

Under heavy pressure from farm groups, the Obama administration is dropping an effort to prevent children from doing hazardous work on farms owned by anyone other than their parents.

Late in the day on April 26 the U.S. Department of Labor withdrew proposed regulations of Child Labor in Agriculture.

The Labor Department says it is withdrawing proposed rules that would ban children younger than 16 from using most power-driven equipment. The rules also would prevent those younger than 18 from working in feed lots, grain bins and stockyards.

The agency says thousands of comments have expressed concern about the impact of the changes on small family-owned farms.

Many farm groups have complained that the rules would upset traditions in which children often work alongside relatives other than parents to learn how a farm operates.

“The withdrawal of the proposed child labor regulations comes as a relief to the farmers and ranchers in Nebraska because now they can continue to teach their children about the importance of agriculture through first hand experiences,” states Jim Ramm, Nebraska Cattlemen President.

Government officials have said their goal was to protect children from life-threatening injuries.