

IH & The SMV... Life In The Slow Lane...

In the 1950's as towns were increasing becoming more urbanized, the number of fatalities related to accidents involving slow moving vehicles (i.e. farm equipment) was steadily growing. The rural sleepy towns that in the past were ruled by farming were becoming more urbanized and industrial. Often times farmers had to travel at greater lengths between farm fields as farming operations grew and vehicular travel volume increased.

The narrow rural roads were barely adequate when cars met each other, but with larger and slower moving farm machinery now being more common, accidents did happen.

A device needed to be invented to warn motorists of the potential hazard of the slow moving farm equipment. In the past farm equipment manufacturers had used red tail lights and red flags as warning devices to alert motorists.

With the increased traffic also came increased travel speeds and reduced reaction times because of it. If a car traveling 55 mph encountered a farm machine traveling 15 mph, the driver



IH 1066 open station tractor with seat mounted SMV emblem. Plow has SMV emblem too.

By Kenneth Updike



H 1466 w/ plow showing cab & plow mounting of SMV emblems.

of the car has 7 seconds to react. That time was not much especially if speeds were exceeding 55 or if road conditions were questionable.

A study by the Ohio State Ag Engineering department conducted in the late 1950's led to the findings that 65% of accidents involving slow moving vehicles resulted in rear end collisions.

In 1962 Ohio State researcher Ken Harkness had a number of prototype slow moving vehicle warning emblems made and tested. It was determined that a triangular shaped emblem with a 12 inch high fluorescent orange center and three 1 3/4 inch wide reflective borders was the most effective shape for day and night visual identification.

In 1963 the SMV emblem was dedicated to the public. Within 2 years, Nebraska, Michigan, Ohio and Vermont had state laws recorded that required the use of the SMV emblem.

The SMV emblem was designed to be used only on slow moving vehicles. It should be visible to the rear and be mounted 2-10 feet above the ground. The emblem must

point up and it should be centered (if possible) on the rear of the vehicle. It is not to be used on stationary objects like fence posts, gates, driveway markers, ect. These are illegal uses of the emblem.

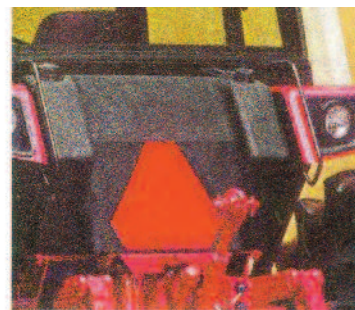
The first IH machines to have the SMV emblem specifically designed into it were the IH 15 series combines.(715-815-915) The rear separator hood was stamped with the outline of the SMV. The IH 86 series Pro-Ag line of tractors followed this with their rear fuel tank being sculpted to fit the emblem and the 800 series Early Riser planters had their body work designed around the SMV emblem being an integral part too!

IH always suggested that farmers use and maintain SMV emblems on all of their machinery. Even if the machine was built before the SMV emblem was around, the use of it was encouraged. In many states, the use of an SMV is required by law on portable farm equipment.

Currently there are 2 grades of SMV emblem. The original SMV and the new Super reflective SMV emblem. The ASAE has set design criteria for these emblems that manufacturers need to meet to have the emblem certified.



1206 & plow. Pre SMV sign era. This has a flashing warning light on the tractor only.



IH 86 series SMV mounted on the rear fuel tank.

The original SMV emblems introduced in 1962 met ASAE spec S276.3. These are the only type of SMV emblem that IH used on all of their farm machinery and for sale as spare parts thru their dealers.

The issue of these "old" emblems fading out has long been a problem. In the 1990's studies were done to try and find a solution. New advances in materials used to make the SMV and field testing of several prototype versions led to the development of the new Super reflective SMV emblem. I call it the SSMV (Super SMV) emblem.

This new emblem has the exact same size and shape as the old one. The change is in the materials used to build it. The red outer border stripes now use a super reflective, prismatic material like that used on the conspicuity tape required for use on semi truck trailers by the DOT. This new red tape is up to 10 times brighter than the old red tape used.

The new super reflective SMV emblems are designed to meet ASAE spec 276.6.

Only those emblems manufactured to meet either of these two specifications have a decal on their face stating the name of the manufacturing company, their address and that it certifies compliance with either ASAE S276.3 or S276.6. If you buy a replacement emblem and this data is not listed, you have an inferior sign or cheap will-fit knock off. You are not getting the "real deal".

On September 1, 2004 the state of IL made it state law that all agricultural, horticultural and livestock vehicles operating on Illinois public roads must have the new brighter, longer lasting SMV emblems. Similar laws exist in

other states like Ohio. The use of wide marker or extremity lighting is also required in some states. ALL of the current modern day machinery built has this feature. You can add these marker light bars to your IH tractors and other machinery if you wish. There are a number of vendors selling kits that contain the needed parts to retrofit older machines.

With tractor rides and cruises becoming more and more popular, the use of proper safety equipment is essential. The new SSMV emblems should be on tractors participating in these venues. The "old" standard SMV emblems will work (they are 10,000 % better than having nothing at all) but

the new emblems will let others know sooner that you are ahead of them. SMV emblems save lives, they might even save yours!

The SMV emblem is (unfortunately) unique to use in Canada and the U.S.A. In Europe, tractors have a circular decal attached to them indicating their travel speed (ie 20KM or 30KM or 50KM). It is this authors hope that someday the SMV will be adopted worldwide as universal symbol.

IH wasn't a builder of high speed race cars or such. Using an SMV emblem on your IH equipment when traveling on the road, will not only help keep you safe, but let you enjoy life, in the slow lane.



IH 3388 2+2 & IH 800 planter showing SMV mounting locations. The planter has 2 SMV's as it is an end tow unit.



MAGNUM Tractor with 690 disc ripper showing SMV mounting and the wide extremity marker lighting.