

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/deere-to-allow-farmers-to-repair-their-own-equipment-11673228580>

BUSINESS

Deere to Allow Farmers to Repair Their Own Equipment

Agreement aims to ensure farmers, independent repair shops can fix increasingly high-tech tractors



Deere & Co. has reached an agreement with a farm group that gives farmers access to resources needed to repair their high-tech equipment.

PHOTO: BING GUAN/REUTERS

By *Patience Haggin* [Follow](#)

Updated Jan. 8, 2023 10:53 pm ET

Machinery manufacturer Deere & Co. signed a memorandum of understanding with the American Farm Bureau Federation on Sunday that the group said ensures farmers can repair their own farm equipment or take it to independent repair shops.

The agreement addresses a debate that has grown in recent years, as the farm industry has implemented high-tech equipment like software and sensors in machinery like tractors and harvesters aimed at boosting harvests and speeding planting.

Some farmer organizations and consumer advocacy groups have accused Deere **DE 1.95%** ▲ and other manufacturers of using proprietary software on their equipment to restrict repair work to the manufacturers' own dealers.

Some farmers have said it has increased their costs by forcing them to call in technicians from dealerships for repairs they could handle themselves, if the equipment companies would give them greater access to the software.

Deere has said it provides tools and repair manuals enabling private repairs, but has pushed back against what it says are attempts by farmers to modify software that controls machinery operations.

The agreement creates a mechanism to address farmers' concerns and give them access to resources needed to repair their own equipment, such as diagnostic and repair codes, manuals and product guides.

Since 2021 the Biden administration has pushed for tractor makers to make it easier for farmers and independent mechanics to repair the equipment.

The memorandum says it seeks to address the so-called "right-to-repair" issue through the private sector, rather than through regulation or legislation, and discourages the federation's state organizations from introducing, promoting or supporting such legislation.

Should state or federal right-to-repair legislation be enacted, both Deere and the federation have the right to withdraw from the agreement with 15 days' written notice.

Still, the agreement could be difficult to enforce, said Kevin O'Reilly, Right to Repair campaign director at the Public Interest Research Group, an advocacy organization. Lawmakers "should continue pushing Right-to-Repair legislation until every farmer in every state with every brand of equipment can fix every problem with every tractor," Mr. O'Reilly said.

The federation said the agreement could serve as a model and that it had begun talks with other manufacturers.

Write to Patience Haggin at patience.haggin@wsj.com

Appeared in the January 9, 2023, print edition as 'Deere to Allow Farmers To Repair Own Equipment'.