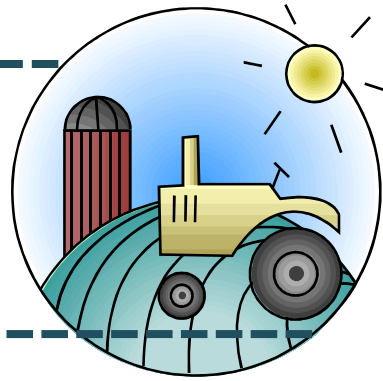




Rural Roadways - SAFETY REVIEW

With harvest time just around the corner, rural roadways will see increased traffic as farmers travel to and from their fields. During this busy time, the National Safety Council reminds us that sharing the road is everyone's responsibility and being proactive about preventing possible incidents that could result in injury is just plain smart. Patience is highlighted as an important trait that will allow everyone to go home at the end of the day. For further details, visit www.nsc.org.



BEING VISIBLE TO OTHERS ON PUBLIC ROADWAYS:

1. Use SMV emblems that meet the ASAE S276.5 Standard
2. Use red retroreflective tape to the rear of tractors and machines
3. Use amber retroreflective tape on the sides of agricultural machines
4. Use warning red and amber lights
5. Utilize pilot vehicles
6. Use properly adjusted mirrors to see around the tractor or machine when traveling

*National Safety Council
(www.nsc.org/public/NFSW_Ag_prod.pdf)



OTHER THINGS FARMERS SHOULD KNOW:

1. Remember that the general public may not realize that tractors and other agricultural machinery often cannot travel faster than 25 mph and have limited maneuverability
2. SMV emblems and extremity markings should be kept clean and bright
3. All lights need to be working properly
4. Use mirrors to watch for motorists
5. When planning to make a left turn, look to see if someone is attempting to pass

*National Education Center for Agricultural Safety
(www.nsc.org/public/2002_FSHW.pdf)



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Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

Fall 2002
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FEATURING:

Pepin County Man Continues Farming Despite Sight Loss

Back in Action

Rural Roadways - SAFETY REVIEW

ALSO LOOK FOR:

Partners... by Mike Wildeck

Caregiver's Corner

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

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AgrAbility of Wisconsin

Plowing Ahead

PEPIN COUNTY MAN CONTINUES FARMING DESPITE SIGHT LOSS

Perseverance and independence are two traits that many Wisconsin farmers possess. This is no different for Pepin County dairy farmer, Rick Linder who despite the loss of his sight nearly ten years ago continues to do his part on the Linder Farm.



Current calf barn construction among one of the many building projects at Linder Farm.

Moving from the Twin Cities in 1976, ten year-old, Linder and his family settled in among the rolling hills of Stockholm, Wisconsin. The Linder Family Farm, now supporting three families, runs 220

acres of corn and 400 acres of hay along with milking 225 cows in their new double-twelve parlor. The farm has endured a variety of building projects over the years including two parlor expansions, new free stall barns, a shop, a house and currently construction on a calf barn with the family providing most of the planning and labor.

ADJUSTING TO CHANGE

Nearing completion of their first parlor expansion project in the early 90's, Linder says his eyes began to "screw up" a bit. He went to the doctor hoping they could be fixed and learned that his diabetes, a disease he had lived with since age eight, was now affecting his sight. Surgery was scheduled and completed on both eyes at the same time in hopes of correcting the problem. Linder however left completely blind.

With his blindness came many challenges, but Linder considered himself lucky to have

lived on the farm for so long allowing him to know the area well. With the help of Betty Burenbeck, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Counselor, Linder attended school in Wausau where he spent a couple weeks learning how to use a cane

and read some Braille, as well as work with computers. Though he admits being stubborn and embarrassed about using his cane within those first few years, Linder won't walk anywhere without it now. He

basically gave up on Braille during his time at school and continues to be off and on with his use of computers.

Despite the loss of his sight, Linder's passion to be a farmer never faltered. Several questions however were raised about how this might be achieved. Questions about how he could continue milking cows led his DVR Counselor, Burenbeck, to seek assistance from AgrAbility of Wisconsin. Paul Leverenz, Resource Center for Farmer's with Disabilities Director, visited the farm providing ideas on how Linder could identify the cows and continue his mechanic work.

MAKING ACCOMMODATIONS

Cow bells and leg bands were initial cues Linder had used to identify cows that were dry or treated, but these still allowed error. The installation of Universal quad tracks within their first single-fourteen parlor provided the Linder's with a computerized

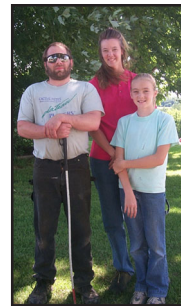
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version of milking. Each cow was assigned a number and wore a collar with a transponder that is read by an antenna identifying them as they walk into the parlor. Herd records are kept in the computer and a "lock-out" feature safeguards Linder from putting "hot" milk into the tank. The computer recognizes a "locked-out" cow and doesn't allow the milker to be turned on.

*"I couldn't do it all totally on my own...I always need somebody with an eyeball for something."
--Rick Linder*

calves belling, the windmill squeaking, and cows going in and out of the headlocks out in the barn are his preferred cues. Knowing the area helps out a lot too, but Linder recognizes the invaluable role others play in his life. "I couldn't do it all totally on my own," he admits. "I always need somebody with an eyeball for something." He also holds everyone accountable noting that if you work on the farm and you are one of the main people, you are supposed to know – know when a cow is bred, know when she will have her calf, know when she needs to be dried off or know to ask questions.



Rick, Tess and Libby Linder.

Information gathered during the milking is sent to a PC that is located in the basement of the parlor. This computer was originally set-up to interface with the Universal set-up and was enhanced by a voice recognition system allowing Linder to stay involved with herd management. Their more recent parlor expansion requiring purchase of ten new



Linder "talks shop" with Paul Leverenz, RCFD Director.

Universal quad tracks left the system not able to interface in the same way. This, coupled with Linder's minimal interest in computer work has limited his input on herd management.



Linder explains Universal milking system.

WORKING AS A TEAM

Linder's day starts with a trip to the parlor for the 6:00 am milking while the rest of his day is spent with the calves or in the shop. Wind chimes located near the house and on the milk house provide him with cues to find his way around the farm though more personal sounds like the trees blowing, a fan in the barn,

He maintains his independence in the shop relying on others solely for reading gauges from time to time and especially returning the tools to their special spot, an important aid that allows him to locate tools efficiently. Linder has felt at times that he is not as good as a person that can see, but his wife, Tess, is quick to share that a lot of the things people do on the farm wouldn't happen unless Rick was right there giving them pointers on anything from heat detection to working on the machinery. "He taught me everything I know," she explained. "He taught me to drive bobcat and tractor just by talking to me and by me asking him questions."

Though his role on the farm has changed, Linder doesn't have a problem keeping busy. He takes care of most maintenance for the milking equipment and farm machinery, as well as completing a majority of the phone work and research for things like the farm's building projects. Through these experiences, he has found that people have a real difficulty wanting to deal with him. He and his wife feel that people don't take him seriously often times stereotyping him as the "blind guy" who doesn't have a clue what he is talking about. Granting that he was probably a little freaked out by somebody with a disability before he became blind, Linder still considers dealing with peoples' ignorance a pain. He also struggles with the fact that due to a limited number of salespeople for specific types of equipment he can't simply take his business elsewhere.

TAKING TIME FOR RECREATION

Like many farmers, Linder finds himself caught in a vicious cycle of working seven days a week knowing that there is always something to get done. He admits trying to live "normal" just like anyone, but feels that he can't do any of the things he once thought were fun. He and his family continue to camp, snowmobile, tube, four-wheel and other fun stuff, but Linder finds himself always on the back. "I'm the mechanic though," he proclaimed with pride. "That's the fun part for me now...I get to keep all of this stuff going for all of these people."

Upcoming Fall Events:

- ☆ WI Occupational Therapist Assoc Conf, LaCrosse, WI -- October 4 & 5
- ☆ Assistive/Rehabilitation Technology Fair, Wausau, WI -- October 1
- ☆ 5th Grade Disability Awareness Day, Marshfield, WI -- October 10
- ☆ National AgrAbility Workshop, Nashville, TN -- October 22-25
- ☆ Assistive/Rehabilitation Technology Fair, Green Bay, WI -- October 29
- ☆ Advisory Council Meeting, Madison, WI -- November 14

Plowing Ahead

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Partners...



Over the past few years I've met with dozens of producers on a wide variety of operations in regards to the AgrAbility program. As you might suspect from this part of Wisconsin, most have been dairy operations, but it's been a real mix of different size herds, some confinement systems, some grazing-based, and so on.

For my own reporting purposes I've gone back on occasion and documented some of the results that have occurred since our initial farm visit. If you've ever worked in government or private business you probably know what I'm referring to. It's a simple matter of being accountable and documenting some quantifiable results....things like "a decision made to continue farming," and "ability to do daily chores without hiring an employee."

I've had a couple of AgrAbility clients recently that I've seen on a more frequent basis for other reasons.

For the first time, I became aware of the full impact that AgrAbility has made on their lives, not just on the farming operation. The mobility that's gained to feed the calves and milk the cows might be the primary objective. However, it's also enabled that individual to help with sapping trees for maple syrup, or mending fences, or a hundred other little things that we might not think are quite so important. In fact, those "little things" are very important.

Attitude can be a hard thing to measure and quantify for a report, but it's a wonderful gift for a farm family. We shouldn't underestimate all the good things that can happen when farming becomes fun again. People feel more viable and productive, and that feeling spreads to other family members, employees, and the community.

-- Mike Wildeck

*Dairy Agent for Marathon,
Lincoln & Langlade Counties*

BACK IN ACTION

With her year as the 54th Alice in Dairyland completed, Sheri Hicken has rejoined the AgrAbility of Wisconsin program. Returning to her duties as outreach specialist, Hicken looks forward to bringing skills and talents she gained this past year to the program. She serves as the first contact for farmers and other individuals who call AgrAbility, completes program reports, presents program information to both farm and non-farm audiences, develops and maintains promotional materials and strives to increase disability awareness in Wisconsin's



Campers eagerly share their ideas and experiences with disability.

youth. Recently attending Jefferson County's 6th Annual Safety Day Camp, Hicken visited with 130 youth providing them opportunities to define disability and try different pieces of assistive technology. ■

CAREGIVER'S CORNER



Family caregivers are the backbone of a long-term care system. Fifty-two million Americans, or 1 in 3, will care for a family member some time in their lives. Seventy-five percent of the caregivers are women, with 50% of them juggling work, family & caregiving. Although caring for a family member can give great personal satisfaction, many caregivers experience a sense of burden. Some caregivers have fair to poor physical health and many experience depression.

The Wisconsin Alliance for Family Caregivers is a network of organizations and family caregivers that provides education, resources, and support to family caregivers statewide. AgrAbility of Wisconsin is proud to be a part of that network.

For more information on the Alliance or additional caregiver resources, visit <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/caregiving/>. ■

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