

To whom it may concern

My name is Darren Fitzhenry and I have been in the Motorcycle industry for 32 years, during that time I have worked in both wholesale and retail and know literally 100's of people in this trade and currently work for one of the major manufactures as a Regional Manager talking to and visiting dealers on a daily basis

The subject of ATV safety has been a "hot" topic for few years now as no one want to see customers/friends injured or killed, the overwhelming opinion of the people in the shops that sell and service ATV's is that mandatory roll over protection is not the answer to improving safety, the comment that continually comes out is that mandatory wearing of approved motorcycle helmets would go a long way to cutting the death toll. Virtually nobody I know would think about getting on a motor bike without wearing a helmet but this message seems to be lost when it comes to riding an ATV!

In the last year I have seen one of the major helmet manufactures produce a specialized helmet just for the purpose of farm use that addresses some of the criticisms of traditional helmets, it has a quick release buckle, doesn't impede hearing and has options for sun protection etc. (I am not at all involved with the company that import/distribute these!) just believe that it answers some of the criticisms that anti helmet people have brought up in the past

Some of the points in the report are quite valid, banning under 16 year olds from operating full size ATV's , having extra warning labels on them in regard to tipping over and possibly a rating system if it was simple to understand and not too complex for the manufactures to comply to , I would like to see a mandatory training course that could be done online that explains the way an ATV handles under different conditions (I have watched a DVD on this and it was quite good) this style of training would be of a real help to the new or casual workers that are often employed on farms and a good recap for the experienced users

I don't think that the side by side style of vehicle is the answer to all situations as they can be too large and cumbersome for some situations and not really any safer if the driver doesn't wear a seat belt and secure any side window netting, if they are getting in and out continually I can't see them going through all these things time after time

In closing all the dealers of the reparable brands that I have dealt with over the years care about their customers and do their best to sell the correct ATV for the job that the customer requires and would be happy to run through any extra advise on safely operating the vehicle and fitting up the correct fitting helmet

Regards

Darren Fitzhenry