

Spring 2004  
Edition



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**Colorado  
AgrAbility  
Works!**

Promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities.

Providing "on the farm" visits at no charge to the family.

Making assistive technology recommendations to live and work more productively.

Providing information on resources for peer support.

# THE BALING WIRE

## Itching for a Niche?



Got an itch for a niche? Now before you go scratching, you should know what a niche is. A Niche market is a focused portion of a market where a product or service not being addressed by the mainstream is formed. Some

examples include pasteurized goat milk, organic vegetables, honey/honey products, agri-tourism (i.e. corn mazes).... The list goes on.... With Agriculture trends today, producers must look at diversification as a means to survive and thrive in this economy. Niche markets may be the answer.

I have an idea, where do I start?

First, think about a good or service that is needed but difficult to find in your area. Are you recognized as an expert in something everyone needs?

Other sources to scan are articles in papers, magazines, and journals. A shortage in a market may trigger an idea that you feel you could provide. Maybe no one in your area provides organic seed or hay and you know there are producers around you who prefer these commodities for their livestock and operations. You may decide organic seed would be a way to go with your operation and begin the investigation process.

Look at all aspects of the market you are interested in pursuing. What pricing is competitive for your geographic area? What may some of the obstacles be in producing this product or service? Are there required fees or licenses?

Secondly, write down your goals for your family and your occupation. Are these compatible with long-term family and occupational goals?

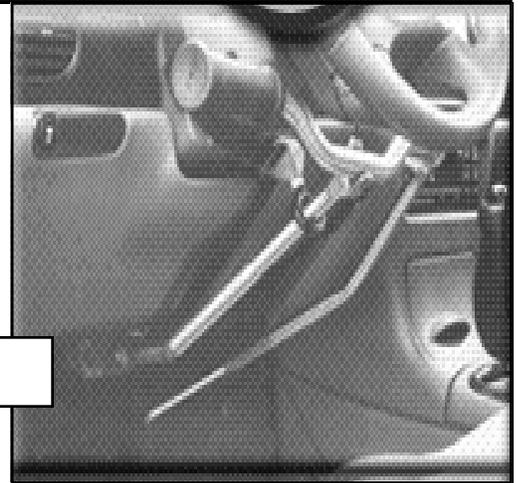
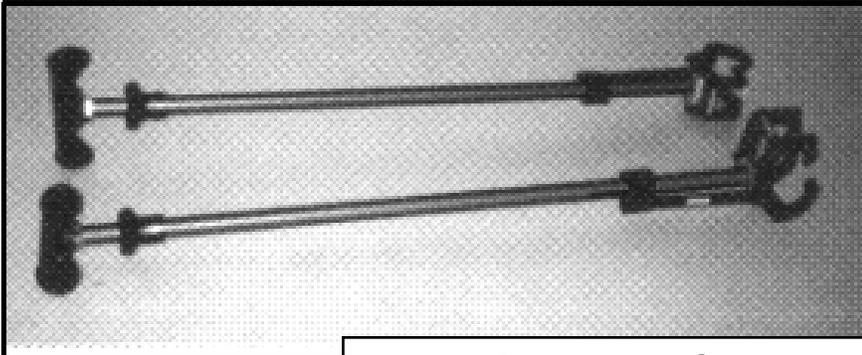
Third, decide what resources, land, labor, special skills or knowledge you have to undertake your niche market and determine what resources you lack and how you will make up for them.

And, finally one important ingredient— the business plan! Do not underestimate this step. This is the roadmap and statement which shows potential investors that your business will produce! Many resources exist to help with this step including free help from organizations such as SCORE.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture offers workshops on marketing and production in niche markets. For more information contact Wendy White at the Department of Agriculture (303)239-4119 or e-mail— [wendy.white@ag.state.co.us](mailto:wendy.white@ag.state.co.us).

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# AgrAbility Baling Wire



**Various Hand Controls**



### Niche Market *(Continued from page 1)*

Colorado Proud is a free program for producers which serves as a networking and information tool. The main goal is promoting production and consumption of Colorado food & agricultural products.

A publication called Colorado Farm Fresh also exists which costs \$20.00 to list your product or service.

Maybe you have an idea or a successful agricultural niche market. We would love to hear from you and pass some of your advice along to our clients at the AgrAbility project.

We can be reached at **1-800-335-2598 x233 or x224**.

Go ahead! Get creative, your "niche" could be contagious!

-Michelle Zorack, Colorado AgrAbility



### Permanent Hand Controls:

#### **Automobility Manufacturing Corp.**

1444 Lorne St.  
Regina, Saskatchewan, S4R 2K4  
Canada  
(306) 791-9840  
[www.handcontrolscorp.com](http://www.handcontrolscorp.com)

#### **Driving Aids Development Corp.**

9417 Delancey Dr.  
Vienna, VA 22182  
(800) 767-6435  
[www.drivingaids.com](http://www.drivingaids.com)

### **Special Thanks**

AgrAbility would like to thank the **Edmund T. and Eleanor Quick Foundation** for their generous funding in 2004. The funds will be used to help Colorado rural elderly and disabled live longer and safer in their homes.





# Technology Helps!

By Jason Beck, Rehabilitation Technologist

Is switching your foot between the gas and brake pedals in your car more difficult than it use to be? Does driving your car long distances aggravate an old leg or knee injury? Many different types of injuries and diseases can make driving dangerous or difficult. A leg amputation, knee injury, or diseases like MS or diabetes can make it very difficult or impossible to use the gas/brake pedals.

Losing the ability to drive can be a major loss of independence. However, with the correct hand controls many people can continue driving. It is very important that you discuss using hand controls with your doctor to make sure that you are a good candidate to use them. Often times your doctor will have you complete a hand control driving evaluation to make sure that you are able to safely operate a vehicle with hand controls. It is also important to discuss how hand controls might affect your license or insurance with the department of motor vehicles and your insurance company.



There are many different types of hand controls on the market today. Hand control styles can be divided into two different categories: permanent or portable.

Permanent hand-controls are “permanently” installed into your car or truck. Depending on the model of hand control you can install them yourself, have them installed by your mechanic, or have the installed by an adaptive driving company. “Permanent” hand controls can be removed if you sell your car or truck without damaging the car or truck but, they are not designed to be transferred from vehicle to vehicle. These controls consist of a lever that is operated by a person’s left hand while the right hand is used to steer. By pushing or pulling the lever towards or away from you will accelerate or stop the vehicle.

Portable hand controls are designed to be moved from one vehicle to another depending on the needs of the individual. They can be moved quickly and easily. They work like long pedal extensions. One control will be on the brake pedal and another one on the gas pedal. Each control has a long handle that is attached to each pedal. The handles are pushed down on the pedals to brake or accelerate. One hand will control the pedals while the other hand is on the steering wheel.

If you would like to further discuss the idea of hand controls please contact the Colorado AgrAbility Rehabilitation Technologist, **Jason Beck**, at **(303) 937-7713 x224**.

See “**Permanent Hand Controls**” on the opposite page for a list of companies that sell and install many different types of hand controls.





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Easter Seals Colorado  
5755 W. Alameda Ave.  
Lakewood, CO 80226

Phone: 303-937-7713  
Fax: 303-233-1028



[www.eastersealsco.org/agrability](http://www.eastersealsco.org/agrability)



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## Equipment Corner

We have a few items in our loan closet here at Easter Seals which you may benefit from or someone you know. Please call us at 1-800-335-2598 x224 and ask for Jason if you are interested in any item listed below.

- **2 small manual wheelchairs**
- **Walkers**
- **1 support bed rail**

We are always looking for items in good condition such as shower/bath bench seats and other durable medical equipment. Let us know if you would like to donate.

Editing & formatting of the Baling Wire Spring 2004 Edition by Bill Zorack

