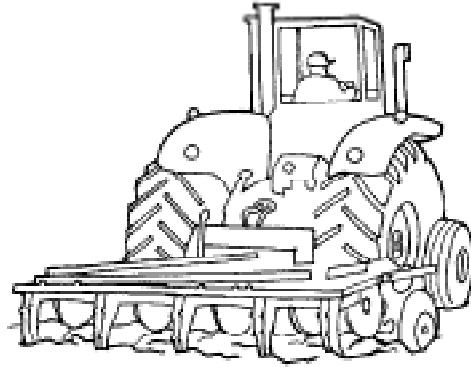


## Farm Equipment Safety:

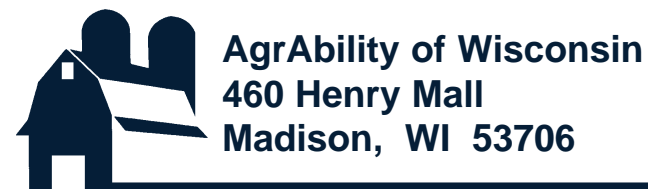
In 2000, Twenty-four Wisconsin farmers died due to incidents with large agricultural equipment, tractors, and trucks.

Harvest Health, a program with the National Farm Medicine Center's Midwest Agricultural Research Center, publishes a safety checklist for farm equipment on their website. Following these simple checkpoints can help you prevent fatal accidents or serious injuries.

- Tractors have ROPS and seatbelts are worn
- "No Riders" policy is strictly enforced
- Fire extinguishers and first aid kit are on board
- Handrails are sturdy, steps are clean
- Hydraulic lines/hoses are in good shape
- PTO, bells, chains, pulleys and sprockets are guarded
- Hitching balls/pins are in good condition
- SMV sign is in place and not faded
- Tires are properly inflated and have good tread
- Operators have read and understood owner's manuals
- Drive lanes are free of ruts, bumps, and stones
- Sufficient turning area is provided along ditches and embankments
- Steep slopes are avoided



For a more complete list of safety tips, please contact Harvesting Health at the Midwest Agricultural Research Center by calling 1-800-662-6900 or check the website at <http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/nfmc/harvest/safetychecklist.htm>



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Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

January 2001  
Volume 11 No.2

### FEATURING:

**Upholding the Family Tradition**

### ALSO LOOK FOR:

**Upcoming Events**

**Partners...**

**Upcoming Getaway Weekends**

**Special thanks to the Plum City Farming Community**

**Farm Equipment Safety**

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

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**UW Extension**



AgrAbility of Wisconsin

# Plowing Ahead

## UPHOLDING THE FAMILY TRADITION

A dairy farmer from central Wisconsin who received services from AgrAbility of Wisconsin agreed to participate in an article for Plowing Ahead with the request that he remain anonymous.

**"If someone still intends to farm (with a disability), it is worth it to call AgrAbility...Don't give it up because you think there is no help."**

He commented that assistance doesn't go to people who don't need it and that services can help people continue doing their everyday work.

**"I grew up on the farm and I've wanted to do it (farming) since I was a little kid. It is just hard to give it up."**

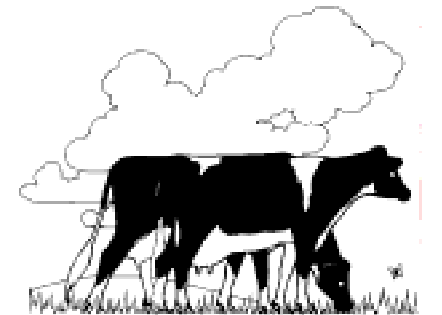
The lifestyle of farming and the idea that this dairy farmer's farm has been in his family for generations have motivated him to work with AgrAbility of Wisconsin to create solutions. Now, thanks in part to AgrAbility of Wisconsin, he hopes to continue farming for as long as he can and then pass the farm on to his daughter and son-in-law.

The farmer injured his knee while working with heifers in 1970. Since then, the physical rigors of dairy farming have severely damaged both of his knees and caused serious problems with his back.

After the farmer had back surgery and his first knee joint replacement in 1998, a friend suggested that he call AgrAbility of Wisconsin. The friend, who is a former AgrAbility of Wisconsin client and farmer network volunteer, told the farmer about his experiences with AgrAbility of Wisconsin. The farmer decided to call us to see if we could help. Since then, he has been working with AgrAbility of Wisconsin and The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to figure out how to continue farming in spite of the effects of many years of hard work and injuries.

**"AgrAbility came out and saw what I had to work with and helped me figure out what to do."**

The farmer's injuries affected all aspects of farming before he started working with Paul Leverenz, Director of Easter Seals Resource Center for Farmers with Disabilities. He used to have trouble climbing into his tractor. He said that it was "just plain hard". Paul suggested extra hand holds and modified tractor steps which have made climbing into his tractor easier and safer. Now his farm work goes faster and the tasks are less painful.



*continued on page 2...*

**“It was well planned out and it helped me with my daily work...They headed me in the right direction”**

He says the most important change has been the motorized feed cart. Feeding his livestock with a wheelbarrow and shovel had become impossible. As a result, he purchased a motorized feed cart on his own. It seemed like a good solution until he worked with it and found that the cart was too wide for his barn and had no speed regulation. It went too fast and ran over his feet while he was trying to feed. After attempting to modify the cart unsuccessfully, the farmer worked with the Resource Center for Farmers with Disabilities to find a new motorized, pneumatic feed cart. The model they chose was not the bottom of the line.

**“Even though the cart costs more, it would have cost more to fix the barn to fit the cheapest cart.”**

The cart had to be narrow enough to fit in the stall barn and the farmer needed to be able to regulate the speed. He helped explain to DVR why he needed the cart. DVR was able to purchase the most appropriate feed cart rather than the cheapest.



He had not been able to use part of his barn because he wasn't able to clean the gutter with a shovel anymore. He shared the financial responsibility to improve the barn by paying for new concrete and DVR bought a new barn cleaner auger.

Paul Leverenz recommended a John Deere Gator because the farmer had been using a farm truck to inspect his livestock and crops. Because of his injuries, the farmer had a difficult time getting in and out of the truck and operating the manual transmission. The truck also limited his access to the farm because it would get stuck in the fields and pastures. When he tried taking the tractor into the field, he couldn't get close enough to see the crops without getting out of the tractor. The John Deere Gator allows him to check the cows and the crops in the field without having to walk too far or worry about getting stuck. The farmer has logged 800 hours on the the John Deere Gator since he received it in July 1999.



The farmer has had two additional knee joints replaced since he started working with AgrAbility of Wisconsin and continues to farm with his daughter and son-in-law.



**Plowing Ahead**

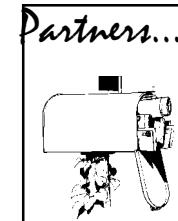
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Visit us at <http://bse.wisc.edu/agrability>.

**2002 UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- **Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin Annual Business Conference, March 5 & 6**  
Alliant Energy Center (formerly the Dane Co Expo Center), Madison
- **2002 Mid West Ag Expo – Wisconsin, March 13 & 14**  
Alliant Energy Center (formerly the Dane Co Expo Center), Madison
- **42nd Annual Farm Show, March 26, 27, and 28**  
Brown Co Veterans Memorial Complex, Green Bay

**STOP BY AND VISIT US DURING THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!**



**Partners...**

Thank you for calling!

I entered the field of providing services for people with disabilities with relatively no knowledge of living with a disability. I was 18, healthy, and was very sure of myself. I had no friends with disabilities and my living relatives were all fairly healthy. I scanned the classifieds one spring to find a summer job to make money for college. I interviewed at a few places. I was looking for a job at a vet clinic, but in Ashland, Wisconsin there were none to be found. A nursing home offered me a job as a nursing assistant. The two-week training period taught me the basic technical aspects of caring for elders and people with disabilities. I had no idea how much I had left to learn until I started working. It was a nice clean nursing home with a high staff to resident ratio. While I was learning the routine, though, I rushed from room to room to make sure my charges were clean and not hungry. The residents were anonymous to me. In the world before political correctness, residents were either old and frail or younger and disabled. The tasks I completed for them were intimate and required more than technical expertise. I felt inadequate. After a few weeks there were brief moments when I had finished my tasks and had time to finished conversations I had

started with people to fill the awkward silence during, feeding, bathing, and toileting. The rushing began to seem rude to me. The conversations opened my eyes and my heart. Residents turned into people like me. They were existing, recovering, dying - in an institution with quick bursts of contact from staff and then family for an hour or two here and there. Planned social events with other residents, little privacy, and their disability or illness left some people lonely, frustrated, in pain, bored, and needing just a moment to talk to someone who cared about their lives. I listened and I learned. Myrtle, Elsie, Peter, Dolores. Their names are still in my heart. Their stories were gifts of perspective from people who had been young, healthy, loved, known pain and joy, made mistakes, and who had a great deal to share with me. I no longer rushed and listened impatiently. The summer job turned into a cherished experience that tempers the way I live my life. Thank you to those who took the time to respond to my introduction in the Summer "Plowing Ahead". Your phone calls and visits are also gifts of perspective to me.

Sincerely,  
*Jessica Danziger*

**Sowing the Seeds of Hope**

Farm Couples Weekend Getaways and Farm Women's Mini Getaway & Renewal Weekends are a great way to take a step back and view life's daily challenges from a different perspective.

The Wisconsin Office of Rural Health Policy and the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association offer free seminars to farm communities to teach couples and women how to constructively cope with stress and help create relationships with people who are in similar situations. They provide refreshments, meals, lodging, materials, and instruction at no cost to attendees.

**Farm Couples Weekend Getaways**

Upcoming dates:

**February 9-10** at Best Western Motel in Marinette

**February 9-10** at Cedar Valley Center near West Bend

**February 9-10** at Park Inn in Eau Claire

**February 16-17** at Best Western Quiet House in Dodgeville

**March 2-3** at the Radisson Hotel in La Crosse

For more information call Roger Williams at (608)263-4432 or email: [rwilliams@dcs.wisc.edu](mailto:rwilliams@dcs.wisc.edu)

**Farm Women's Mini Getaway & Renewal Weekend**

March 15, 16, and 17, 2001 at Cedar Valley Center near West Bend, WI

For more information, call Mary Bub at (262)629-4154 or email: [mmbub@juno.com](mailto:mmbub@juno.com)

**Special thanks to the Plum City Farming Community**

Members of the FFA Chapter at Plum City, Wisconsin organized a harvest drive to collect corn donated by local farmers.

Chapter members traveled to local farms with a truck and grain gravity wagon to gather the donated corn and then delivered it to a local grain elevator.

Plum City FFA donated \$1,400 to AgrAbility of Wisconsin which exceeded their goal to raise \$1000.

This FFA Chapter has been conducting annual corn drives and donating the proceeds to worthy programs for nearly twenty years.

Thank you Plum City FFA and Plum City Farmers! Your donations will help AgrAbility of Wisconsin provide services to more farmers with disabilities.

