

Iowa study aimed at making tractors safer for kids

September 5 2012, by Ryan J. Foley

(AP)—Researchers who hope to keep children from dying in tractor accidents are using a state-of-the-art driving simulator to help determine when kids can safely operate farm equipment.

Federal regulators tried to combat the high number deaths and injuries among teen [farm](#) workers earlier this year with rules limiting their ability to operate power equipment. But farm families called the proposal an attack on their way of life, and the Obama administration dropped it.

Scientists at the University of Iowa and the Marshfield Clinic in Wisconsin are attacking the problem from a different angle. They're using the National Advanced Driving Simulator in Coralville to learn how children ages 10 to 17 make decisions while driving tractors.

Researcher Barbara Marlenga says current safety guidelines are based on expert consensus, but not science.

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Citation: Iowa study aimed at making tractors safer for kids (2012, September 5) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-09-iowa-aimed-tractors-safer-kids.html>

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