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<https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/15557-a-right-to-repair-conversation-with-a-john-deere-exec>

A recent article from *Vice* titled “John Deere Promised Farmers It Would Make Tractors Easy to Repair. It Lied.” has re-sparked the discussion about right to repair in the ag equipment industry.

In the article, *Vice* outlines a series of commitments by the Far West Equipment Dealers Assn. (FWEDA) and the Assn. of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) as well as other groups, made in 2018 to “provide end users with the information and tools needed to maintain, diagnose and repair their equipment and to prevent legislation that does not meet these needs.”

The article from *Vice* claims the commitments outlined in the initial 2018 statement (with availability “beginning with tractors and combines put into service on or after Jan. 1, 2021” were not met.

Farm Equipment Executive Editor Kim Schmidt addressed the article in her editorial for the March issue of *Farm Equipment*, titled “Right to Repair Rears its Ugly Head,” but what conditions led to the *Vice* article being written in the first place? Natalie Higgins, vice president of Government Relations at the Equipment Dealers Assn. (EDA) recently broke down what she sees as a lack of communication about the tools available to farmers as the main culprit.

I think the rush on the technical side to get the products and resources for farmers to market let us not to take the time to contemplate how we communicate the availability to our customers”, she says. “The *Vice* article was indicative of a serious disconnect between what is actually on the market and what people think is on the market. That’s something we’re going to continue working at. Frankly, now it has a front row seat.”

She adds that the industry associations, like EDA, will step up to bridge that communication gap present in the industry.

“And it’s not just about the growers.”, she says. We’re educating dealers, because this is a whole new area of enhancement. We are focusing on the fundamentals like putting information on our websites and using social media to promote these resources.”

When asked about the *Vice* article at a John Deere media event in Ankeny, Iowa, North American Public and Industry Relations Manager for John Deere Jon Ebert said Deere supports farmers’ right to repair their equipment but does not support modification of code.

“I’ve seen the [*Vice*] article, and what I would say is that for many years, John Deere has supported their customers’ right to repair their equipment,” he says. “We’ve offered a broad range of diagnostic, maintenance and repair tools for farmers that are available through John Deere dealers.

“But” John Deere does not support modification of code, for reasons that impact operator and farmer safety, the environment and the fact that our equipment meets certain emissions standards.”

In another interview, Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing Regions 3&4 at John Deere David Gilmore stated that he also had seen the article from *Vice* and that Deere had met all the requirements laid out in the article.

“I have seen the article and, quite frankly, it’s inaccurate” Gilmore says. “We believe in the right to repair, and we’ve met all of the commitments that we made to the industry and to our customers, in terms of providing them with the tools and the software that they need to not only maintain and diagnose but also repair their machines.

“Its in our best interest as an organization to help all of our customers to keep their machines up and running so that these machines can allow those customers to add value to their farming operations. So, we obvious believe in the right for them to repair their equipment. “

Gilmore adds that, going forward, Deere will “continue to inform and make information available to its customers.”