



p-TIPS

Outstanding in the field (Fuel efficiency on the farm)

- Is there any end in sight to spiraling energy prices? Probably not. High fuel costs affect everyone in one form or another, and we owe it to future generations to conserve energy to the extent possible. Small farmers and ranchers are being especially hard hit as soaring gasoline prices eat up their profit margins. California has an ongoing Flex Your Power at the Pump campaign to encourage state residents to conserve fuel while saving money. The California Farm Bureau Federation (www.cfbf.com/issues/energy/flex.cfm) is an enthusiastic participant in that campaign and offers suggestions to reduce farm fuel consumption without sacrificing productivity.
- 1) Inflate tires to proper pressure. Overinflated tractor tires lower productivity and waste fuel, while underinflated ones increase wear.
 - 2) Consider reduced tillage. Try reducing tillage or its intensity whenever possible or change to no-till cropping if fields permit.
 - 3) Modify equipment, where applicable, to perform multiple operations in one pass. This reduces trips across the same field.
 - 4) Use the appropriate-sized tractor for the load. Excess tractor capacity wastes fuel; too small a tractor for the load is also inefficient.
 - 5) Stay on top of general tractor maintenance. Regular maintenance makes all vehicles cleaner, safer, and more fuel efficient.
 - 6) Paint on-farm fuel tanks a light color to reduce evaporation losses. This cost-effective measure yields long-term savings.
 - 7) Minimize the time spent driving tractors or other field equipment on the road. Lighter, more fuel-efficient vehicles should transport crops to storage or markets.
 - 8) Think about how you use your pickup truck. Heavy trucks have a crucial role on farms, but their power isn't needed on trips to town. Combine errands as much as possible. If a family member has a medical appointment, schedule vehicle service, buy farm supplies, and purchase inputs on the same day.
 - 9) Remember that general driving tips enhance fuel efficiency. Use your heating and air-conditioning only when really necessary and don't exceed the speed limit.
 - 10) For diesel-powered irrigation pumps, be sure to match the engine output horsepower with the horsepower demanded by the pump. Research shows that matching pump and engine rpms moves the most water per liter of fuel.