



Crop Circle

Colorado AgrAbility Newsletter

Summer 2002

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Special points of interest:

- * Colorado AgrAbility is a collaborative partnership between Easter Seals Colorado and Colorado State University Cooperative Extension.
- * The AgrAbility Project is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture-CSREES. Funding for this document was provided under project number 2002-41590-01350.

Colorado Successfully Competes for New USDA AgrAbility Grant

Good News!

Colorado AgrAbility successfully competed for one of 22 grants given by the United States Department of Agriculture Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service to provide services to farming and ranching families impacted by disability issues.

The USDA grant will help support activities that promote the success of people with disabilities working in agriculture in Colorado.

Colorado AgrAbility is a partnership of Easter Seals Colorado and Colorado State University Cooperative Extension.

AgrAbility can help by:

- Assessing agricultural work sites and tasks.
- Recommend farm equipment adaptation, home modifications, and adaptive equipment to work or live more independently.
- Provide peer support from other farmers and ranchers with disabilities.
- Provide educational programs in rural communities.
- Refer families to appropriate services in their local community.

AgrAbility services are available to any individual or family member who are impacted by health chal-

lenges that limit their ability to participate in agricultural tasks or live as independently as possible.

As time permits, staff are always willing to present at community gatherings or organizations to talk about the project and our activities.

Referrals can be made directly to Easter Seals or Dr. Bob Fetsch at Cooperative Extension.

A toll-free number has been established to receive phone calls about questions and concerns: **1-800-335-2598**.

Ag Sorority and Fraternity Fundraiser

Even with final projects, papers, and tests bearing down at the end of the spring semester, the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity and Sigma Alpha sorority at Colorado State University found time to put on a cookout to raise funds for

assistive technology equipment needed by a Colorado farmer with a spinal cord injury.

The cookout netted \$300 which is being utilized toward the purchase of a manlift on a John Deere

tractor.

Alpha Gamma Rho and Sigma Alpha are agricultural student life organizations who also devote time to worthy community service projects. We give them a hearty **thank you!**

Fundraising for Assistive Technology

Assistive technology and adaptive equipment are often great solutions that enable people with limitations to continue carrying out needed jobs on the farm. Examples of technology include extra steps or handholds on a tractor, tools that can be used with one hand, or even a Gator or ATV to access fields for someone who has difficulty with balance or endurance for walking long distances. The downside is that usually insurance or public money will not pay for the devices. The right solution may require a considerable investment depending on what kind or type of device is needed.

Usually funding for the equipment can be accomplished through the personal resources of the farmer or rancher, family contributions, the annual farm loan, or with assistance from vocational rehabilitation for people who qualify for services. Generally, if equipment is purchased for the farm business it can be written off as an expense at tax time. Also, sometimes the equipment can be considered medically necessary and taken as a deduction on taxes.

On occasion it is necessary for an individual or family to consider fundraising as a means of purchasing needed technology. Most of us have contributed at one time or another to these type of campaigns, and they are usually received well within communities. But how do you start a fundraising effort?

If you are an individual or family member needing assistive technology it may be helpful to approach a church, fraternal, or civic organization within your community to sponsor the fundraising effort. They may be willing to sponsor a bake sale, bazaar, pancake breakfast or similar activity that can help raise funds for your cause. Usually organizations are already familiar with this type of fund-



raising. The effort can be undertaken at very low cost by their volunteers.

If you have a willing sponsor that has no experience in fundraising but is willing to assist, here are some general guidelines that can help take some of the mystery out of fundraising.

- Ask: what is the funding need? Be specific.

The best fundraising efforts are done from a grassroots level and for an achievable purpose.

- Work with your supporter on a plan to achieve the goal.
- Include a timeline on when things should be accomplished.
- Be available (or another family member) to answer questions and make appearances at events on your behalf.

If your sponsor wishes to create a donor letter campaign, these are a few things to keep in mind when creating the letter:

- Think about why you are writing the letter?

- Who is the audience you are writing to?.
- Write the letter so it reads well out loud.
- Include why the donation is needed and what it will be used for.
- Let them know what an impact their donation will have (i.e. be able to continue working, or living independently).
- Use short paragraphs and simple concise descriptions.
- If your sponsor is a non-profit entity that can accept charitable contributions, check if the donor can get a tax exemption for their gift.

The best fundraising efforts are done from a grassroots level and for a solid achievable purpose. It is often necessary to combine several types of resources to purchase something expensive like a manlift for a tractor, such as funding from private charities, individual donations, loans, vocational rehabilitation, and whatever you can personally afford out of pocket.

It can be a difficult decision to go to ones community for assistance. But it is also important to remember that asking for assistance is not admitting defeat, but a greater realization that there are people willing to help donate time and money to the cause. In the long run an entire community benefits when its members are working to sustain themselves and their family or living as independently as possible within their own homes.

Staff at Easter Seals Colorado AgrAbility are also willing to consult with you or your sponsor on planning a fundraising effort. Please feel free to contact us!

Being Summer Weather Wise: Stay Safe from Lightning Strikes



Outdoor activities account for many injuries and deaths from lightning strikes each year. Last year in Colorado, 20 people were struck by lightning, including folks working in agriculture. Being safe during a lightning storm can make the difference between life and death.

So, what should you do if you catch yourself out in the open and spot lightning? First, use the 30/30 safety rule: count the number of seconds until you hear thunder, divide the number of seconds by five—this equals the approximate distance in miles the lightning is away. If the time between the lightning flash and the sound of thunder is 30 seconds or less, **seek**

shelter! Safer areas to seek shelter can be in a fully enclosed vehicle with windows completely rolled up, or inside large permanent buildings. Don't use electrical devices while inside. Avoid seeking shelter in small structures or near metallic objects such as fences or gates. Avoid trees, water, and open fields. If you are out in an open area and immediate shelter is not available, then crouch down with feet together and hands over your ears. Do not resume out-

"If you can see it- flee it! If you can hear it-clear it"

door activities until after 30 minutes after the last audible thunder.

In the unfortunate event of being with someone struck by lightning— if the person is breathing, call 911 or your local emergency number and return to the victim. If the person is not breathing, have someone call the emergency number for you, and begin rescue breathing. If the person has no pulse, begin CPR. (classes in CPR are available from the American Red Cross or American Heart Association).

Stay safe this summer as the monsoon season is upon us and remember this handy slogan about lightning: "If you can see it-flee it; If you can hear it-clear it."

Don't let the heat get you down!

Summer time is here! While farmers and ranchers are definitely thinking about irrigating corn, hay, and preventing effects of the drought, they may not realize they are at greater risk for illnesses from dehydration and heat. Here are some reminders to prevent the heat from getting you down:

- Drink more water! Maintaining water balance is critical to health.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks! These act to further dehydrate the body.
- Eat juicy fruits like watermelon and apples!
- Eat vegetables that contain water and nutrients like celery, corn, and cucumbers
- Alcohol increases the likelihood of dehydration.
- Wear loose fitting clothing that is

light in color.

- Avoid the outdoors during the most extreme heat of the day if at all possible.
- The older you are, the greater the risks for dehydration and heat illness.

Recognize the signs and symptoms of heat related illnesses:

- Heat cramps-heavy sweating and painful spasms usually in the leg or abdomen muscles.
- Heat exhaustion— weakness, cold, pale, and clammy skin. Pulse becomes thready. Fainting and vomiting. Stop what you are doing, get inside and cool off, and replace fluids.
- Heat Stroke— accompanied by high body temperature (106 degrees or higher) along with hot

dry skin and a rapid strong pulse. Unconsciousness is possible. You need **immediate** medical attention!

What is the meaning of the heat index? It is like the opposite of "wind chill". The heat index combines the effects of heat and humidity.

- 80-90 degrees: sunstroke, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion **possible** with prolonged exposure and physical activity.
- 105 to 130 degrees: Sunstroke, heat cramps or heat exhaustion **likely**. Heat stroke is **possible** with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
- 130 degrees or higher: Heatstroke **highly likely** with continued exposure.



Creating solutions, changing lives.

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

**Strengthening our community one
life at a time...**

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Consider a tax deductible donation to Colorado AgrAbility

Your donation helps support the activities of the Colorado AgrAbility project and the purchase of assistive technology for farmers and ranchers with disabilities. Easter Seals Colorado is a 501 c 3 charitable organization, and your gift is tax deductible. For more information or to make a donation, please contact:

Carla Wilhite
Project Coordinator
5755 W. Alameda Ave.
Lakewood, CO. 80226
Phone: 303-937-7713 x.224
Toll-Free: 800-335-2598 x. 224

Make checks payable to:
Easter Seals Colorado AgrAbility Project.

Easter Seals Walk-a-Thon

Easter Seals is hosting a walk-a-thon on Sunday July 28 at Washington Park in Denver, Colorado. Walkers will raise money for Easter Seals Programs. Staff from Colorado AgrAbility will be walking to raise money for the AgrAbility Project. If you would like to sponsor one of the staff members to walk, please contact us! Or, if you would like to walk with us, even better!!

Used Equipment Available

We keep our eyes open for items donated to Easter Seals that may be useful to farming and ranching families. Currently we have:

- Standing table
- Old steel Braun wheelchair lift for a Van, hydraulic needs repair

- Extra step for a John Deere tractor.

If you are interested in these items, call Carla toll-free at 1-800-335-2598.

Would you like to refer someone to AgrAbility?

Contact information:

Dr. Bob Fetsch at Cooperative Extension : 970-491-5648 -or-

Carla Wilhite at Easter Seals: 303-937-7713 x.224 or toll-free at: 1-800-335-2598.

