

The “Top 10” Ag Law and Tax Developments of 2025: Number 5

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2025 proved to be a watershed moment for agriculture, marked by a decisive shift away from corporate consolidation and toward the protection of individual farmers. From the right to repair machinery to settlements in the meatpacking industry, the legal landscape seemed to favor market competition and producer autonomy.

A central pillar of this shift occurred in June 2025, when a federal judge ruled that John Deere must face a major antitrust lawsuit brought by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).¹ The court’s rejection of Deere’s motion to dismiss signals a critical turning point; it challenges the company’s exclusive control over diagnostic software, which critics argue created an illegal monopoly on repairs.

Building on this judicial momentum, the FARM Act² was introduced in late 2025. This federal legislation aims to codify a farmer’s right to bypass authorized dealerships in favor of independent mechanics. With a “repair gap” estimated to cost farmers over \$3 billion annually, this act seeks to transform equipment ownership from a restricted license back into a full property right.

In 2025, federal courts also addressing long-standing allegations of price and wage manipulation in the meatpacking industry. In August, JBS received final approval for an \$83.5 million settlement regarding allegations that the “Big Four” packers conspired to suppress cattle prices by artificially limiting supply. By November, a global settlement totaling nearly \$400 million was finalized against major processors like Tyson and Perdue. This case focused on “wage-fixing” schemes facilitated by Agri Stats, a data-sharing firm that agreed in October to cease sharing sensitive plant-level wage data.

There was also significant litigation in the broiler industry concerning a conspiracy to fix prices by “bid rigging.”³

The year concluded with a dramatic escalation in December, when a new Executive Order established task forces within the DOJ and FTC. These teams are specifically tasked with investigating “foreign-controlled” food supply chains, targeting both meat processing and agricultural equipment.

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¹ FTC v. Deere & Co., No. 25-CV50017 (N.D. Ill. Jun. 9, 2025).

² Freedom From Agricultural Repair and Maintenance Act, H.R. 5857 and S. 3549, introduced Oct. 28, 2025.

³ In Broiler Chicken Grower Antitrust Litigation, MDL No. 3167, 2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 260867 (Jud. Panel on MDL Dec. 16 (2025)).

