



February 4, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing on behalf of the Farm Hack community to request an exception to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) for farmers and the agricultural tools and machines they use to produce our food. It should not be illegal for a farmer to bypass digital locks restricting access to the computers (ECU/TCU) in their equipment in order to modify and repair farm machinery. We stand with a community of farmers whose right to their property is undermined by the DMCA and whose right to access, understand, and fully utilize their tools should be defended.

Farm Hack is an on-line and in-person community of farmers, engineers, and technologists working to make farm tools and equipment more accessible, adaptable, and appropriate to small and medium scale sustainable agriculture systems. Since its founding in 2010, Farm Hack has hosted events across the country to design, document, and build Open Source, universally accessible tools for resilient and sustainable agriculture. Putting full control over the means of production into the hands of farmers is fundamental to our individual sovereignty and our collective food security.

Most of the people in our community would never suspect that repairing or tinkering with their tractor could be illegal. However, current law encourages manufacturers to assert control over equipment by putting digital locks on the embedded software that operates our increasingly sophisticated, computer-controlled devices. That same law, the DMCA, makes it illegal for farmers to circumvent these digital locks—a practice which is often a necessary step in repair or modification. The DMCA is meant to protect against piracy. It seeks to defend the intellectual property contained in these computers in the form of software code. However, the law goes too far and, therefore, infringes on a farmer's ability to access that software for the benign, necessary purposes of general repair and maintenance.

Please consider this request for an exception to the DMCA. Feel free to be in touch should you require further information or testimony from specific farmers as to the harmful effects of this law on their work.

Respectfully,

Dorn Cox  
Farm Hack Board President  
Daniel Grover  
Farm Hack Network Facilitator