloo Boys still exist.

The Waterloo Boy Co. of Waterloo, Iowa, began building tractors in 1914. In 1918, John Deere purchased the company.

"The Waterloo Boy was the first tractor Deere ever marketed, but they marketed it under the name Waterloo Boy," explains Kass. "A later Waterloo Boy tractor did carry the name John Deere on an oval

emblem in front of the frame, along with the Waterloo Boy name in larger letters, but by that time Deere was selling its own tractors."

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