

Major Changes to Ag Vehicle Law in Wisconsin – Act 377 of 2013

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Overview of presentation

- ▶ **WI Agricultural Vehicle Size & Weight Law prior to enactment of Act 377**
- ▶ **WI Agricultural Vehicle Size & Weight Law Now**
 - **Modified definition of Implements of Husbandry (IOH)**
 - **Created new vehicle classification – Agricultural Commercial Vehicle (Ag CMV)**
 - **New legal weights created for IOH & Ag CMV**
 - **New permit created for IOH & Ag CMV**



Act 377 of 2013

- ▶ Sweeping change to movement of agricultural vehicles – bill was more than 30 pages long.
- ▶ Why?
 - Laws 25 to 40 years old
 - Agriculture and agricultural equipment not only different from 40 years ago...different in design, size and weight in last 10 years
 - Handful of court cases



How was legislation developed

- ▶ Used information from MinnRoads study on large tires and pavement effects
- ▶ Created a stakeholders group that met for two years
- ▶ Stakeholders group produced two reports, Phase I and Final.
- ▶ Studies...and lobbying...resulted in bills introduced in both Houses – Sen. Jerry Petrowski and Rep. Keith Ripp were primary sponsors



Basics pre-Act 377

- Implement of Husbandry (IOH)
 - Defined in 2 statutes - essentially, farm vehicle in operation between farm and field
 - One statute exempted IOH from having to be registered 'have a plate on it'
 - Another statute said IOH had to obey WI legal weights and no commercial motor vehicle could be an IOH
 - IOH that were single or two-vehicle combos were exempt from any limit on height or length
 - IOH were exempt from width limits, except for farm tractors at 9' on the Interstate and 12' on all other roads



Biggest Changes - IOH

- ▶ IOH vehicles defined by type of vehicles and granted legal privileges related to typical use, e.g. farm tractors, potato harvesters, combines, etc.
- ▶ New, higher weights allowed, w/o permit for IOH vehicles.
 - S.348.15(3)(g) is the ag weight table
 - 92k new legal wt for a vehicle that was eligible for 80k
 - Most IOH allowed 23k on a single axle
 - Weight not valid on any Interstate in WI



Biggest Changes - IOH

- ▶ IOH vehicles limited in maximum length w/o permit
- ▶ IOH vehicles required to have more lights, easier to see markings – delayed implementation date
- ▶ No passing IOH vehicles in ‘double yellow’ zones
- ▶ “No-Fee Permit” created for IOH vehicles that exceed new legal weights or length
 - Permit must be obtained from all jurisdictions on route(s)
 - “Category B” vehicles must be authorized on some route
- ▶ Local maintenance authorities have options that will allow them to opt out or partially opt out of issuing permits. WisDOT must issue permits



Biggest Changes – Ag CMV

- ▶ Creating the legal creature - Think manure hauling in modified dump trucks or lime spreaders or TMRs
- ▶ Allowed 92k gw and 23k on single axle if allowed by new Weight Table
- ▶ Allowed 10' in width, some also allowed to 12' for specified protrubances
- ▶ Retain all safety and operator requirements



Other Major Features

- ▶ If IOH or Ag CMV are over new legal weights without a permit, the fines are to be calculated on the standard legal weight table not the new ag weight table – fine could be much heavier
- ▶ WI State Patrol limited to warnings until 2015, except on Interstate; locals can cite now
- ▶ Local maintenance authorities have options that will allow them to opt out or partially opt out of issuing permits. WisDOT must issue permits



Dust Hasn't Settled Yet

- ▶ Still need research info – WisDOT pursuing NCHRP grant
- ▶ Continuing resource intensive outreach
- ▶ New Ag Size & Weight laws in effect now
- ▶ No “No-Fee Permit” has been issued
 - Custom Operators and CO-OPS want exemption from axle wt limits and single source permit
 - Trailer legislation anticipated – Other farming states stay tuned



Contacts and resources

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