BACKGROUND:
On forest industry land in the southern U.S., hunting lease holders (a hunt club) had been plowing and maintaining a food plot over the top of a gas line right-of-way.

UNSAFE ACT AND CONDITION:
Although utility rights-of-way are often used for food plots, in this case the hunt club had not consulted with the landowning company or the gas line company before putting in the food plot over the gas line right-of-way. It turned out that one section of the food plot had been plowed over a two-inch, high-pressure gas line that was buried only five inches under the ground.

ACCIDENT/INJURY:
During pre-harvest site planning, the landowning company's forester and the technician for the gas line company discovered the food plot and instructed the hunt club to stop cultivating that spot. Continued plowing at this location would have eventually damaged the gas line and could have led to an explosion and injuries.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:
- Call "811" or your state underground utilities locating service or "One Call Center" (see www.call811.com for the number) before crossing, working near, or disturbing any ground over a petroleum pipeline with heavy machinery. A pipeline company representative will check the site and advise on required precautions, restrictions, and prohibitions. Alternatively, you may also contact the pipeline company directly. The number is usually shown on a nearby post- or pipe marker located on the right-of-way.
- Do not assume that the pipeline is located directly under the line markers or under the right-of-way's center. The pipeline may not follow a straight course between markers, and you cannot determine the pipeline's depth.
- Avoid plowing on steep slopes, as it could cause the cover on the pipeline right-of-way to wash away and might even expose a pipe.
- Some landowners, on the advice of their insurance companies, choose to prohibit food plots on any gas line rights-of-way.
- Contact the pipeline company's emergency number or other emergency number if you hit or touch a pipeline with heavy equipment—a gouge, dent, crease, or scrape may cause a future safety problem for which you will be liable.
- For additional guidance on this issue, see FRA Loss Control Overview #46, Working Safely Near Petroleum Pipelines: http://loggingsafety.com/content/working-safely-near-petroleum-pipelines

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