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Tractor rollbar retrofit: ‘A lot cheaper than dying’

September 18-24 is National Farm Safety and Health Week

Meet Josh Goebel, farmer and fire captain from southwest Wisconsin. Goebel recently retrofitted his tractor with a rollover protective structure (ROPS). He did it through the Wisconsin ROPS Rebate Program.

He was motivated by a story.

“I went to buy a haybine from this guy and he had a John Deere 3010 just like mine, with the narrow front end,” Goebel said. “He asked if I had a ROPS on my tractor and I said no. Then he told me about an accident with his loader. He was dumping dirt when it tipped. Broke his leg in 20 spots, required 11 pins, he had broken ribs and a punctured lung.”

Goebel contacted the ROPS hotline. Even with some out-of-pocket cost, retrofitting is, “a lot cheaper than dying.”

Need a rollbar? September 18-24 is National Farm Safety and Health Week. Celebrate by contacting the ROPS hotline, 1-877-ROPSR4U, www.ropsr4u.com.

A ROPS is an operator compartment structure (usually cab or rollbar) intended to protect farmers from injuries caused by overturns or rollovers. More than half the tractors in Wisconsin do not have this protection. ROPS did not become standard on U.S.-manufactured tractors until 1985. A ROPS, when used with a seatbelt, is 99 percent effective in preventing injury or death in the event of an overturn.

The Wisconsin ROPS Rebate Program reimburses up to 70 percent (maximum of \$865) toward the total cost of purchasing, shipping and installing individual ROPS. More than 150 ROPS have been installed since the program began in early 2013, made possible through philanthropic support from Auction of Champions.

Goebel said he had intended to install a ROPS when he bought the tractor, but the earmarked money got diverted to unexpected repairs.

“The rebate really helped me make the decision,” he said.

Goebel, 36, and his wife Nicki operate [Hickory Ridge Heritage Farm](#) on 67 acres in Darlington, Wis., where they raise Aberdeen Lowline Angus cattle and Red Wattle heritage hogs. The John Deere 3010 is his primary tractor for hay cutting, raking and hauling manure. He has a son, J.D., and a daughter, Jaiden.

The terrain is hilly, making the ROPS even more important. If there is an overturn, chances are 99 percent that the story will have a happy ending. This [video](#) describes the program.

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