

Farm Equipment Training & Operation Policy

I. Applicability

This Policy applies to farm facilities operated under the administration of the Ithaca Agricultural Experiment Station. It does not apply to the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, the Vineyard Research Laboratory in Portland, or the Hudson Valley Laboratory in Highland; these facilities operate under their own policies.

II. Background

Operation of farm equipment on the farm lands owned by Cornell University has increasingly been accepted by or assigned to individuals inexperienced in machinery operation, hazards, and safety procedures. Accidents and injuries resulting from inexperience or unsafe operation are well documented in the safety literature. Prevention of accidents through adequate training will:

- improve knowledge of equipment operation, thus increasing the operator's ability to recognize and manage the risks associated with machinery, and
- reduce lost work time and damage to equipment and research plots that can occur due to improper operation or accidents.

The tractor operator's initial training course described in Section IV will provide safety education pertinent to farm equipment usage, and will help to develop basic skills in tractor operation. Farm managers and project leaders will further train individuals in the use of more specialized farm equipment and will have the authority to determine adequate skill levels required for use of farm equipment under their management.

III. Tractor Operator Requirements

It is the policy of the College that those who operate College farm equipment demonstrate competency in safe operation. Members of the Cornell community who desire to, or are required to operate tractors (20 hp or greater) will be authorized to do so if they successfully complete a tractor operator's initial training course. The course may include an exam and driving test given by an approved Cornell instructor or farm manager; it is described further in Section IV of this policy.

Members of the Cornell community may be exempted from initial training a) through previous experience and demonstration of knowledge and skills of tractor driving to an approved Cornell instructor or farm manager, or b) through demonstrated ability to operate Cornell farm equipment as a member of the Cornell community (faculty, staff, graduate student or student employee) prior to April 1, 1988, to the satisfaction of the appropriate farm manager or project leader.

IV. Tractor Operator's Initial Training Course

All members of the Cornell community who are to operate farm equipment are required to successfully complete the initial training course described in this Section, unless exempted as described in Section III.

The training will consist of:

1. A field operation course of instruction given by the farm manager or other approved instructor(s). The field operation course will include instruction and demonstration on the subjects of daily maintenance and service; basic functional

principles of tractor operation; driving a tractor forward and backward; safe implement hitching; forward and reverse operation of a tractor with attached two-wheeled trailer; PTO safety; and other principles, at the discretion of the instructor.

2. A demonstration of operational skills to the instructor.

At the discretion of the farm manager or other approved instructor (s), the field operation course may be supplemented with:

1. Study and completion of selected units of the student manual entitled, "Safe Operation of Agricultural Equipment," or alternatively "National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program." Up to two hours of out-of-class, compensated time can be provided to the participant by the department for completion of a student manual assignment. Copies of the manual are available from the CALS Occupational and Environmental Health Program, 416 Kennedy Hall 255-0485.
2. Safety films, videotapes, and/or slide-tape sets. A written exam, upon completion of the assigned self-study program.
3. A written exam, upon completion of the assigned self-study program.

The farm manager or instructor will maintain a training record to include a brief description of training and student roster on specific pieces of equipment.

V. Further Training

At least annually, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences will offer additional training on specific aspects of operating or maintaining farm equipment. Farm managers conduct short, topical training sessions when new equipment and/or new procedures are introduced into the field operation.

VI. Field Operations

Farm managers and project leaders have the responsibility and the authority to warn any equipment operator observed operating in an unsafe manner. Failure of the operator to correct the unsafe actions shall result in immediate stoppage of the equipment operation upon the request of the farm manager or the project leader. The farm manager or the project leader will provide written notification of the stoppage and the unsafe operation to the operator's supervisor and department chair. At the discretion of the farm manager or the project leader, notification may also be sent to the CALS Director of Occupational and Environmental Health. The parties involved will be required to take appropriate actions (including, but not necessarily limited to, additional operator training) before equipment operation can be resumed.
