



## Did You Know?

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**Wisconsin Farm Center:** Offers a one-stop, one-call resource for farmers and their families. By calling their 800 number or simply stopping in their office at the Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection, you'll have access to the following assistance: Farm Link for senior and beginning farmers, legal information, volunteer farm advisors, financial counseling and analysis, rural electric power services (REPS), mediation, and employment and training services. For more information, call (800) 942-2474 or visit them on the web at <http://datcp.state.wi.us/core/agriculture/farm-center/>.



**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA):** Find a specific service area in the USDA by visiting their website at [www.usda.gov/services.html](http://www.usda.gov/services.html). For example, the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) works to stabilize farm income, help farmers conserve land and water resources, provides credit to new or disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and helps farm operations recover from the effects of disaster. County FSA offices are located in 59 Service Centers across Wisconsin. To contact the state FSA office call (608) 662-4422 or log on to [www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi).



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### FEATURING:

*Brown County Man Returns to Job He Loves*

*Corn Huskers to Host National Workshop*

*Safety First During Harvest Time*

*Did You Know?*

### ALSO LOOK FOR:

*Partners...  
by Tricia Behn, ESW  
Rural Rehabilitation Specialist*

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# Plowing Ahead

## Brown County Man Returns to Job He Loves

Your job isn't worth doing if you don't love it, shared Larry Dufek smiling from the seat of his Kawasaki mule. Driving through the freestall barn, he goes on to explain how blessed he is to be able to work with his family and friends everyday doing something that he loves in a world where 70% of all Americans do not even enjoy their careers.



Dufek utilizes his Kawasaki mule to travel everywhere around the farm -- from fields to freestall barns.

It's not hard to see why Dufek Crest Dairy with its friendly, easy-going atmosphere is a great place to live and work. The New Franken, Wisconsin farm located in Brown County has been in the family for several generations and now boasts 1200 milk cows, along with 3200 acres. Dufek and his wife, Patty, manage the farm, while over a dozen employees carry out daily tasks such as completing fieldwork and working with the cattle in their double-16 parlor. Despite the many hands working to run this dairy, it still can be a stressful and hectic place to work especially during those busy times of the year like fall.

### SEASONS OF CHANGE

Fall bringing with it the harvest season is one of the most demanding times of the year, a time when farmers work nearly 'round the clock to simply keep up. One such busy fall day in September of 2001, everything was brought to a screeching halt at Dufek Crest Dairy. Dufek had been leveling off a silo when the bottom of his pant leg got caught in the drive wheel, resulting in a severe injury to his lower leg. Following the accident, Dufek's leg had to be amputated just below the knee. After spending several months in the hospital, he returned home to find that



Proud parents of Kayla, Tiffany, and Glen (not shown), Patty and Larry Dufek value their family and friends.

friends and family had pitched in to ensure that the dairy operation ran smoothly while he was recovering. "My neighbors and some custom harvesters came in and helped harvest the rest of the corn and beans. They were great. Without the help of them and my family, I couldn't have done it."

Dufek was fitted with a prosthetic limb and had to go through lengthy rehabilitation—learning how to walk again with a new leg. Several months later he returned to work full-time on the farm, but his role had to change. Describing himself as a "mover and shaker" of sorts, Dufek struggled with having to sit back and let others take on more responsibility, but he took comfort in seeing his employees step up and into their new roles nicely. Though Dufek found the transition from full-time farmer to full-time manager a challenging one,

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he credits his loving wife, Patty, for helping him every step of the way.

### HELPING HANDS

Dufek was also appreciative of assistance he received from both the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and AgrAbility of Wisconsin. After contacting AgrAbility of Wisconsin, Paul Leverenz, Easter Seals Wisconsin Farm Assessment and Rehabilitation Methods (FARM) Director and AgrAbility partner, visited Dufek on his

*Life is so precious, live every day to its fullest--that's why we plan for the future and live for today....Your job isn't worth doing if you don't love it.*

-- Larry Dufek

farm to discuss tasks he was having difficulty with, what he wanted to be doing and how those things could happen. "AgrAbility helped me to modify more equipment to make my jobs easier, even more efficient," notes Dufek. One major change was the addition of a Kawasaki mule, which allows Dufek to maintain an active part in the dairy operation. With his mule he is able to travel anywhere

around the farm including excursions into the barn where specially designed grates now fit over the gutters. Placement of an extra set of steps on one of his tractors and on a skid loader makes entry and exit of that machinery easier. Headlocks and crowding gates were installed in the barn where Dufek does most of the health care on his cattle providing him increased safety while he gives attention to his herd. With the help of this assistive technology, Dufek feels he can do just about anything, continuing to climb silos and drive tractor with more ease. Challenges, such as pushing in the clutch pedal on his tractor, can still arise but Dufek has learned ways to overcome such obstacles.

### A JOB WORTH DOING

As Dufek Crest Dairy continues to expand, Dufek and his wife are pleased with the progress their family has made. "My priorities changed a lot after my accident," says Dufek noting that his family has become a lot closer since the accident – closer than they had ever been. Continuously planning for the future, the Dufeks envision more dairy facilities and modernizations will be built on the farm in a few years with Larry eventually serving as the primary, full-time manager of the operation.

Fortunate to return to a job he loves, Dufek advises, "Life is so precious, live every day to its fullest—that's why we plan for the future and live for today." ■

## Corn Huskers to Host National Workshop

The 2003 National AgrAbility Project Workshop will be held on November 11-14 in Omaha, Nebraska. Extension educators, occupational therapists, physical therapists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, rural health care providers, farmers, ranchers, & farm workers who have disabilities and their families are all welcome to attend. An exciting program is being planned that includes the following four technical tracks:

**Track 1 - Equipment & Assistive Technology:** This 2-day track will include such topics as Liability and Product Design, Student Project Designs, and offsite visits to Valmont, an irrigation system manufacturer, and the University of Nebraska Tractor Test Lab.

**Track 2 - Farm Business & Financial Management:** This 2-day track will include a presentation from Cary Griffin, Senior Partner, Griffin-Hammis Associates, a leader in the Self Employment field. Other topics presented by University of Nebraska experts will include Understanding the USDA Farm Program, Understanding Farm Finance, and Budgeting Changes in the Farm Business.

**Track 3 - Independent Living & Health:** This 1-day track will have interactive sessions on Home Modifications and Low Cost Independent Living Solutions for the Home, Orthotics and Prosthetics for Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities, and Electronic Memory and Prompting Aids.

**Track 4 - Support Services & Delivery Systems:** This 1-day track will include discussions on Service Delivery Models, Comprehensive Agricultural Assessments, Working With Diverse Cultures, and a presentation on Mental Illness and its effect on farm families.

For more information, contact Carol Maus at 1-800-914-4424 or visit the web at [www.agrabilityproject.org](http://www.agrabilityproject.org). ■

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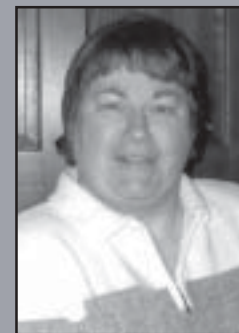
Dufek and Leverenz, FARM Program Director, visit about modifications made around the farm.

### Plowing Ahead

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# Partners...



*I have always loved the farm. Maybe it's the smell of freshly mowed hay drying on the fields, the plowed earth, or the sight of tractors lined up. Maybe it has to do with the raising of a farm family. Whatever it is, the large farm kitchen has always been the place where I sat to talk with family, prepare veggies fresh from the garden, or do homework as we discussed the day and upcoming tomorrows.*

*At home in Reedsburg, where I and my husband Bill live, our small kitchen consists of a small cooking area, counters and seating at the table made by my father-in-law. It lacks the laundry in the corner, counters full of farm papers and the hooks filled with the outdoor farm clothing. Even though I live in the country, it is not the multi-purpose room of my childhood farm kitchen. I miss that.*

*My job as a Rural Rehabilitation Specialist takes me home to my childhood farm kitchen. Each time I meet a farmer and his family, it is on the farm or 'round the kitchen table. Farm kitchens remind me that I am being invited to be a partner in your lives. Each of us brings a different set of skills that together we will use to meet a common goal. I bring knowledge of agricultural occupations and*

*knowledge of disabilities to your table. You help me to see what it is that has become difficult in your occupation of farming. Together we speculate on what could be done to make a difference and restore your productivity on the farm. Later, we may meet again on the farm, with another partner, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Together, we decide what paths will be taken. It is important to me that you know the opportunity to continue in agriculture with a disability exists.*

*When I sit at the kitchen table, most times, that table has a century old story behind it. The farm is a family farm and generations may have sat at this same table. It makes me determined to have the best partnership ever. I want to know why you have invited me and what on the farm is creating a struggle for you. I picture the conversation on my way home and envision ALL that has been created by these decision making people. ALL of these decisions have worked on the farm, because one person.... or maybe a century of people have made right decisions in partnerships 'round the kitchen table. I just wish I could hear the conversations way back, when the kitchen table was new and shiny. Did they speak of things that we spoke of and the best way of doing it? I bet they did and like me, had a good time doing it.*

## Tricia Behn

Rural Rehabilitation Specialist  
Easter Seals Wisconsin, FARM Program

## SAFETY FIRST

*During Harvest Time*

Fall is a special time of the year for many people. Farmers in particular seem to appreciate the cool mornings and changing colors as they estimate how successful this year's crop will be. But, it can also be a very stressful and hazardous time for farmers.

Below are some tips to help stay safe and better manage stress this harvest season:

◆ **Physically:** Eat healthy, don't skip meals, and avoid alcohol. Get rest, take breaks and stretch muscles before and after work. Work within your physical capabilities--know your limitations.

◆ **Mentally:** Realize it may be a stressful time. Accept there will probably be unexpected problems and delays. Don't dwell on things you don't have control over, like the weather. Don't hide problems that you are stressed about from family members. Think about last year's harvest and what you can do differently this year.

◆ **Equipment:** Inspect all vehicles and equipment that will be on public roads. Be sure to check: lights- front, rear, flashing hazards, turn signals, side reflectors; Slow Moving Vehicle emblem (SMV) for travel under 25mph; tires, brakes, steering controls, and any

other items that are part of the routine maintenance. Always remember to shut off equipment before unplugging or servicing and to replace all removed shields before restarting the equipment. And remember to never step over a moving PTO shaft.

Before beginning to harvest evaluate if you have enough equipment and help to get everything done. If not, an investment in renting extra equipment or hiring another employee for the season can be much less expensive than paying for and dealing with an injury.■

Submitted by: Curt Wilke, University of Wisconsin-Extension Outreach Safety Specialist.