



AgrAbility of Wisconsin

Plowing Ahead

Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

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FEATURING:

Auburndale Farmer Meets Challenges with Success

2004 National AgrAbility Workshop

Safety First: Handling and Working with Bulls

A Free Getaway for Farm Couples

ALSO LOOK FOR:

Partners... by Holly Allen Rural Rehabilitation Specialist, Easter Seals FARM Program

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

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Auburndale Farmer Meets Challenges with Success

For Darrel Jones, the four-generational, Auburndale dairy farm is his life. "It just kind of gets into your blood," Jones explained about farming. Twenty-one years ago, Jones' family increased their dairy herd from 25 to 50 head of cattle. At the same time, Jones was involved in an ATV accident that paralyzed him from the chest down.

After the accident, family and friends helped with the farm work and Jones' brother took over the milking. Three months later, his brother was unfortunately killed in an automobile accident and Jones' wife, Kathy, started milking the herd. Even though she grew up on a farm, Mrs. Jones explained that it was a learning experience for her because she had never been fully involved in the milking process.

As Jones recovered and increased his daily activities on the farm, he started making his own modifications to the

equipment, such as adding hand controls on his tractors, and turning cow mats into "steps" to maneuver the skid steer into the heifer shed.



The hand-controlled skid-steer allows him to scrape out the heifer shed once a week, instead of taking one-half hour each day to complete the task by hand.

Jones first read about AgrAbility of Wisconsin in a newspaper

article. After speaking with another farmer who was familiar with the program, he decided to contact AgrAbility of Wisconsin. Following his conversations with AgrAbility staff, Jones contacted the Division of Vocation Rehabilitation (DVR), who aided in funding the modifications and purchases of necessary equipment on the farm.

Carlene Volbrecht, Rural Rehabilitation Specialist from Easter Seals Wisconsin's FARM Program, first visited the farm; she suggested several different types of modifications and additions that would aid Jones in his daily farm activities. Ramps were suggested for the free stall building, however "the barn was set-up, it was a level entrance, so that wasn't a big thing," Jones explained.



The purchase of an electric feed cart eliminated the need for the wheelbarrow while creating ease and convenience in the daily feeding.

continued on page 2...

Other equipment purchased by DVR included a hand-controlled skid-steer. The skid-steer allows him to scrape out the heifer shed once a week, instead of taking one-half hour each day to complete the task by hand. The skid-steer has an engine located in the back, permitting Jones to access it easily. This is important since Jones repairs his own equipment right on the farm in a heated shop. Included with the skid-steer were pallet forks that let Jones pick up and transport items around the farm.

“Without friends and family, I wouldn’t still have the farm
-- Darel Jones

Since mobility was an issue for Jones, Volbrecht suggested several pieces of equipment

that were later purchased by DVR. These suggestions included a four-wheel-drive Polaris Ranger with an enclosed cab, a power dump box, and hand control

modifications. “The biggest thing was getting the Ranger,” said Jones. He is now able to easily access all areas of his farm, including the uneven terrain of the pasture.



The Ranger allows Jones to easily access all areas of his farm, including the uneven terrain of the pasture.

The purchase of an electric feed cart eliminated the need for the wheelbarrow while creating ease and convenience in the daily feeding. “You tie up one person standing there watching the feed, where here I can keep an eye on it. I can [drive the feed cart] to where [I need to put in feed] and it will pull me right along,” Jones explained.

In the near future, Jones plans to install concrete ramps to the entrance of the heifer shed and side of the building. This will permit access for the skid steer. Jones will possibly purchase a tractor lift in the future, but he’s still researching the various lifts until he finds one that meets his requirements.

Even though he has no plans to expand the farm any further, Jones plans to continue farming long into the future. He is grateful to everyone who helped with the farm while he was recovering from the accident, “Without friends and family, I wouldn’t still have the farm,” said Jones.

2004 National AgrAbility Project Workshop Hosted by Illinois

The 2004 National AgrAbility Project Workshop was held on November 16-19 in Springfield, Illinois at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Extension educators, occupational therapists, physical therapists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, rural health care providers, farmers, ranchers, & farm workers who have disabilities & their families attended.



A wide array of sessions were offered to increase knowledge of strategies for farmers, ranchers and

farmworkers to use for continuation in production agriculture. The sessions provided information related to the overview of the vocational system and federal disability policy, applications of assistive technology to agriculture, as well as trends in medical rehabilitation for improvement of functional ability.

The 2005 National AgrAbility Workshop will be hosted by Vermont. Past and present AgrAbility clients are always welcome to attend. If anyone is interested in attending next year, scholarships will be available again. No dates have been officially set yet, but as information becomes available, it will be posted in the Plowing Ahead Newsletter. ■

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Partners...

I am pleased and honored to be the most recent addition to the Easter Seals FARM program and AgrAbility of Wisconsin team. However, I am no stranger to this wonderful organization. While I was a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1995 to 2000, I had a great opportunity to work with the program. I originally began working as an undergraduate student intern. I later returned as a student employee and transitioned to a graduate intern.

I grew up on a three-generation dairy farm east of Green Bay, where my father was born and raised. He farmed with my mother for over 35 years until recently when the decision was made to sell the cows, due to the progression of his illness.

I completed my Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling in December 2000. At that time, Lutheran Social Services employed me as a case manager for county social services. Prior to accepting this position, I worked as a vocational evaluator and Disability Program Navigator, for a community based non-profit agency that assists individuals with disabilities.

I can remember when I first learned of the Easter Seals



Holly Allen, FARM Program

Farm program. As part of one of my college classes, I had to select a program to work with to gain experience in rehabilitation. My instructor was describing the places we had to choose from and I recall him describing the Easter Seals FARM Program. At that time I said to myself, what a perfect fit for me. Ironically, about 7 years later, I found myself saying the same thing when the opportunity to become Easter Seals third Rural Rehab Specialist crossed my path.

I guess the phrase You can take the girl out of the country, but you can't take the country out the girl; couldn't be truer in this case. I am excited to apply my knowledge; both personal and professional, to assist farmers and their families achieve their goals and access services. Although I have worked in different capacities over the past few years, there is one vital piece that has been consistent...my desire to help people achieve their goals of independence.

Holly Allen

Rural Rehabilitation Specialist, Easter Seals FARM Program

SAFETY FIRST

Handling and Working with Bulls



Over the past 10 years, bulls have killed 17 Wisconsinites. With incredibly strong heads and shoulders, bulls can easily crush a person. Are you equipped with the proper information to stay safe around your bull? Here's some facts that will help keep you safe, and that's no bull!

- √ Bulls that were hand-reared are more likely to attack their owners than bulls raised in group pens.
- √ Do not keep bulls past two years of age. At this age, they begin to change temperament and are more likely to attack.
- √ Keep your eye on the bull at all times. Know where he is located when you are in the building, pen or pasture.
- √ Have a dog and/or ATV with you when you are

around a bull.

- √ Ship a bull immediately if he stares you down, paws the ground or stops showing fear.
- √ Use rugged fences and gates including posts of four-inch pipe and welded cross members of two-inch pipe. The top railing should be at least 50-inches height to prevent a bull from jumping over the rail. Keep the bottom railing about 18-inches off the ground, so a person could roll underneath if necessary. Also, consider adding human pass-throughs that would allow you to easily escape a dangerous situation.

For more information about how to stay safe on your farm, contact the Wisconsin Center for Agricultural Safety and Health at 460 Henry Mall, Madison, WI 53706, or by visiting them on the website at <http://www.wiscash.uwex.edu/>. ■

Submitted by: Cheryl Skjolaas, UW-Extension Outreach Safety Specialist

Farm families: An invitation to get away from the daily grind, improve coping strategies



Many farm, and non-farm related stressors have affected most Wisconsin farm families over the past year. If you and your farm spouse are looking for an enriching and upbeat learning experience, you may want to attend one of the free Farm Couples Weekend Getaways planned over the next few months. The weekend experiences will help to improve your communication skills, lower your stress levels, help plan for your farm's future, and of course, enjoy a much-needed mini-vacation from the farm and farm work.

The free weekend getaways (refreshments, meals, lodging, instruction and materials are being covered by grants) will be held on the following weekends:

- February 12-13, 2005 Camp 28 Resort, Rib Lake
- February 18-20, 2005 Cedar Valley Center, West Bend

- February 26-27, 2005 The Comfort Suites, Shawano
- March 5-6, 2005 House on the Rock Inn, Dodgeville
- March 12-13, 2005 Holiday Inn Express, Black River Falls

Some couples may be eligible for financial assistance to offset the cost of labor or childcare while away.

The getaways are limited to nine couples per weekend, so it's important to register as soon as possible. For more information, or to register for the program, contact Roger Williams at (608) 263-4432 or e-mail him at rwilliams@dcs.wisc.edu. ■

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