



# THE BALING WIRE

Fall 2006 Edition

Promoting Independence in  
Agriculture



Look for our winter workshops hosted at cities near you!

This year the workshops will include information about AgrAbility & managing back injury

The workshops will also highlight equipment designed to make your farm and ranch work easier and more efficient.

Please call Dr. Bob Fetsch at 970-491-5648 for more information!

## Ranching with Back Pain

Agriculture has long been rooted in family. Many families live and work the land for generations, often on the same farm or ranch as their relatives before them. It isn't uncommon to see mothers and fathers working land and livestock with their children and their grandchildren; it is part of what makes farming and ranching much more than just a business. However, aging, injury, illness and disability often present challenges to staying on the farm, often leaving family members with the challenging task of caring for loved ones while they stay in their home and in agriculture.

Whitewater, CO rancher Don Lumbardy is one of the many Colorado farmers and ranchers who have faced this issue first hand. Lumbardy, whose family has deep roots in agriculture, is the second generation to live on his current operation, where his mother, Mozelle, also resides.

According to Lumbardy, in March of 2004, it was business as usual on his place as he was gathering his sheep together to take them to a shearer. But the day took an upsetting turn when Don's mother suffered a stroke. The stroke was "extremely debilitating," related Don. Mozelle lost much of her speech and mobility, and the stroke caused her to remain in the hospital for about a month and a half for recovery and therapy.



Don and AgrAbility staff looking for ways to help Mozelle get around the ranch.

However, one physical therapist not only provided help in the hospital but also gave the Lumbardys assistance for the future with a referral to a group that had the resources to aid Don and Mozelle once they returned home. The therapist had previously attended a workshop presented by Colorado AgrAbility, a joint

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# AgrAbility Baling Wire



venture between the USDA, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, and Easter Seals Colorado, that works to promote independence in agriculture by helping farm and ranch families who are facing challenges due to disability. The organization does this by providing education, workshops, on-site evaluations and assistance to help its clients stay in the agriculture business.

When Mozelle was allowed to leave the hospital, Don called AgrAbility to find out what kind of assistance would be available for his mother. “It took off from there,” he said. “They made several trips over [to the Western Slope]...I got a lot of advice and a lot of resources,” he added.

The organization was able to provide Mozelle with an older electric scooter that was donated to them to get around her property, as well as information on how to incorporate physical therapy into gardening and contact information for a talking book library. The organization also provided blueprints for a wheelchair ramp.



Don deciding where to put in a wheelchair ramp for his mom.

According to Jason Beck, Colorado AgrAbility Project Coordinator, Don was very focused on working with the group to help his mother be able to live her life in agriculture, as she had before. AgrAbility representatives came up with solutions to make this happen. “He stressed it over and over again that he just wanted his mom to be part of the ranch,” Beck related.

However, while helping Mozelle, it became apparent that Don himself could benefit from the organization. According to Beck, when the AgrAbility representatives were on-site to help Mozelle, who has since recovered her speech, they noticed Don was protecting his back. “I had a back injury years ago. I was very hesitant, but when they were here, I asked them to show me what they could do to help modify my equipment,” Don related.



Replacement tractor seat.

The organization was able to modify his tractor to make riding on it easier on his back, including a new seat that had a good suspension system in it, which Don says has worked very well.

According to AgrAbility, the hesitancy to ask for help is common in the agriculture industry, which is known to include people with a very hardy and independent spirit. However, the organization encourages anyone who faces challenges from an injury illness or disability to use the services in order to stay productive and independent on their farms or ranches.



The group can help those in agriculture who face any issue from back injury to multiple sclerosis, and representatives will also try to find financial assistance to make their recommendations a possibility. Beck stresses it is especially important to take care of yourself if you are caring for others. “If you’re a caretaker of a family member, it is also important to watch out for yourself. What happens to you can affect your family.”

As a caretaker and a client, Don Lumbardy has become a supporter of AgrAbility, and says he would encourage people to contact the organization and find out what it can do for you. “The engineering ideas were really spectacular. They certainly have some unique engineering designs on equipment that you would never think of,” adding that he has seen more equipment offered by AgrAbility that he would like to try out. “Just the knowledge that the expertise is there is good. I would tell people never to hesitate to call,” Don related.

If you or someone you know has difficulty farming or ranching due to a back injury or any other injury or disability, please call AgrAbility Project Coordinator, Jason Beck, at 1-877-279-1638 x224 for more information.

## Preventing Back Injuries

Farm work is hard work, and anyone who has done this type of work feels the results. Farmers and ranchers get backaches and pains in the shoulders, arms, and hands more than any other health problem. A third of the injuries that cause them to miss work are sprains and strains, and a quarter is back injuries. These are also the most common causes of disability. The technical term for these sprains and strains is “work-related musculoskeletal disorders” (WMSDs). Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) are:

- The leading cause of disability for people in their working years
- Caused by chronic exposure to these physical stresses like lifting, bending, twisting, squatting, and vibrating equipment

Good body mechanics are defined as maintaining proper body alignment during activities. Employing correct body mechanics will help reduce unnecessary stress to your body and in turn decrease risk of injury. When lifting safely it is important to:

1. Maintain the normal curves of your back – bend the knees and keep your back straight.
2. Maintain a wide base of support to improve your stability.
3. Keep objects you are lifting close to your body.
4. Minimize twisting – pivot your feet or move your entire body to change directions to decrease stress to your back.
5. Lift with your legs, utilizing legs and large muscles will diminish the workload to the back.
6. Push an object (vs. pulling).
7. When lifting tighten your stomach muscles to reduce the strain on your back.

## COLORADO AGRABILITY PROJECT



*Promoting Independence in Agriculture*

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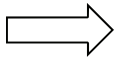
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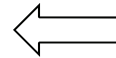
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[www.hdfs.cahs.colostate.edu/AgrAbility//agrability.htm](http://www.hdfs.cahs.colostate.edu/AgrAbility//agrability.htm)



### **AgrAbility is Coming to a City Near You!**

Each winter AgrAbility provides 15 winter workshops in 8 cities. This year's morning workshops for farm and ranch families will be on "Managing Back Problems and Injuries, and AgrAbility." Below is a list of the dates and places for the educational workshops. Times have yet to be announced for some sessions.

- ⇒ **Monte Vista: Jan. 23**, San Luis Valley Information Center at 947 1st Ave., with Marvin Reynolds, (719) 852-7381.
- ⇒ **Greeley: Jan. 25, 10:30-noon**, Greeley Farm Show Event Center room C, with Ernie Marx, (970) 498-6003.
- ⇒ **Trinidad: Jan. 30**, Trinidad Junior College Sullivan Student Center at 600 Prospect Ave., with Dean Oatman, (719) 846-6881.
- ⇒ **Aurora: Feb. 1**, Arapahoe County Fairgrounds at 25690 E. Quincy Ave., with Dale Edwards (303)738-7907.
- ⇒ **Yuma: Feb. 6**, First Presbyterian Church at 110 W. 4th Ave., with Dennis Kaan, (970) 345-2287.
- ⇒ **Meeker: Feb. 20**, Fairgrounds Complex at 779 Sulphur Creek Road, with Bill Eckstrom, (970) 878-9490.
- ⇒ **Delta: Feb. 22, 11:15-noon**, Delta/Montrose Area Vocational Tech Center at 1765 U.S. Hwy. 50, with Wayne Cooley, (970) 874-2195.