

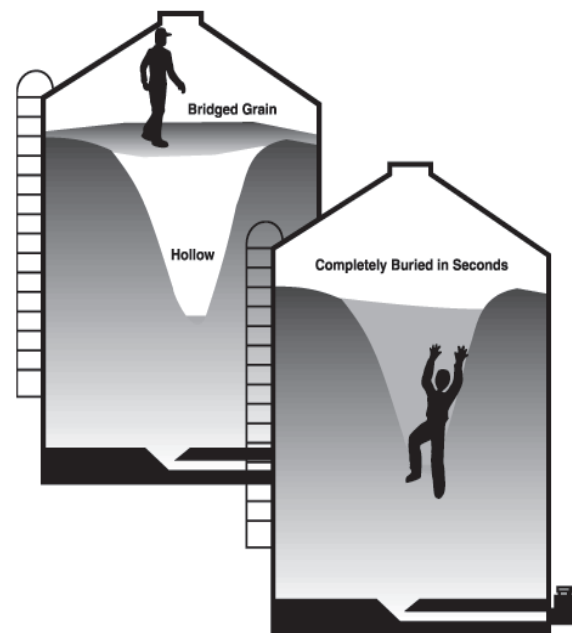
## SAFETY FIRST - Entering Grain Bins

(continued from page 2)

- Turn on the aeration fan to clear accumulated gases from the head space above the grain. If molds are present, carbon dioxide levels may be elevated creating an oxygen deficient atmosphere.
- Use an approved respirator to filter out molds and spores that may enter your respiratory tract.
- Use precaution. Safe entry requires using a harness with two ropes and two assistants outside the bin. This may seem like an excessive precaution but the forces of grain are significant if you become engulfed.

Prior to entering the bin, check the level of the grain by looking through the roof hatch. If you know that grain hasn't been removed, then it is time for entry. If grain has been previously removed, look to see if a cone on the grain surface has formed. If a cone is not present, there is a high likelihood of a cavity below the grain surface crust. Use a long pole to probe, push it through crusted grain on the surface to identify a cavity below the crust before walking on it. If there is a cavity, use the pole to break up the crust. It may take some extra work to break the crust up

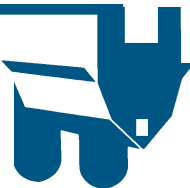
from the outside with a pole but if you fell through the crust, rescue would take much longer and the consequences could be life threatening.



Contributed by Brian Holmes and Cheryl Skjolaas, UW-Extension. Figure from North Dakota State University Publication AE-1102

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### FEATURING:

Kuhl Hosts DVR  
Training

Partners...  
Manuel Lugo,  
former Deputy  
Administrator DVR

Safety First:  
Grain Bin Safety

Upcoming Events:

Wisconsin Farm  
Technology Days  
July 20 - 22  
Pierce County

AgrAbility of Wisconsin  
is a partnership  
between the UW  
Cooperative Extension  
Service and Easter  
Seals Wisconsin.

UW  
Extension



AgrAbility of Wisconsin

# Plowing Ahead

## AgrAbility Client Hosts Training for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Larry Kuhl is a cash crop farmer from Amery, WI, a small town in the northwestern Wisconsin. Larry has farmed his 1200 acre farm for most of his life, and on March 25, 2007, he started like most other days, having many jobs to complete. Unfortunately, while measuring a roof in need of repair, he fell approximately 10 feet. As Larry will say, "I never would have thought a short fall could cause so much damage". Larry sustained a complete break of his spinal cord at the T8 level which left him with many challenges including little feeling below his chest and no ability to walk.

After being hospitalized and completing a therapy program, Lar-

ry was discharged from the hospital to his home. Larry first heard about AgrAbility from a social worker at the hospital. For several months, Larry was unable to work on the farm in any capacity which, as his wife Patty explains, is a big change from his once active lifestyle. Larry applied for services through the Easter Seals FARM program that, along with the partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), was able to provide accommodations to Larry's farm such as tractor lifts, hand controls, automatic hitching devices, and a mobility aid to help him move around his farm. Larry is now able to work full-time on the cash crop farm, completing the same tasks



Jeff Kratochwill describes the lift features, while Larry Kuhl demonstrates the Life Essentials lift on his John Deere tractor and Larry's wife, Patty, watches Larry make the transfer.

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that he did before the injury.

Larry has since been a strong supporter of AgrAbility and the Easter Seals FARM program. On November 12, 2009, he hosted training provided by the FARM program to share his experiences, demonstrate the assistive technology provided to him, and discuss the potential for other assistance in helping farmers with disabilities continue to be involved in their farm. The training was provided through the financial support of the Otto Bremer Foundation and its purpose was to provide training to Vocational Rehabilitation counselors in North-west Wisconsin on the opportunities to accommodate a farmer with disabilities that allows them to safely continue farming. Approximately 30 people attended the training including Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, Easter Seals FARM staff, an insurance agent from the local Otto Bremer bank, and a local newspaper reporter.

The success of the training was noted by Randy Sommerfeld, DVR District Director. He stated, "Yesterday we had our November staff meeting at a farmer's home who had received services from DVR. Easter Seals did a great training along with our DVR counselor (Gail Hauser) on the process the equipment that was recommended and provided. The farmer was pretty emotional at times when he and wife explained the injury, the feeling of hopelessness, the hope that he felt when the counselor agreed with him that he should continue farming and his current role in the farm-

ing operation. Staff all got to see and try the equipment." Participants were able to see Larry using his equipment and some tried the lifts that Larry uses to access his equipment. This type of first-hand education allows the participants to more fully engage with the clients, learn about the process and see the results of the assistance.

We thank Larry and Patty for their continued support of AgrAbility of Wisconsin and the Easter Seals FARM program.

*(Contributed by Jeff Kratochwill, FARM Rural Rehabilitation Specialist, Randy Sommerfeld, DVR District Director)*



*A DVR Counselor tries the lift on Larry Kuhl's combine while the participants look on.*

## **SAFETY FIRST - Entering Grain Bins**

Unusual growing and harvest conditions in 2009 have increased the risk of stored grain going out of condition this winter and spring. University of Wisconsin-Extension specialists Brian Holmes and Cheryl Skjolaas explain how this crop is different from past crops and how you can stay safe when inspecting the grain.

"Molds and fines are at the core of the situation," said Holmes. "The cool growing conditions delayed the corn harvest which resulted in grain being harvested wetter than usual...fines resulting from the damage should have been removed before storage. If all or some of these fines remained in the storage, they are suscep-

tible to mold infestation and interfere with aeration of the stored grain."

Like the complexities of growing and harvesting the crop, inspecting the stored crop has varying factors. When inspecting the crop, you're looking for accumulations of fines and signs of molds including "hot spots." To properly check the bin entry is required. Skjolaas adds, "The person entering the bin should consider their safety prior to entering." Before entering a bin, Skjolaas noted a person should:

- Lock out and tag out the unloading auger system so it will not be turned on while you go into the bin to inspect the grain.

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# **Special Partners Piece**

## **Manuel Lugo - Retirement Thoughts on the Partnership between AgrAbility and DVR**

Since this issue of Plowing Ahead features the partnership between AgrAbility of Wisconsin, the Easter Seals FARM Program and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), we wanted to take this opportunity to present a special thank you to one of our important partners and supporters, Manuel Lugo. Manuel recently retired after a 34-year career with DVR. Manuel started his career as a counselor in 1975, working his way to the position of Deputy Administrator when he retired late last year. While working as a District Supervisor, Manuel met Paul Leverenz and started serving AgrAbility clients.

During his early career with DVR, Manuel was asked to serve migrant farm workers and Native American populations. He noticed similar cultural characteristics in farmers – notably they were independent, hard-working, and committed. This culture provides a huge advantage for rehabilitation service providers as most farmers want to continue farming and do not need to be trained or motivated to do their job. They just need some assistance with the proper equipment and modifications to their operations to retain the capacity to earn a living and continue farming. This was demonstrated in the success rate of farmers served by DVR. The Rehabilitation Services Administration, the federal agency within the Department of Education that oversees Vocational Rehabilitation programs, reported nationally for 2008 the percent of individuals receiving services with successful employment outcomes was 56%. With AgrAbility clients in Wisconsin, the rate is close to 95%. Clearly, understanding the "culture" of farming and training counselors has benefited those working with the program.

Manuel credited the staff and partners for creating an environment where counselors were encouraged to get their "boots on the farm." To see first hand how modifications and equipment work within the farm system to create the conditions for success of the farmer clients. He and Paul worked together to create and continue training sessions similar to the one on Larry Kuhl's farm to describe the process, the culture and the systems of technology and support that enable farmers with disabilities to continue farming. They have also collaborated on training projects for AgrAbility staff from other states. In June of last year, they col-

laborated on a training session that included individuals from eleven (11) different state AgrAbility projects. Although, these training sessions did not come easily, over time it has proved valuable for counselors and farmers alike.

When asked about some of his most memorable experiences, Manuel mentioned the numerous awards and accolades that have highlighted the partnership such as the Mutual of America Community Partnership Award. He also remembers meeting and speaking directly with farmers when problems occurred and helping to come up with solutions for serving farmers. Additionally, the continued success rate of the farmers who work with AgrAbility is a point of pride for Manuel.

We want to take this opportunity to wish a happy and healthy retirement for Manuel and his wife Janice, who also retired with over 35 years of experience with DVR. Manuel plans to spend time with his family, working on his "collection of old cars", and doing some occasional consulting as requested to help others learn from his years of experience with DVR. Thank you, Manuel for all you have done for the farmers in AgrAbility!



*Manuel Lugo provides information and advice to participants during an AgrAbility training event held in Madison, WI, June 2009.*



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