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**Special points of Interest:**

- AgrAbility promotes success in agriculture for people with disabilities.
- AgrAbility provides "on the farm" visits at no charge to the family.
- We make assistive technology recommendations to live and work more productively.
- We provide information on resources for peer support.

# THE BALING WIRE

## *Multiple Sclerosis and You*



Multiple Sclerosis affects 1 out of 650 Coloradoans according to the 2003 statistics of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Because many of our clients at AgrAbility are dealing with Multiple Sclerosis or have a family member who is, we are devoting our feature section to give our readers information and resources.

For information on this disease, we contacted Melinda Jerger, Program Coordinator at the National MS Society, Colorado Chapter. First, MS (Multiple Sclerosis) is defined as a chronic disabling disease, which affects the central nervous system. It is classified as autoimmune because the body attacks the myelin sheath, the mate-

rial surrounding nerves. Two basic types of MS exist: Relapsing/Remitting and Progressive.

Relapsing/Remitting MS is characterized by periods of partial or total remission, which may last months or even years, while progressive MS means the disease may worsen steadily from the onset or may become progressive after a relapsing-remitting course.

Melinda explains that symptoms vary from person to person. MS is twice as likely to occur in women than men and typical age onset is between 20-50 years. Some of the symptoms include: fatigue, numbness or tingling in arms and legs, blurred vision, gait pain, vertigo, or some muscle spasticity. If

you or someone you know displays several of these symptoms seeing your doctor and getting the diagnosis confirmed by a neurologist is pivotal. The sooner a diagnosis is made, the sooner treatment can begin.

According to Melinda, many individuals with MS are being offered hope through medications. These include the commonly referred to ABC drugs: Avonex, Betaseron and Copaxone. Each drug has made significant impact to modify the progression of MS or minimize frequency of symptoms. Other treatments include the use of physical therapy, exercise, vocational and cognitive rehabilitation, attention to diet, adequate rest and

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## *Kickin' Up Our Heels At The Ball!*

What a Ball we had at the Southern Colorado Livestock Association Annual Banquet and Dinner/Dance on November 8th in Trinidad, Colorado. Southern Colorado Livestock Association's Kimmi Lewis sponsored the

dinner. The Chamber of Commerce also got involved in coordinating the event. Festivities were held at the Mitchell Museum in downtown Trinidad. The food was delicious, the band lively and the silent auction was spec-

tacular. Silent auction items included Western Art and various donated goodies.

About two thousand five hundred dollars was raised from the ball for Colorado

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# AgrAbility Baling Wire

## MS

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counseling. These options can significantly help one maintain independence and quality of life. The media and celebrities advertise alternative treatments for multiple sclerosis, but Jerger cautions people to be reserved and carefully evaluate the so-called "miracle cures" before expending energy and resources.

### Where is My Advocate?

Multiple Sclerosis can mean reduced income, higher medical costs and transportation challenges. For people in rural areas, these difficulties can be magnified by distance as the resources available to people with MS are typically found in larger cities. People who rely on agricultural income are faced with rethinking how

they approach their livelihood.

Are there resources available that can help meet these challenges? Yes. The Colorado AgrAbility Project can and has served as a free, non-profit advocate in finding equipment resources, giving on-site assessments and making recommendations for modifying daily routines at home and on work sites. Solutions range from equipment modifications such as power scooters, lever handles for doors and modified tractor steps to strategies that take advantage of the time in a day when a person with MS might have more energy and allowing for periods of rest.

Finally, Melinda tells us the best advice she could give anyone living with MS is to not give up on having a normal life. As with any disability, modifications need to be made and time is

necessary to adjust, but people with MS can have normal lives and experience a life filled with all the activities they enjoy such as recreation, family and work pursuits.

-Michelle Zorack, Project Coordinator

To contact the AgrAbility project please call 1-800-335-2598 x 233 or x224.

Special thanks to Melinda Jerger and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS).

For information about NMSS programs and resources, please contact the MS Society office closest to you or log on to the MS Society website for Colorado @ [www.fightmscolorado.org](http://www.fightmscolorado.org).



### *The following is a list of Multiple Sclerosis Offices in Colorado:*

#### Colorado Chapter Office

700 Broadway Suite 808  
1-800-344-4867  
(303) 831-0700

#### Southwest Colorado MS Society

736 Animas View Drive  
Durango, CO 81301  
(970) 247-2506

#### Northern Office

424 Pine #104  
Ft. Collins, CO 80524  
1-800-356-9619

#### Southern Office

803 W. 4th St, Suite G  
Pueblo, CO 1003  
1-800-383-6120  
(719) 545-8663

#### Western Slope Office

743 Horizon Court #107  
Grand Junction, CO 81506  
1-800-371-2667  
Local (970) 241-9327



## Kickin'

(Continued from page 1)

AgrAbility's Assistive Technologies program. Every penny will be spent on assistive technology for Colorado ranchers and farmers, to help them have the best chance of continuing the way of

life they know and love—agriculture!

We would like to thank all who came out to meet us. A heart-felt thanks is in order for all who donated money or items for the auction, as well as those who participated in the silent auction.

Special Thanks to Kimmi Lewis, Kim Pacheco and the entire group who volunteered and coordinated the event!!! AgrAbility serves Colorado better because of you!





## Technology Helps!



Individuals with limited mobility may have trouble safely climbing onto and off of farm equipment. Limited mobility can be caused by lower body weakness, amputations, gait irregularity, balance difficulties, low grip strength, arthritis, or other medical problems. Given the variety of sizes and configurations of tractors, there are no "universal" steps and hand holds, or plans for either. However, there are companies that do offer prefabricated additional steps and hand holds for different tractor models. These include John Deere, K & M Manufacturing, and M.D. Products. The contact information for these companies is listed at the end of this article.

If a commercial supplier of steps and hand holds for your model tractor does not exist and the equipment needs to be fabricated locally, be sure that the fabricator follows the American National Standards Institute and/or American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ANSI/ASAE) minimum standards for access and egress (ASAE Standards, S318.14, Section 8). Check with your library for a copy of the ASAE Standards. Individual copies of just the access/egress section are available from: ASAE Order Department, 2950 Niles Road, St. Joseph, MI 49085-9659 USA E-mail: [martin@asae.org](mailto:martin@asae.org), Phone: 616-429-0300 Fax: 616-429-3852. These standards are in place to make sure that any custom fabricated steps or hand holds will be safe to use and constructed in such a way that they are easy for you to use. In addition to the safety standards provided by ANSI/ASAE the list below includes other important items to consider during the design and fabrication of your steps or hand holds to make sure that your steps and hand holds will be safe and easy to use.

- Steps and hand holds should be placed to assist the operator who has a disability to easily and safely mount and dismount the tractor without losing balance or creating a secondary injury.
- Steps should be made of steel with non-skid, non-slip tread materials that can be purchased from steel and welding supply companies.
- Hand holds should be fabricated and secured in a manner that allows the user to maintain continuous contact with them during mounting and dismounting the tractor.
- Hand holds and steps should be placed to maintain a clear pathway for entering and exiting the tractor.

- Hand holds and steps should be welded or bolted to the tractor frame or existing steps. When possible, avoid adding or attaching steps or handholds to fenders or sheet metal.
- Hand holds and steps should be created in such a way that they do not interfere with tractor function or future value, such as obstructing valves or controls or interfering with the clearance (ground or row) of the tractor.

If steps and hand holds are created safely and used correctly they can greatly increase the ability for somebody to gain access to a piece of equipment. Contact Michelle Zorack or Jason Beck at Colorado AgrAbility if you would like more information about adding additional steps or hand holds to your tractor or other equipment.

### Deere & Company

One John Deere Place  
Moline, IL (USA) 61265  
1-800-503-3373  
[www.deere.com](http://www.deere.com)

### K & M Manufacturing

308 NW 2nd St  
Renville, MN 56284  
1-800-328-1752

### M. D. Products, Inc.

1998 215<sup>th</sup> Street  
Humbolt, IA 50548.  
Phone: 515-332-3550  
Fax: 515-332-3770  
[www.md-products.com](http://www.md-products.com)

Deere & Co. fabricates a line of "Step-Kits" with integrated hand holds that is available for their 10-55 Series Row Crop Tractors. Ask your local dealer about the "Dress up a Deere Friend" brochure.

K & M fabricates a line of bolt-on added steps and hand holds for some models of John Deere and Case/IH tractors.

M. D. fabricates a line of add-on steps for John Deere Model 7000 and 8000 Series tractors and also sells individual steps.





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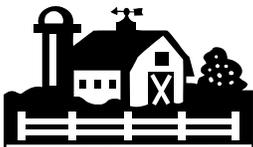
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Fax: 303-233-1028



[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 wheel-chairs
- 1 support bed rail
- Crutches
- Walkers
- 3 bed support rails
- Canes
- Walker bags

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.

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