Common Ground Student-Run Educational Farm Tractor Operator Contract

- **Fasten your seatbelt if the tractor has a Roll Over Protection Structure (ROPS).** Older tractors, not equipped with a ROPS, should not be equipped with a seat belt.

- **Where possible, avoid operating the tractor near ditches, embankments, and holes.** "Stay as far back from the edge as the ditch is deep" is a safety practice. If the operator happens to drive off a steep slope, he/she should throttle down and steer down the slope to reduce overturn probability. If the operator allows the tractor to wander off the road and head into a ditch, he/she should throttle back and gradually steer back onto the road.

- **Reduce speed when turning, crossing slopes, and on rough, slick, or muddy surfaces.** Tractor upsets are more likely to occur on slopes, especially if a front-end loader is used. Keep all loads low while moving. Keep brakes locked together (if so equipped) for road use. When tractors bounce, they lose stability. When turning, centrifugal force at 15 mph is nine times as high as it is at 5 mph. Slow down and make as wide a turn as possible.

- **Stay off slopes too steep for safe operation.** Go down slopes in the same gear needed to go up them. If it is necessary to go up steep slopes, back up them if possible. When working on slopes always keep the wheels set as wide as practical.

- **Watch where you are going, especially at row ends, on roads, and around trees.** When trailing implements in fields with obstructions, be mindful of where the outmost parts of the implement are at all times. Use care at field ends so as not to turn into part of the trailing hitch. It may be advisable to reduce speed on row and field ends.

- **Do not permit others to ride.** *Make it a rule: No seat! No rider!* Children should never be allowed to ride on a tractor.

- **Operate the tractor smoothly -no jerky turns, starts, or stops.** Engage the clutch slightly before increasing engine speed when starting on slopes. Sudden release of the clutch with full throttle could cause the front of the tractor to raise, particularly when headed up a slope. Locked wheel turns by using one brake is hazardous.

- **Hitch only to the drawbar and hitch points recommended by tractor manufacturers.** Loads attached to the rear axle or to the rear lift arms can cause backward flips. Check the operator's manual for allowable hitch points on each tractor.

- **When the tractor is stopped, set brakes securely and use park lock if available.** Turn off the tractor engine and set the brakes before dismounting. Place blocks at rear wheels if on a slope. On manual transmissions, place the gearshift in the lowest forward or reverse gear.

- **Operate only equipment for which individual certification has been awarded by the HRC manager or staff representative.** Equipment certification is required by individual students prior to any use.

"I, _____________________________, have read or had the ten safe tractor operating practices explained to me. I understand the dangers associated with operating a tractor if I do not follow these and other safe operating practices."

Signed: _____________________________  
Date: _____________________________

*Last updated 03/07/2003*