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It's time for one of my most favorite Iowa celebrations, "Farmer Wave Week." To some, this might sound made up but I assure you it honestly is a real thing! One of my very first articles was all about the farmer wave. I have been writing this fun column for over two years now and I thought it was time to revisit one of my favorites from Nov. of 2018

Thanksgiving is right around the corner and I could not be more excited. It is one of my favorite holidays and I am very thankful to have grown up on our family farm. Being raised in a rural setting means being surrounded by an amazing small town atmosphere where everyone knows everyone, helps each other out, and always remembers to wave when driving down the road.

You may not know this but Nov. 6-12 is "Farmer Wave Week" in Iowa. Governor Terry Branstad signed a proclamation to recognize the very first "Farmer Wave Week" back in 2014. The farmer wave is typically just two fingers coming up off the top of the steering wheel to wave at someone while driving. On a simple trip to town, no matter what vehicle I am in, I am guaranteed at least 4-7 farmer waves from my friends and neighbors. I always reply with an eager full hand, five finger wave, but I have often wondered where that silly farmer finger wave even came from? Is it because some of the farmers I know are missing a few fingers?

This past week, my truck has been in the shop getting new brakes, so I had to drive our old Ford stick shift pickup to school. Now remember, I am only 15 with a school permit, so I am not the most experienced driver, but it was either I learn how to drive the dreaded stick shift or take the bus. Let's just say, I quickly became a gear shifting, double clutching queen!

On my maiden voyage to school in the Power Stroke stick shift, with my little brother riding shotgun, anxious to immediately report back to my two older brothers on how many times I killed it, I met my first vehicle on the gravel road. With one hand on the shifter and the other on the steering wheel, my two fingers instinctively came up to greet my fellow neighbor. I did not even realize it, but I had just done my very FIRST farmer wave! Suddenly it dawned on me, that is where the finger wave originally came from. Stick shifts, pickups, and friendly neighbors is how the farmer wave began.

This is what I am most thankful for this fall; my farm background, a strong family, learning to drive a manual transmission at a young age, and being raised in small town Iowa where everyone knows everyone else. Enjoy celebrating this unique week and always remember to wave at your neighbors!

~Kesley Holdgrafer