



AgrAbility of Wisconsin

# Plowing Ahead

Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

Summer 2004

Volume 13

No. 1

## FEATURING:

**Makovec Continues Century-Old Tradition In Style**

**Safety First: New Equipment, New Hazards**

**Website Celebrates June Dairy Month**

## ALSO LOOK FOR:

**Partners...  
by Carlene Volbrecht,  
FARM Program,  
Easter Seals  
Wisconsin**

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

*Printing is donated by Rural Insurance Companies.*



## Makovec Continues Century-Old Tradition In Style

Nestled in the midst of the green hills in Southwestern Wisconsin, "Lazy M Acres," a 101-year-old farm is run by Robert Makovec of Muscoda, Wis. Makovec's grandfather bought the original 40 acres many years ago to begin the strong tradition of the Makovec dairy operation. The farm was honored at the 2003 Wisconsin



*Makovec proudly wears his "Makovec Century Farm" hat as he sits in his Kawasaki Mule.*



*The Kawasaki Mule allows Robert to safely and efficiently move about the farm.*

About 12 years ago, Makovec began to have problems with his knees. He began by getting a quarter-knee replacement, but in 1999, the entire knee was replaced. In 2002, his hip was replaced with a steel plate, making it more difficult to accomplish everyday tasks at "Lazy M Acres."

"When you get a hip replaced, there's so many "do's" and "don'ts," it's unreal," said Makovec. His doctor warned him not to bend over 90 degrees, and to stay

centered throughout his work. "He (the doctor) told me that I can't jump, can't climb, and can't carry over 50 pounds."

The restrictions on Makovec's movement forced him to employ a hired hand to help with the milking, lifting and climbing. "It was hard for me to go into a manager role instead of a laborer," said Makovec,

State Fair when it became a Century Farm.

"I was born and raised on this farm," said Makovec as he looked across the barnyard to the rolling hills that surrounded his land. The 230 acres of corn, alfalfa and soybeans, along with the 65 head of dairy cows keeps Makovec busy almost every minute of the day.

*"I didn't think anything would come of it (when I contacted AgrAbility of Wisconsin and DVR). They bent over backwards to take care of me--I was surprised and very pleased.*

*-- Robert Makovec*

"Some days you just want to do it (the jobs)

*continued on page 2...*



The addition of a TMR Mixer helped Robert to make daily chores easier.

yourself, and you shouldn't, but you end up paying for it."

Makovec began to work with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

(DVR) and AgrAbility of Wisconsin after learning about the programs from a friend. After contacting Allan Hein, a DVR counselor in Prairie du Chein, Makovec began working with Hein and Bruce Whitmore, a Rehabilitation Specialist for the Easter Seals FARM Program.

Makovec used to spend two hours everyday hauling silage for his cattle in a small skid loader bucket. "It was really bad for my knees and my hip—running a skid loader for that long is hard on anyone," said Makovec. Together, Whitmore, Hine and Makovec were able to make adjustments

to the daily farm routines, allowing Makovec to feed his cattle with ease.

A new feed bunk was constructed with conveyors for silage, eliminating much of the strain that was being placed on Makovec in the skid loader. A TMR mixer and a battery-powered feed cart were also added to "Lazy M Acres."

"The solution to the problem of feeding and excessive time in the

skid loader was the bunk and TMR combination. The conveyors coming from the two silos were kind of incidentals to get feed into the TMR wagon because we had the old bunk and auger feeder removed," said Whitmore.

The feed cart, which is computerized, allows Makovec to ration every individual cow's feed separately as he steers the cart down the barn aisles. An automatic gate will soon accompany the Kawasaki Mule that Makovec uses to travel across the farmyard. "It was about time for an update," said Makovec about the modifications.

Today, Makovec is looking forward to the future at "Lazy M Acres." A modification to his daily routine, along with the addition of some equipment, has helped to continue the strong traditions in agriculture that the

Makovec Family started over a century ago. "I didn't think anything would come of it (when I contacted AgrAbility of Wisconsin and DVR)," said Makovec. "They bent over backwards to take care of me—I was surprised and very pleased." ■

*"Some days you just want to do it (the jobs) yourself, and you shouldn't, but you end up paying for it."*  
-- Robert Makovec



The new feed bunk with conveyors for the silage eliminated Makovec's daily two-hours in the skid loader, which hurt his knees and hip.



## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR AGRABILITY CLIENTS TO ATTEND NATIONAL WORKSHOP

The 2004 National AgrAbility Training Workshop will be held in Springfield, Illinois from November 16-19, 2004. Do not miss this opportunity to hear distinguished guest speakers and workshop leaders present a wealth of information and ideas relevant to anyone: farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers with disabilities remain productive members of America's agricultural community.

Scholarships to attend the workshop will be available to farmers and ranchers through the National AgrAbility Project on a first requested-first provided basis. Available scholarships may include registration fees, hotel expenses, and travel costs.

Interested AgrAbility of Wisconsin clients or their representatives should determine which expenses they would like covered by a scholarship (if travel costs are requested, the approximate amount must be submitted), and then provide that information to Cally Abplanalp, Associate Outreach Specialist at AgrAbility of Wisconsin by calling (608) 262-9336. ■

**Plowing Ahead**  
 Published by AgrAbility of Wisconsin  
 Editor/Layout Designer:  
 Melissa Copas

Please direct inquiries to:  
**AgrAbility of Wisconsin**  
 460 Henry Mall, Madison, WI 53706  
 (608) 262-9336 Voice  
 (608) 262-1228 Fax

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

# Partners...

*As the newest member of the Easter Seals Wisconsin team I thought it would be important for our partners to learn more about my background and how my journey lead me to become employed with this organization.*

*I was born and raised on a multi-purpose farm in Southern Michigan, approximately 45 miles West of Detroit. I lived on my mother's family farm where my grandfather raised cash crops. His major cash crop was potatoes. We also had a variety of garden vegetables that we harvested to be driven into the Detroit markets for sale. My grandfather also planted a wide variety of fruit crops like raspberries, strawberries, currants, and apples.*

*In addition, one of my uncles farmed jointly with my grandfather and on adjoining land raised beef cattle and grain crops. Growing up, my brothers along with my cousins went around to our relatives' farms in the neighborhood to harvest hay, and help in the barns feeding young stock and milking cattle.*

*After graduating from high school I attended Michigan State University. My major was Dairy Science with a minor in Crop and Soil Science. In my senior year I switched my major to focus upon communications and public relations work. My first professional position after graduation from MSU landed me in Shawano, Wisconsin, doing public relations work for a milk cooperative, now called Morning Glory Farms.*

*Two years after relocating to Wisconsin, I got married to a man from the Eau Claire County area. In 1987 we bought his 200-acre family dairy farm. I was active in managing the farm financial bookwork, milking the cows, feeding the young stock, and field work, while my husband continued to work full-time off-the-farm. We milked 32 Holsteins and cropped 120 acres. Also during this time, our family increased to include three sons. In the summer of 1991, we held an auction to sell our milk cows and machinery.*



*Carlene Volbrecht, FARM Program*

*After working various service-type jobs in the Eau Claire area, I landed a job with Lutheran Social Services in the Family Preservation Program. After two years with LSS, I made the decision to return to college to pursue a Master's Degree in Human Development and Family Studies. Upon graduation the Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) hired me and I completed vocational evaluations for individuals with disabilities.*

*During this time I also had the opportunity to work with the Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association.*

*I left SVRI in 2002 to complete a second Master's Degree in Vocational Evaluation and Rehabilitation Counseling. Last fall I had the opportunity to participate in an internship for three months with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in Eau Claire. After graduation in December 2003, I was hired by Workforce Resource to work at the Chippewa County Job Center as an Education and Training Specialist.*

*In May, I made the decision to pursue the challenge of joining the Easter Seals Wisconsin and the AgrAbility Program. I feel as if all of my past employment, life, and educational experiences have jelled cohesively in my new position as a Rural Rehabilitation Specialist. I look forward to working out in the communities to meet farmers and assist them in reaching their individual goals.*

## *Carlene Volbrecht*

*Rural Rehabilitation Specialist, Easter Seals FARM Program*

## **SAFETY FIRST**

*During Wisconsin's June Dairy Month*

### **New Equipment, New Hazards**

If you have upgraded items on your farm such as feed carts, crowd gates, pressure washers, fans, or milkers, you are probably using electricity, pneumatic power, or gasoline or diesel engines to operate these items. Using powered equipment can be a great time and back saver, but there may be some unique hazards associated with this equipment.

- Gasoline or diesel powered equipment produces hazardous exhaust fumes and should only be used in very well ventilated areas. Consider using electrical powered equipment in enclosed areas.
- Powered doors and gates may move slowly, but they can be a crushing hazard. Install warning signs, safety kill switches, and inform all workers of the potential hazard.
- Electrical wires can be an electrocution and fire hazard. Consider having a licensed electrician, who is familiar with

agricultural electrical needs, inspect old wiring and install any new wiring on your farm.

- Always use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) in damp or wet areas.

Recognizing the above hazards and taking appropriate precautions can help prevent you, your family, and all farm employees from experiencing costly, painful injuries.



*Submitted by: Curt Wilke, UW-Extension Outreach Safety Specialist.*

*This material is based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under special project number 2002-41590-01371. UW-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming including Title IX and ADA. If you need this material in another format, please contact AgrAbility of Wisconsin at (608) 262-9336.*

# Savor Wisconsin.com Celebrates June Dairy Month

Wisconsin is known the world over for its high-quality dairy products, and SavorWisconsin.com is celebrating June Dairy Month by encouraging consumers to buy from Wisconsin's dairy businesses.

SavorWisconsin.com can help consumers locate the dairy business nearest them. Visitors will find listings ranging from farmstead dairies to local cheese plants and specialty dairy retail shops.

"We can all be proud of Wisconsin dairy businesses and support them," said Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. "We have a culture and history in dairying that is second to none."

Dairy is the state's major cash cow, contributing \$20.6 billion to Wisconsin's economy each year and pumping nearly \$40,000 per minute into the economy. Dairy is the largest sector of Wisconsin agriculture.

Farmers are not the only people of Wisconsin who benefit from dairying.

Over 300 different careers—more than 128,000 jobs—are directly linked to dairy. Dairy contributes to the quality of life in Wisconsin by generating tax revenue, supporting community businesses, and elevating Wisconsin's standing in the international marketplace by the state's exportation of high-quality dairy products.

Much of Wisconsin's international recognition stems from the state's cheesemaking reputation. Wisconsin is home to more cheese plants than any other state and has won more cheesemaking awards than any other state or nation. Wisconsin's heritage is reflected in the European varieties of cheese which continue to be crafted here.

"People are surprised that they can taste the foods they find all over the world right here in Wisconsin," said Debbie Crave of Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese. The Crave family operates an on-farm cheese plant using the milk from their cows. The Craves make specialty cheeses, such as mascarpone and the European style Les Freres, which showcase the heritage and history of cheesemaking in Wisconsin.

"Wisconsin is known for cheese of exceptional quality and value. Our family is proud to be part of this great, long-standing cheesemaking tradition," said Crave.

Nilsestuen encourages Wisconsin citizens to support their economy and explore the tastes of Wisconsin's world-renowned dairy products by using SavorWisconsin.com to locate the business nearest them.

Encouraging consumers and businesses to buy Wisconsin products is part of Gov. Doyle's "Grow Wisconsin" economic development plan. The project is a joint effort of DATCP, the Wisconsin Apple Growers Association and the University of Wisconsin - Extension and was funded in part by a USDA grant. Businesses needing more information about registering may contact Natalie Walleser at DATCP, (608) 224-5117. ■

*Submitted by: Natalie Walleser,  
SavorWisconsin.com, DATCP*



**AgrAbility of Wisconsin**  
**460 Henry Mall**  
**Madison, WI 53706**

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Madison, WI  
Permit No. 658