

Northeast

DEALER

The Newsletter of NORTHEAST EQUIPMENT DEALERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

JOIN US AT THE 2024 NEW YORK FARM SHOW!

The New York Farm Show is right around the corner and information packed. From the latest farm technology to its full line of educational workshops, we're ready to prepare you for the year ahead. Join us as we host daily seminars presented by the New York Beef Producers Association and the New York Forest Owners Association.

NEW YORK FARM SHOW RETURNS IN FEBRUARY

Mark your calendars for the event, which is set for Feb. 22-24 at the New York State Fairgrounds.

By CHRIS TORRES

The farmers' megamall is back! Whatever you need to improve your farm, you'll find it at the Northeast's largest indoor farm equipment show, New York Farm Show.

The event is set for Feb. 22-24 at the New York State Fairgrounds.

Here is a little teaser of what will be in Syracuse this year:

- Featured will be more than 40 new products, including the new DJI Agras T40, a state-of-the-art spray drone that has a 10.5-gallon liquid tank and a 110-pound capacity granular tank; the T8088 Ag Bagger from RCI that features a 104-inch rotor and 12-foot tunnel with no backstop or cables; the new PS6138 PowerSpread manure spreader from H&S Manufacturing Co., which has a 373-cubic-foot heaped capacity and patented flighting for a far more even spread pattern; and much more.
- Twenty-seven new exhibitors will showcase their products and services.
- Educational seminars will focus on forestry, and a reimagined beef exhibit is planned.

As always, there will be free parking with a shuttle bus service running daily to each exhibit building. Tickets to the show are free if you request them by Feb. 15. Otherwise, the cost is only \$5.



**NEW YORK
FARM SHOW**

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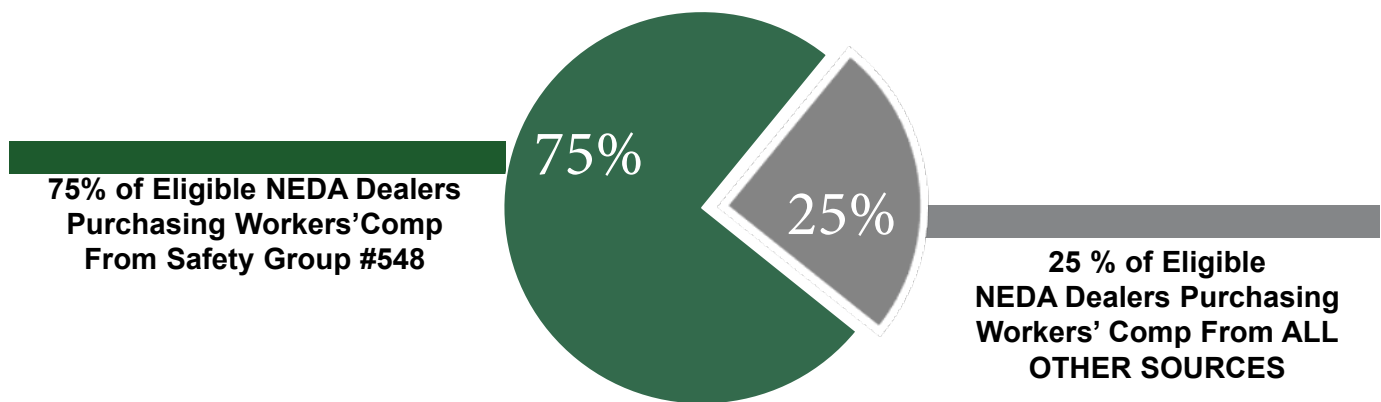
Policy Year	Dividend
2021-2022	35.0%
2020-2021	35.0%
2019-2020	35.0%
2018-2019	40.0%
2017-2018	40.0%
2016-2017	35.0%
2015-2016	30.0%
2014-2015	20.0%
2013-2014	15.0%
2012-2013	15.0%

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Observations from the **FIELD**

Most AG dealers I've visited are reporting positive results from 2023, with the caveat that whole goods, parts and services associated with the rural lifestyle market have tempered significantly. Large AG whole goods sales reports seem to be a hit or miss proposition, with interest rates and product availability being the challenges most often mentioned.

NEDA's legislative priorities continue to focus on right-to-modify bills. In addition, we've seen several states introduce legislation focused on consumer and data privacy. Although NEDA hasn't taken a policy position on any of the proposed bills, we are actively monitoring them, exploring potential impacts, and looking to build coalitions advocating on the subject. Please take some time to examine your dealership's policy, procedures, and practices involved in protecting and limiting access to your customer's data (financial and otherwise). It's important that we as dealers and as an industry understand the current situation, as well as what policies and procedures are in place and if they are adequate to provide solutions to potential problems.

NEDA will continue to support and participate in workforce development efforts, including access to quality educational programming and support, DOT (over-width hauling), employment, and tax laws and regulation.

Right-to-Repair continues to be a major issue in PA, VT, NH, MA, ME, and NJ as the advocates continue to expand their coalitions, networks, and grassroots advocacy. Successful auto telematics ballot initiatives in MA and ME have demonstrated public support for the issue.

Knowing that advocates will point to those successes and that legislators respond to public support, active dealer engagement is our best "tool" if "we" are to overcome disinformation campaigns and associated public perceptions. (See page 12 for related article.) Please take time to familiarize yourself and your staff with the issue and talking points. Simply put, NEDA needs your help recruiting new members, as well as participating in and financially supporting our legislative and program development work.

Participation leverages a dealer's ability to REAP the benefits of membership - your PROFITS will follow!



TIM WENTZ

Field Director / Legislative
Committee Chairman
wentzt@comcast.net
717-576-6794

The impact (value) of the association's legislative advocacy, workforce development, and Industry Relations work can easily be overlooked. Our efforts cannot be accomplished without significant financial investment, support, and grassroots participation. If we're to continue that work, we are going to need your help participating in and financially supporting our legislative work, association governance/direction, and program development. We need your help recruiting new members, participating in legislative visits, giving testimony, contributing financially to the legal/legislative fund, association governance/direction, and program development!

When you REAP the benefits of membership, your PROFITS will follow! Call Ralph Gaiss at 800-932-0607 for questions and support.



The general information provided in this publication by Northeast Equipment Dealers Association, Inc., (NEDA) is not intended to be nor should it be treated as tax, legal, investment, accounting, or other professional advice. Before making any decision or taking any action, you should consult a qualified professional advisor who has been provided with all pertinent facts relevant to your situation. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information regarding the subject matter covered. Changes in the law duly render the information in this publication invalid. Some of the editorial material is copyrighted and should be reproduced only when permission is obtained from the publisher and the association.

NEDA Board of Directors

OFFICERS

BRYAN MESSICK, President
Messick's Farm Equip. / Elizabethtown, PA
717-361-4836 • Fax: 717-367-1319
New Holland, Kubota, Krone
bryanm@messicks.com

LAURA OLINGER, 1st Vice President / Treasurer
NEDA & NAEDA OPE Council Member
Bentley Bros. Inc. / Albion, NY
585-589-9610 • Cell: 585-733-9602
Kubota, Stahl, Landpride, Ariens
laura@bentleybrosinc.com • www.bentleybrosinc.com

NATE SHATTUCK, 2nd Vice President
NEDA & NAEDA OPE Council Member
Devon Lane Farm Supply, Inc. / Belchertown, MA
413-323-6336 • Fax: 413-323-5080
Yanmar, Landini, Monosem, Ferris, Simplicity, Stahl, Husqvarna
nates@devonlane.com

JOHN E. KOMARISKY, Immediate Past President 2023
Main & Pinckney Equipment Inc. / Auburn, NY
315-253-6269 • Fax: 315-253-5110
New Holland, Simplicity, Brillion, Bush Hog
john@mainandpinckney.com

DAVE CLOSE, CEO and Executive Vice Pres.
800-932-0607, Ext. 245 • Fax: 315-451-3548
davec@ne-equip.com

DIRECTORS

PAUL BUCCHI
Sno-White Equipment / Southington, CT
860-747-2020
Scag Power Equipment, Stahl, Toro, Walker Mowers, Husqvarna, Hustler Turf Equip., Billy Goat, Echo, shindaiwa, Bear Cat, SnowEx
paul@sno-whiteope.com

TIMOTHY CALL
Empire Tractor / Batavia, NY
315-343-1822 • Fax: 585-343-1848
New Holland, Kubota, Kioti
timc@empiretractor.com

BRIAN CARPENTER
Champlain Valley Equipment / Middlebury, VT
802-388-4967 • Fax: 802-388-9656
New Holland, Case IH, Kubota, Gehl
brian@champlainvalleyequipment.com

TIMOTHY CALL
Empire Tractor / Batavia, NY
315-343-1822 • Fax: 585-343-1848
New Holland, Kubota, Kioti
timc@empiretractor.com

BRAD HERSHEY, Northeast EDA Region Director
Hooper, Inc. / Mifflintown, PA
717-436-6100 • Fax: 717-463-2312
Case IH, JCB, Kubota
bradh@hooper.com

ED HINES, Past President 2014, 2001
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Case IH, Gehl, New Idea, Cub Cadet
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ASSOCIATION & MEMBER NEWS

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NEW YORK FARM SHOW RETURNS

continued from page 1

Show hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

Answer questions, win money

Visit the American Agriculturist booth in the Horticultural Building to take part in our daily opinion poll and get in the running for one of five \$100 Cabela's gift cards, or one \$350 Tractor Supply Co. gift card.

How to get tickets

Tickets are available for free from your [Northeast Equipment Dealers Association](#) member or by writing to New York Farm Show, P.O. Box 3470, Syracuse, NY 13220. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your request received by Feb. 15. Otherwise, tickets are \$5 at the door.

New York Farm Show is the leading farm show in the Northeast and has been held since 1985. It is co-presented by American Agriculturist and Northeast Equipment Dealers Association.

For more information, visit newyorkfarmshow.com.

Purdue Economists Provide Forecast for 2024 Amid Farm Bill Uncertainties, Global Dynamics

Purdue agricultural economists predict an overall positive outlook for 2024

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Despite recession warnings and adverse precursors in 2022, the United States' economy performed better than predicted in 2023. Purdue University [Department of Agricultural Economics](#) experts now look to 2024 and provide insights into the national economy, trade, policy and food prices. These findings were recently published in the [Purdue Agricultural Economics Report's](#) annual outlook, including potential outcomes of a delayed farm bill.

"As we enter 2024, the complexities surrounding the farm bill debate persist. With federal spending cuts in focus, the projected cost of the farm bill will likely take center stage in agricultural committee deliberations this year," said Roman Keeney, associate professor of agricultural economics at Purdue University and co-editor of the report.

"The Purdue Agricultural Economics Report will closely monitor the evolving farm bill situation through its [policy](#) brief series, offering insights into critical legislation impacting farmers nationwide."

Inside the issue, Purdue agricultural economists predict an overall positive outlook for 2024 with modest GDP growth, low unemployment, decreasing inflation and a potential lowering of interest rates.

"The Federal Reserve increased their policy rate at the end of 2023 but has kept it stable since August. Recession is a possibility, but it would be sheer stubbornness to continue predicting recession in the face of so much good news," said Larry DeBoer, professor emeritus of agricultural economics. "My guess: There is no recession in 2024."

To read the full Purdue Agricultural Economics Report, visit <https://purdue.ag/paer>.

► Published online [Morning Agclips](#) | 1.28.24

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Have You Reviewed the OSHA Top 10 Recently?

By Equipment Dealer Specialist **Jerry Leemkuil**
Federated Mutual Insurance Company

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Top 10 list addresses the most frequently cited standards following inspections of businesses and worksites by federal OSHA. For equipment dealers, this list is particularly beneficial in enhancing safety practices and risk management within the industry.

Why should you review this list?

Each year, OSHA posts their Top 10 violations after the month of April to allow the prior fiscal year's inspection data to finalize.¹

By focusing on the OSHA Top 10 list, equipment dealers can gain targeted insights into the regulatory landscape, helping them align their operations with industry standards to help avoid common pitfalls. This serves as a comprehensive guide, shedding light on specific safety concerns and compliance requirements relevant to the equipment sector.

In the fiscal year 2022, the Top 10 included:

1. Fall protection^(C)
2. Hazard communication
3. Ladders^(C)
4. Respiratory protection
5. Scaffolding^(C)
6. Control of hazardous energy (lockout/tagout)
7. Powered industrial trucks
8. Fall protection training^(C)
9. Eye and face protection^(C)
10. Machinery and machine guarding



Is your business operating safely?

OSHA inspections across the nation are completed at both the state and federal levels.

In 2022, over 69,000 OSHA inspections have occurred, resulting in more than 133,000 violations.² Knowing that these risks exist — and that there are plenty of safety resources to help mitigate them — what will you do for your business to avoid becoming a part of these statistics?

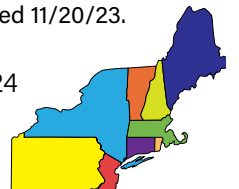
Staying up-to-date as these topics evolve is necessary to help prevent costly and dangerous losses and can help to ensure a safer working environment for your employees. Reach out to your local Federated® marketing representative for more information.

¹ <https://www.osha.gov/top10citedstandards>. Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Standards. Accessed 11/20/23.

² <https://enforcedata.dol.gov/views/oshalab.php>. Data Enforcement. Accessed 11/20/23.

^(C) Construction Standard instead of General Industry (according to OSHA)

► Published online **NAEDA Equipment Dealer Magazine** | 1.9.24



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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

I recently had a conversation with a department of education employee involved in Agricultural Education policy, evaluation, and delivery. Our conversation was focused on aligning topics and tasks that are presented and taught to current and future “industry” needs. Within our discussion, Right-to-Repair came into the discussion. He was under the impression that the manufacturers were purposely controlling access to service tools, preventing customer/independent repair, etc. Needless to say, I quickly responded to his misunderstanding, and we went on to examine unintended consequences of unfettered access and modification of equipment to include used equipment values, excessive wear, safety, etc.

Thinking back to my conversations with dealer principals and service managers, a recurring theme became apparent.

Without the core competencies and knowledge, “Access to coding/tools” doesn’t directly translate to an individual’s or independent shop’s ability to “repair” a given unit – a point repair advocates fail to address (along with many others)! Personally, I believe that it’s in “everyone’s” interest – society, dealers, the manufacturers, and, most importantly, our customers – for all to work cooperatively towards the goal of establishing and delivering educational programming focused on equipping students (at all levels) and our existing workforce with the core competencies necessary for success in today’s and tomorrow’s marketplace.

Simply put, our ability to enable students, teachers, and staff with the ability to master the “core” knowledge/competencies/skills will determine future success or failure. The quicker “we” can agree on what knowledge/competencies/skills are necessary, the better “we’ll” be able to build training and educational delivery models/methods required. For example, a customer/technician having an error code is only one step in the repair process. Repair requires the ability to read/understand a schematic, go from “2D” to “3D”, use a multi-meter, flow-gauge, etc.

Although I don’t have any verifiable data to support my theory, I believe strongly that education and communication are key to our dealers, manufacturers/industry, and customer’s success and an important piece of the “right-to-repair” policy discussion. Dealer and industry participation will determine how successful NEDA will be advocating within your departments of Education and Labor.

COMPLIMENTARY WEBINAR

Hosted by Federated Insurance Co.

NEW ATTACKS ON NONCOMPETES

Thursday, February 25, 2024

11:00 AM CST - 30 minutes

REGISTER HERE!!!

Advance Registration is Required!

State legislatures and federal agencies continue to take aim at noncompete and nonsolicitation agreements with new laws ranging from total bans to severe restrictions. Protecting your customer list, sales territories, and proprietary information is increasingly difficult. That’s why it’s more important than ever to understand what is and is not enforceable in each jurisdiction where you do business.



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Understanding Beneficial Ownership Reporting Requirements

By GLENN HANSEN

The Corporate Transparency Act became law on January 1, 2024, requiring millions of companies to file a Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI) Report. Beneficial ownership refers to the individuals who own or control a legal business entity. Governments around the world have implemented Beneficial Ownership Information Reporting requirements to ensure greater transparency in business operations, and to combat financial crimes, money laundering, and corruption. Non-compliance can result in fines and jail time.

In a recent webinar explaining BOI reporting, the [National Federation of Independent Business](#) (NFIB) gave three reasons why the new federal rules are in place. First, the NFIB points out that states do not collect beneficial owner information. Second, it states that the BOI rules help catch malign actors who conceal ownership to launder money, finance terrorism, other illicit activities. And third, NFIB states that the federal law providing for BOI collection is needed to protect national security and counter money laundering.

Combatting Financial Crimes

The primary goal of these reporting requirements is to combat financial crimes such as money laundering and corruption. When authorities know who the beneficial owners are, they can track and investigate suspicious financial activities. By disclosing the owners, small businesses contribute to a more transparent and accountable business environment. Compliance is increasingly global. Many countries have adopted international standards for beneficial ownership disclosure to align with global efforts against financial crimes.

Compliance with Beneficial Ownership Information Reporting fulfills legal obligations and helps businesses maintain a positive reputation. Transparent business practices instill trust among customers, partners, and stakeholders.

Who Files a BOI Report?

The NFIB states the BOI requirements impact both domestic and foreign reporting companies. Any corporation, LLC, or other entity that was created by filing a document with a Secretary Of State needs to file a BOI report. Some businesses are exempt from these reporting requirements, including many financial institutions such as banks, credit unions and insurance companies. One interesting exemption is for "large operating companies," which must have more than 20 employees on a full-time basis in the United States, have an operating presence at a physical office within the United States, and must have filed in the previous year federal income tax returns in the United States demonstrating more than \$5 million in gross receipts or sales. A business entity must meet all three criteria.

Take this [quiz](#) to see if your business must complete a BOI report.

Identify Beneficial Owners and Collect Information

Small businesses need to identify and verify the individuals who have a significant influence or ownership stake in the company. This may include shareholders, partners, and others with decision-making authority. Once a business identifies these owners, the business must collect and document relevant information about them. This typically includes personal details such as name, address, and identification documents.

Entire article can be found [here](#).

► Published online [OPE Business](#) | 1.23.24

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U.S. Farmer Sentiment Stable as Inflation Expectations Subside

Farmers' inflation expectations for the upcoming year were markedly lower than those reported a year ago for 2023

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — The latest report from the [Purdue University/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer](#) indicates that U.S. farmers' inflation expectations have subsided while overall producer sentiment changed little.

The December barometer recorded a reading of 114, just one point lower than in November. Both subindices of the barometer, the Index of Current Conditions and the Index of Future Expectations, mirrored this slight decline, settling one point below their respective November figures at 112 and 115. Notably, farmers' inflation expectations for the upcoming year were markedly lower than those reported a year ago for 2023. This month's Ag Economy Barometer survey was conducted from Dec. 4-8.

Farmers reported another improvement in their farms' financial performance during the month of December. The Farm Financial Performance Index saw a 2-point increase compared to the previous month, marking a continued positive trend. Since late summer, the index has climbed 11 points, and at year-end, it was 21 points above the low point for 2023, which occurred in May.

"The shift in farmers' perception of financial performance during the fall quarter corresponds with USDA's (U.S. Department of Agriculture's) more optimistic 2023 farm income outlook released in late November, which was \$10 billion higher than their previous forecast," said James Mintert, the barometer's principal investigator and director of Purdue University's Center for Commercial Agriculture.

The Farm Capital Investment Index reading of 43 was only one point above November's, but it marked a 13-point increase compared to the same period last year. Respondents endorsing the notion that now is a favorable time for substantial investments in their farm operation cited "higher dealer inventories" and "strong cash flows" as key factors supporting this perspective. While the percentage of respondents selecting "strong cash flows" as a rationale for investment rebounded from the previous month, it remained less popular than in July and August. Conversely, in December, the percentage of producers citing "higher dealer inventories" as a primary motivation for investment was more than double the proportion who expressed a similar sentiment in July.

"High input costs continue to be concerning for U.S. farmers, although a notable shift in concerns took place as 2023 unfolded," Mintert said.

Farmers concerned about the risk of lower prices for

crops and livestock increased from 16% of respondents in January to over one-fourth (26%) by December. Number three on the list of concerns for the upcoming year was "rising interest rates," chosen by 24% of farmers in December's survey.

Producers' inflation expectations moderated, with 70% expecting inflation in 2024 to be less than 4%. By comparison, 50% of the producers anticipated an inflation rate of 6% or higher a year ago. When asked about interest rates, about one-third (34%) of respondents said they anticipate rates declining in 2024 while 22% expect no change in interest rates in the upcoming year.

Perspectives on farmland values weakened slightly in December compared to November. The Short-Term Farmland Value Index fell 4 points to a reading of 121, while the long-term index decreased by 2 points to 149. Compared to a year ago, the short-term index was down 3 points, while the long-term index was 9 points higher.

"The improvement in farmers' interest rate expectations since late 2022 could help explain the year-to-year rise in farmers' long-term farmland value expectations," Mintert stated.

About the Purdue University Center for Commercial Agriculture

The [Center for Commercial Agriculture](#) was founded in 2011 to provide professional development and educational programs for farmers. Housed within Purdue University's Department of Agricultural Economics, the center's faculty and staff develop and execute research and educational programs that address the different needs of managing in today's business environment.

About CME Group

As the world's leading derivatives marketplace, [CME Group](#) enables clients to trade futures, options, cash and OTC markets, optimize portfolios, and analyze data – empowering market participants worldwide to efficiently manage risk and capture opportunities. CME Group exchanges offer the widest range of global benchmark products across all major asset classes based on interest rates, equity indexes, foreign exchange, energy, agricultural products and metals. The company offers futures and options on futures trading through the CME Globex® platform, fixed income trading via BrokerTec and foreign exchange trading on the EBS platform. In addition, it operates one of the world's leading central counterparty clearing providers, CME Clearing.

Fight to Repair: Right To Repair News From The Front Lines

10 States Introduce Right to Repair Legislation

By Paul Roberts

EDITOR'S NOTE: We decided to republish the following article in hopes that our member dealers and their staff will gain a better understanding of the messaging advocates are using to build public support for legislation.

It's vital that "we" understand their messaging and can counter with facts, counter programing, and/or information. Your dealership's and your staff's ability to engage and communicate are the most important tools we have in our toolbox.

2024 is only a few days old, but 10 states have already introduced right to repair legislation. Also: Massachusetts Senate passes wheelchair right to repair law. And: tell the FTC you support repair!

2023 was the most successful year yet for those advocating for a legal right to repair, with four U.S. states passing versions of right to repair legislation, and the EU also expanding laws designed to encourage repair and reuse.

By all accounts, 2024 may see even more progress. Less than a week into the New Year, 10 states have already introduced right to repair legislation of various kinds - an indication that the momentum behind pro-repair laws remains strong.

As of Thursday, legislators in the states of Alaska, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington had introduced right to repair bills in at least one chamber of their legislature. Many of those bills were carried over from the last legislative session, which saw thirty-three states and Puerto Rico consider right to repair legislation during the legislative session, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. However, there are some net-new proposed laws, including some new flavors of R2R legislation such as the proposed New Hampshire legislation ensuring a right to repair educational equipment. (Here's looking at you, Chromebook!)

[Entire article](#) can be read here.

► Published in online newsletter | 1.4.24

Portable Fire Extinguishers

Applications!

The use of a Portable Fire Extinguisher in the workplace is addressed in OSHA standard 1910.157. Portable fire extinguishers should only be used by trained personnel to extinguish small, localized fires that do not threaten to block escape routes or spread beyond the immediate area.

Selection!

Fire extinguishers are classified by the type of fuel in a fire. Ag facilities can address most fire hazards with a dry chemical ABC type extinguisher.

- Class A: wood, paper, cloth, trash & plastic
- Class B: flammable liquids (e.g. gasoline, solvents, oil, grease, etc.)
- Class C: energized electrical equipment
- Class D: metals such as potassium, sodium, aluminum & magnesium

Placement!

OSHA 1910.157 requires employers to "mount, locate and identify them [extinguishers] so that they are readily accessible." To prevent damage, industry standards recommend mounting extinguishers on wall brackets with handles 3-1/2 to 5 feet above the floor. Larger extinguishers may be mounted lower but at least 4" off the ground. 1910.157 prescribes the maximum travel distance to access extinguishers:

- Class A, C or D hazards, 75 feet travel distance
- Class B hazards, 50 feet travel distance

Employee Training!

OSHA prohibits employees from using a portable fire extinguisher unless they've been trained to recognize when and how to use it. Training is required when first hired and annually thereafter.

Inspections, Testing & Maintenance!

OSHA 1910.157 requires portable fire extinguishers to be inspected, tested and maintained on the following schedule:

- Monthly visual inspection (no record requirement*)
- Annual maintenance check (record required)

**Note: Although documentation of monthly inspections is not specifically required, indications such as damaged, missing or discharged extinguishers, as well as large accumulations of dust are signs to OSHA that monthly inspections are not taking place.*

If you have any questions concerning the above, please contact Joey Barnes at joey.barnes@unitedconsultantsllc.com or 785-547-5701. Thank you.

► Submitted by [United Consultants LLC](#) | The HelpLine e-newsletter

83(b) Election: What is it?

By IAN C PERRY and ROMAN A. BASI

Within the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), there is a provision known as an 83(b) election. The 83(b) election applies to equity that is subject to vesting. When this election is made, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is notified that the elector, whether it be an employee or startup founder, wishes to pay tax for the ownership at the time of granting, rather than at the time of stock vesting. An 83(b) election must be made within 30 days after the issuance of restricted shares. While the IRS is to be notified of the election, the recipient of the equity must also submit a copy of the completed form to their employer.

An 83(b) election is important due to the ability of being able to pre-pay your tax liability on a lower valuation, assuming any equity value increases in subsequent years. However, if the company's value declines, this tax strategy would ultimately lead you to overpay in taxes. Typically, whenever a founder or employee receives compensation in the form of equity, the stake is subject to income tax based on its value. The tax liability is based upon the Fair Market Value (FMV) of the equity at the time of granting, less any costs of exercising or buying the shares. The tax must be paid in the actual year the stock is issued. In many cases, individuals may receive equity vesting over several years as employees earn the shares from being employed over time. In this scenario, the tax on the equity is due at the time of vesting. If the company performs well and increases in value over the vesting period, the taxes paid during each vested year will also rise in conjunction.

When is it beneficial to make an 83(b) election? This election is beneficial to the elector if the restricted stock's value is going to increase in subsequent years. Along with this, if the amount of income reported is small at the time of granting, this election could be quite beneficial.

When is making an 83(b) election detrimental? If the stock value falls or the company goes on to file for bankruptcy, then the elector has overpaid in taxes. The IRS does not allow an overpayment claim under this election. Another instance in which this election could be detrimental is if the employee decides to leave the firm before the vesting period is over. This is because the taxpayer has paid taxes on shares that they would never receive. Along with this, if the amount of income reported is substantial at the time of granting, this election may not be beneficial.

Another situation in which an 83(b) election may be made is with profits interest. A profits interest is an equity-based upon the future value of a partnership that is awarded to an individual for their service to the partnership. The award may consist of receiving a percentage of profits from a partnership without having to contribute capital. Effectively, it is a form of equity compensation and is used

as a means to incentivize employees. Typically, this type of worker compensation requires an 83(b) election.

An 83(b) election allows someone to pay taxes on their stock awards at the time they are granted, rather than when they are vested. This tax law is often most beneficial to startup employees, who may receive large parts of their compensation in the form of restricted stock or stock options. With most startups hoping that their share value will increase rapidly, an 83(b) election allows for major tax savings. Contact the professionals at The Center for Financial, Legal, and Tax Planning, Inc. Our office is able to assist in the process of making an 83(b) election. Please contact us at (618) 997-3436 or visit our website at www.taxplanning.com.

Ian C. Perry is a staff accountant for The Center for Financial, Legal & Tax Planning, Inc.

Roman A. Basi is an expert on closely held Enterprises. He is an attorney/CPA and President of The Center for Financial, Legal & Tax Planning, Inc.

Agricultural Labor· 56-Hour Overtime Threshold for New York Farm Workers Effective January 1, 2024

On January 1, 2024, [N.Y. Comp. Codes R. & Regs. tit. 12 § 190-2.4\(b\)](#) became effective, establishing an overtime threshold of 56 hours per week for agricultural workers in New York state. The final regulations, adopted February 22, 2023 from recommendations by the state's Farm Laborers Wage Board, phase in four-hour overtime threshold reductions for farm workers every two years until establishing a 40-hour workweek in 2032. For background, see ALWR—Oct. 7, 2022, "New York Labor Commissioner Issues Order Reducing Farm Worker Overtime Threshold from 60 to 40 Hours."

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ASSOCIATION STAFF

Dave Close, Executive VP/CEO
800-932-0607 x 235
davec@ne-equip.com

Kelli Neider, Administrative Assistant
800-932-0607 x 200
kneider@ne-equip.com (Business Forms)

Tim Wentz, Field Director / Legislative
Committee Chairman
C: 717-576-6794, H: 717-258-1450
wentzt@comcast.net

Scott Grigor, NY Farm Show Manager
800-932-0607, Ext. 223
sgrigor@ne-equip.com

Jamie DePalma, Editor, NE Dealer
jamie.ne.dealer@gmail.com

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Robb Roesch at 785-548-5838
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Significantly Increase Sales by Practicing

Every sports team practices. Not just the pros. College, high school, pee-wee, shoot I remember my Pony League baseball team practicing when I was five years old. Add to this the fact that many, if not most, professionals practice. Would you want a heart surgeon who hasn't practiced on cadavers, and in many other ways, shapes, and forms, doing open-heart surgery on you? Of course not. Actually, in that case, you'd hope that they not only had tons of practice before their first surgery and between the others, but you'd also hope that they got lots of game experience too.

As a salesperson, practice can have a significant, positive impact on sales numbers. In an article a few years back I referenced an old sales book: *Secrets of Closing Sales* by Charles B. Roth. In the book he talked about a group of salespeople in Detroit who roleplayed various sales situations with each other and their manager. In a year they increased their sales by 100%. He then talked about another group in NYC that used this idea of roleplaying and increased sales by 150%. Finally, he cited several examples of individual salespeople who increased their sales by as much as 400% using this idea.

I've had the same results in my sales career and with the individuals and companies I've worked with as a trainer. As a brand-new stockbroker, I remember walking around with a large tape recorder recording the top brokers in the office. I recorded their cold calls, presentations, answers to objections, closes, and everything else that they said to prospects and clients. Sure enough, when I started saying the same things, the same way, in the same situations, I started to get similar results until I too was one of the top brokers. With clients, I find the most effective word tracks for all sales situations, and then have the salespeople practice these until they are embedded in their subconscious and come out of their mouths as automatic responses. The result? Sales go up almost immediately and skyrocket long term.



BY JOHN CHAPIN

All that considered, why do the majority of salespeople not practice? In my experience, it happens for one or more of three reasons. First, they haven't been properly trained. In other words, no one ever taught them the process or required them to practice, and the thought never occurred to them. Second, many salespeople are simply lazy, and practice is extra work. Finally, the third reason salespeople don't practice is that they'd rather sound inept in front of the prospect, who is a stranger, than in front of their peers. It's true. If they come off as a blathering idiot in front of a prospect, that's okay because they don't ever have to see or talk to that person ever again if they don't want to.

On the other hand, if they trip over their tongue and look bad in front of their peers, they have to see those people again, also, the ridicule is likely to be worse than in front of a prospect. A prospect is much less likely to laugh out loud or make fun of you than your peers. And while most of the time peers making fun of you isn't the case, most salespeople believe it will be and they imagine it will be much worse than it is. Bottom line, no one wants to be embarrassed in front of their tribe or made to feel singled out or less than.

90% of the time when I begin roleplaying with even veteran salespeople, and I give them a standard objection they've been getting since their third week in the business, the first sound out of their mouth is usually 'ahhhh,' followed by some off-the-cuff, made-up response. The lack of practice is immediately and painfully obvious. If you want to be a great salesperson, you simply must practice.

Ideally, practice will be with other salespeople and your manager, but it can also be with your spouse, one of your kids, your dog, in the mirror by yourself, or in the car driving. And while you'll get the most constructive feedback in front of your peers and manager, the most important piece is that you practice the right things, in any way you can, until they become second nature. If you correctly and consistently practice all the sales situations you're going to run into during the day, this one exercise alone will have a significant, positive impact on your sales numbers.

John Chapin is a motivational sales speaker, coach, and trainer. For his free eBook: *30 Ideas to Double Sales* and monthly article, or to have him speak at your next event, go to www.completeselling.com.

John has over 36 years of sales experience as a number one sales rep and is the author of the 2010 sales book of the year: *Sales Encyclopedia* (Axiom Book Awards). You can reprint provided you keep contact information in place. E-mail: johnchapin@completeselling.com.

Subscribe to John's YouTube for great sales tips. Latest video: Tip for Business and Life Success: [Hard work - key sales success trait](#).

"... why do the majority of salespeople not practice? In my experience, it happens for one or more of three reasons. First, they haven't been properly trained. Second, many salespeople are simply lazy, and practice is extra work. Finally, the third reason salespeople don't practice is that they'd rather sound inept in front of the prospect, who is a stranger, than in front of their peers."

On The Other Hand: Q3 2023 OPE Dealer Survey Report

By GLENN HANSEN

We use our quarterly dealer surveys to study a specific time period – Q3 2023 this time – and to identify trends over time. And while we complete our Q4 dealer survey data, we will share this Q3 survey report to give us all a comparison. Thank you to all who contribute to our information gathering. When comparing to our Q2 survey data, we see what could be contradictory information. More likely, it is just that dealers experienced different results depending on region, market, and other factors. Hence the title, “On the Other Hand.”

We source our data from a nationwide group of OPE dealers. Here's a look at who they are:

- 24% claim annual revenue below \$500,000.
- 54% bring in more than \$4 million in annual revenue.
- 88% are “owners” of an independent power-equipment sales and service business.
- 82% have one location.
- 7% have 4 or more locations.
- (This data has remained mostly consistent across this year's quarterly surveys.)

What products do these businesses carry? A wide mix, but more than two-thirds carry all of these products: battery-powered equipment, blowers, brushcutters, chain saws, edgers, engines, fuel additives, generators, hedge trimmers, mowers (riding, stand on, zero turn, walk behind), pressure washers, string trimmers, tillers.

A small number (less than 10 percent) carry these items: apparel, ATVs, boats, trailers, excavators, go-karts, grills, motorcycles, robotic mowers, rakes, scrapers, skid-steers, snowmobiles, top dressers, trenchers, golf carts.

Let's get into Q3 business conditions and analysis. You can read our [OPE Trends report](#) here.

► Published online [OPE Business](#) | 1.8.24

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service

Pennsylvania Field Office (Part of the Northeastern Regional Field Office) Machinery Custom Rates

The **Pennsylvania Machinery Custom Rates** report shows charges by custom operators for various farming activities for the current year. This report is published annually in March.

The custom rates shown are averages from voluntary reports by custom operators and farmers throughout Pennsylvania. Most of the rates are stated per acre, cwt., ton, bale, or bushel rather than per hour to reduce the variation due to machinery size. The rates shown include the cost of hiring machine with fuel and operator and exclude the cost of seed, fertilizer, and other materials used unless otherwise specified. Individual rates vary due to differences in working conditions, services performed, or even the operator's eagerness to do custom work. Therefore, the average rates shown should not be considered absolute indications of fair charges.

WHY CLOSING THE CONNECTIVITY GAP OPENS THE DOOR TO AG'S FUTURE

Digital connectivity is the lynchpin of agriculture's future. Without ubiquitous connectivity, the agriculture industry cannot fully embrace the new tools and technologies that will enable it to meet the productivity and sustainability demands of the future.

“We've done a number of studies and spent a lot of time with farmers to gather insights on the sustainable practices they are using,” said Nate Birt, senior advisor for Trust In Food, Farm Journal's sustainable agriculture division. “Unless farmers are able to capture data to quantify the things they are doing, it will be very difficult for them to qualify for new programs and markets in the more digitized economy that is developing.”

Capturing and sharing data requires connectivity, both on the farm and in the field. That requires more than just a myopic approach to closing the connectivity gap.

“The GPS satellite part of connectivity is pretty good, so farmers are generally able to get the positioning information they need,” said Andy Theisen, product development manager at Kondex Corporation. “But farmers also need constant machine connectivity, yield map data, and other real-time data from things like weather and soil sensors. For a good portion of the country, the capabilities aren't very good right now.”

AEM is determined to take an active role in shaping the future of agriculture for the betterment of all. With that in mind, the association is pleased to offer *The Future of Food Production*, a whitepaper detailing the key drivers poised to drive ag's evolution in the years to come.

As presented in AEM's whitepaper, just 25% of U.S. farms currently use connected equipment or devices to access data. Lack of adequate broadband coverage has been a big reason why. But that gap is already beginning to narrow. Tens of billions of dollars of state and federal funding have poured into rural broadband infrastructure, largely the installation of fiber optic cable. In many areas around the country, even the smallest of farms in the smallest of communities now have access to high-speed internet.

In late July of 2022, the USDA announced several new projects as part of its ReConnect Program, which furnishes loans and grants for the construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service in eligible rural areas. One project is in a rural area of Nevada, where a \$27 million grant will help deploy a fiber-to-the-premises network for 4,884 people and 22 farms. Through another project in Arkansas, a \$12 million grant will help establish a network connecting 966 people and 145 farms.

Read [entire article](#) here.

► Published online [AEM](#) | 1.19.24

Independent Contractor Final Rule Will Help Employers Distinguish Between Employees and Independent Contractors

U.S. Department of Labor published a rule to address how to analyze whether a worker is an employee or independent contractor under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Independent contractors in business for themselves play an important role in our economy – and this rule won't change that. What it will do is ensure employees receive the protections and benefits they are due.



Read [entire rule](#) here.

► Published online **U.S. Department of Labor** | 1/19/24

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How To Prepare Your Future Workforce for Success

By **Anne Gielczyk** | Company Success

Even though employers are adding new jobs and investing in advanced technologies, they struggle to find skilled talent. You can prepare your future workforce for success by understanding how America's working population is changing and what skills they will need in the coming years.

First, Understand How America's Workforce is Changing

An October report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce breaks down the latest workforce data. Here's how our country's future workforce will change and how employers can prepare.

Labor Force Participation Is Dropping

The number of people in the workforce is expected to increase from 167.8 million to 169.6 million by 2030. But despite having more people in the workforce, the overall participation rate will continue its 20-year downward trend. In February 2020, workforce participation was around 63%. By 2030, it will drop to around 60%.

How should employers prepare? Lower workforce participation means an even smaller pool of qualified workers. To hedge against future workforce shortages, employers should establish reliable talent pipelines. Look for ways to partner with local schools and workforce development organizations.

The Workforce Is Aging

The percentage of older individuals in the overall population is increasing—a shift also reflected in the workforce. Over the past 20 years, there has been a 117% increase in workers aged 65 and older. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates the number of workers aged 55 and older will grow three times faster than workers aged 25-54. As older workers begin to retire, companies will have trouble finding experienced people to fill open positions.

How should employers prepare? Make sure older workers know they are valued and appreciated. Incentivize them to stay in their positions longer and set programs (job shadowing, apprenticeships) so they can pass their knowledge on to the next generation.

The Workforce Will Be More Diverse

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 60% of manufacturing workers are men, and 78% are white. These demographics will shift over the coming decade as more women enter the workforce and the U.S. becomes more diverse. The number of women in the

general workforce is rising and will be around 47% by 2031. And by 2045, experts predict that diverse Americans will account for 50.3% of the population.

How should employers prepare? A more diverse population means a more diverse workforce. Is your workplace welcoming to women and people of color? Do you have unbiased recruitment strategies that hire based on skills and not on gender or skin color? Consider standardizing your hiring process and incorporating industry-based skills assessments where appropriate.

Next, Equip Your Workforce With Skills for the Future

Preparing for the future workforce requires continuous skill development. Not only do workers need to be familiar with digital systems, programming, and AI, but they must also be adaptable in an unpredictable world with ongoing supply chain issues.

The same report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce includes the top ten skills needed now and in the future. You'll notice a mix of hard and soft skills.

- Digital literacy
- Data literacy
- Critical thinking
- Emotional intelligence
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Flexibility
- Leadership skills
- Time management
- Curiosity

Nocti Business Solutions works with subject matter experts to create skills assessments. We can help you evaluate the skills of current or potential employees—giving you objective hiring insights and data you need to close skills gaps within your organization.

We can help you evaluate industry-specific skills, like CNC programming or repairing industrial machinery, and employability skills, like critical thinking and resource management.

Many of our clients in the manufacturing industry use the Employability Skills test as an entry-level assessment tool. Hiring managers can determine if an applicant is ready for the workplace since the assessment measures reading, writing, math, critical thinking, communication, technology use, and interpersonal skills.

► Published online [Nocti Business Solutions](#) | 12.14.24

Stanley Black & Decker Appoints New President, Commercial Outdoor

By SARAH WEBB

Stanley Black & Decker named Denny Docherty as its new president, commercial outdoor.

In this role, Docherty will oversee the company's Independent Dealer Channel, which includes the Independent Retail & Post-Sales Support teams. Docherty will take over the role from Gary Lobaza upon his retirement at the end of March 2024. Docherty brings more than 30 years of experience in the outdoor power equipment industry to Stanley Black & Decker, most recently spending the last 23 years at John Deere in sales leadership, marketing and strategy roles. Docherty began his career with MTD Products, which was acquired by Stanley Black & Decker in 2022.

► Published online [Green Industry Pros](#) | 1.25.24

2024 New Products

Farm Progress editors scoured all the booths and displays at Farm Progress Show and Husker Harvest Days to find the newest products, best upgrades, and handiest tools and implements to make your life of the farm and ranch easier.

They're sharing them ALL in this FREE resource. Download the [2024 New Products Guide](#) to make sure you don't miss a single new product here.

FTC Action Leads to \$2 Million Penalty Against Kubota for False Made in USA Claims

Penalty is largest ever in Made In USA case

Tractor maker Kubota North America Corporation will pay a \$2 million civil penalty as a result of a Federal Trade Commission action against the company for falsely labeling some of its replacement parts as being "Made in USA."

Under a stipulated court order filed by the Department of Justice on the FTC's behalf and agreed to by the company, Kubota will be prohibited from making deceptive claims in addition to requiring them to pay the penalty, which is the largest ever in a Made in USA case.

"Today's settlement includes the largest civil penalty assessed for violating the Made in USA Labeling Rule," said Samuel Levine, Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection. "The FTC will continue cracking down on deceptive Made in USA claims that cheat consumers and honest businesses."

The [complaint](#) filed in the case charges that since at least 2021, Kubota has labeled thousands of replacement parts for its tractors and other agricultural equipment as Made In USA, even though they were made entirely overseas. In addition, after the company moved manufacturing for some parts to other countries, it failed to update the products' labeling to reflect that change, leaving them labeled as "Made in USA," according to the complaint.

Kubota was [previously sued by the FTC](#) in 1999 for falsely claiming that a line of lawn tractors it manufactured was Made in USA, and was subject to an FTC order in that case that expired in 2019.

[Entire article](#) can be read here.

► Published online **FTC News** | 1.26.24

The Horsepower Race is Back On Again

Recent tractor models boast increased power ratings at most brands

By Scott Garvey

When the maximum horsepower ratings of production tractors hit 500 several years ago, I recall seeing a magazine editor ask the question, "Will we ever see 600?"

For several seasons there's been a kind of yellow flag in the race as brands just lap the track holding their positions — but all of that seems to have ended. This summer we've catapulted past 700. And all manufacturers have quietly or loudly announced they've ramped up the muscle on their flagship models.

The most public announcement in the renewed horsepower race occurred this past August. Making its debut at the U.S. Farm Progress Show, Case IH pulled the wraps off the largest tractor it's ever built: the 715 Steiger Quadtrac.

What's prompted the end of that horsepower truce? Farmers, apparently.

"It's all based on customer feedback," Tom Curley, Case IH global product manager for Steiger, said when speaking to Grainews at the Big Iron farm show in North Dakota this past fall. "The goal is to improve productivity...and pull large drills and seeders at the speeds customers want to. For the 715 Quadtrac we had an extensive development program, including a significant amount of testing throughout the United States and Western Canada. The sole purpose of this tractor with 715 horsepower is to get more done in an hour."

[Entire article](#) found here.

► Published online **Grainews** | 1.18.24

Bobcat Introduces All-Electric Options

Here are all-electric machines for customers who need their advantages.

By **TOM J. BECHMAN**

If you believe electric machines are the solution for your future, then your future is arriving now. Look no further than compact track loaders — machines that tackle heavy-duty, tough jobs — to discover the potential advantages of electric-powered machines.

Bobcat is one of the companies leading the charge. Joel Honeyman, vice president of global innovation for Bobcat, West Fargo, N.D., explains that electric power, autonomy and increased connectivity are all technologies available now or coming in the near future. When it comes to electric machines, Bobcat has some in its current lineup with more coming soon, and still more in the concept stage.

"We've developed electric machines first where customers were asking for advantages that electric power could provide, and we're working on more machines as we go," Honeyman says.

service.

Read [entire article](#) here.

► Published online
[Farm Progress](#) | 1.25.24



Toro brings expansion, centre of excellence division to Frederick [CO]

Up to 45 jobs created with annual average wage of nearly \$107,000

BY LONGMONT LEADER STAFF

Gov. Jared Polis and the Global Business Development Division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) announced that Toro, a leading worldwide provider of innovative solutions for the outdoor environment, has selected the Town of Frederick in Weld County, Colorado for expansion. In Frederick, the company is opening a new center of excellence for the research and development functions of their robotics division.

"Colorado is known for our leadership in advanced manufacturing and we are excited that Toro recognizes the opportunities for growth in Frederick, creating up to 45 good-paying jobs for Coloradans," said Polis.

Toro designs, manufactures, and markets lawn mowers, snow blowers, irrigation system supplies and other products for commercial, residential, agricultural and public sector uses. These products are distributed through a global network of professional distributors, dealers, rental stores and retailers in more than 125 countries. The company celebrated the opening of its new center of excellence at a ribbon cutting on Jan. 19.

"Customer and environmental needs drive our innovation priorities with a focus on battery, autonomous and smart-connected solutions," said John Hurst, senior director for The Toro Company's Center for Technology, Research and Innovation. "This investment in the Frederick facility expands our operational capacity, enables us to add talent and further supports our efforts to provide innovative solutions to our global customers, making their jobs easier and more productive."

In Frederick, Toro expects to create up to 45 net new jobs at an average annual wage of \$106,889, which is 179.6 per cent of the average annual wage in Weld County. The positions will include engineers, customer support, and technicians.

"Advanced manufacturing accounts for approximately 30 per cent of Colorado's economy. By choosing Weld County for expansion, Toro will continue to diversify this important industry and ensure that rural communities like Frederick benefit from good-paying jobs," said OEDIT Executive Director Eve Lieberman.

► Published online [Longmont Leader](#) | 1.21.24

Precision Ag Equipment Star Attraction at Keystone Farm Show

BY TOM VENESKY

YORK, PA — It didn't take long for a crowd to gather at the Hoover exhibit.

It was early Tuesday, Day One of the three-day Keystone Farm Show. Sandwiched between a tractor and sprayer was a drone — a symbol of the equipment dealer's foray into a new era of ag technology.

Marc Yoder, the director of precision ag for Hoover, said the company recently became an authorized dealer of DJI Agras, which manufactures drones that can be used for spraying and seeding. He said the move is a reflection of increasing interest in precision ag, and Keystone was the perfect place to showcase it.

[Entire article](#) can be read here.

► Published online [Lancaster Farming](#) | 1.10.24

John Deere, SpaceX Announce Starlink Deal

By **MATTHEW J. GRASSI**

Deere & Company announced an agreement with SpaceX to provide Starlink network satellite communications (SATCOM) service to farmers. Utilizing the Starlink network, this solution will allow farmers facing rural connectivity challenges to fully leverage precision agriculture technologies.

"The value of connectivity to farmers is broader than any single task or action. Connectivity unlocks vast opportunities that were previously limited or unavailable," said Aaron Wetzel, VP of production and precision ag production systems.

The SATCOM solution will connect both new and existing machines through satellite internet service and ruggedized satellite terminals. This will enable autonomy, real-time data sharing, remote diagnostics, enhanced self-repair solutions, and machine-to-machine communication, all of which help farmers work more efficiently while minimizing downtime, according to John Deere.

"We are bringing satellite communications service to the farm at scale so farmers with cellular coverage challenges can maximize the value of connectivity to their operations," said Jahmy Hindman, senior VP & CTO.

He adds that the SpaceX partnership "unlocks the John Deere tech stack so every farmer can fully utilize their current precision agriculture technology in addition to the new innovative solutions they will deploy in the future."

Read [entire article](#) here.

► Published online [AgWeb Journal](#) |

1.17.24

SC Solutions Expands Into Agriculture, Environmental Sectors

SC Solutions Inc., a leading space technology company, announced its strategic entry into the agriculture and environmental sectors, focusing initially on the corn and vineyard industries.

The company's pioneering approach integrates remote sensing data with advanced analytics, including machine learning, to revolutionize agricultural practices and contribute to environmental conservation efforts.

CEO Cliff Beek emphasizes the company's commitment to driving positive change in the agriculture sector, "Our expansion into the agriculture and environmental domains marks a significant milestone for SC Solutions. We believe that technology can play a transformative role in modernizing farming practices, making them more sustainable and efficient. This move aligns with our mission to harness innovation for the betterment of industries and the environment."

[Entire article](#) can be read here.

► Published online

[AgriulturalEquipmentGuide.com](#) | 1.8.24

Man Wins \$11M Jury Award Against Kubota After Skid Steer Accident

By **DON McLOUD**

A man who was riding on the front of a Kubota skid steer and was paralyzed after his shoulder was caught by a grapple attachment has been awarded over \$11 million by a Kansas jury.

Kolton Kincaid sued Kubota Tractor Corp. after he was injured in 2013, claiming there was no warning sticker on the SVL-95 skid steer concerning the danger. Kincaid was 17 at the time and working part-time for a company that provided services for farms.

The skid steer was new and being operated by one of Kincaid's high school friends. Kincaid and another teenage friend were riding on the outside of the skid steer. Kincaid was sitting on the center step on the front of the skid steer as they rode across a large, muddy field to get to a worksite, according to court records.

As the skid steer approached a ravine with standing water, the operator raised the loader arms and grapple attachment. Kincaid's shoulder was caught between the attachment and the cab's roof overhang. His spine was compressed at the pinch point, causing severe spinal cord injury, and he became a paraplegic, records said.

The skid steer and its operator's manual had warnings to "never carry riders" and "do not allow passengers to ride on any part of the machine at any time." But a human factors expert testified on behalf of Kincaid there was no warning against riding where Kincaid sat nor one for a risk of being crushed in the way he was. She added that young people who have not received training might believe riding on a skid steer was safe and were unaware of the dangers.

Kubota argued that the existing warnings on the skid steer and the operator's manual were sufficient, and no further warning was required by state law.

A district court had previously sided with Kubota, saying Kincaid was not injured because he rode on the skid steer but because the operator raised the grapple attachment while Kincaid was on it.

[Entire article](#) can be found here.

► Published online [Equipment World by Fusable](#) | 1.10.24

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