

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Oklahoma Labor Commissioner Mark Costello says a proposed U.S. Department of Labor rule that would govern child farm workers is an attack on the rural family farm and ranch.

The federal agency is proposing that family farms or ranches that are legal partnerships or corporations not be allowed to employ children 16 years of age or younger in farm work that is deemed hazardous.

Costello says that would bar young teens from riding on a tractor and herding and branding cattle. He also says grandparents would be prohibited from having their grandchildren work on the family farm.

Costello says the proposal could damage agricultural jobs, hurt American agricultural competitiveness and damage the cultural integrity of the rural family. He also says the idea threatens to criminalize traditional family farm life.