

## *Client Story: Farmer Gets a Real Lift*

*written by Erich Kirshner*

Thanks to what may be the most elaborate lift of its kind, Yuma, Colorado farmer Dennis Baucke is grounded no longer.

Baucke, 53, was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) 20 years ago. Over the years the disease's progression has weakened his muscles, especially the muscles in his legs. Eventually it meant that on bad days, when his legs were especially weak, getting into his Ford F250 truck, tractor and combine could only be accomplished with help from family members or friends.

Thanks to some great technology and to a public/private

partnership, Baucke no longer has to rely on others to get his work done. The Colorado AgrAbility Project, a partnership through Easter Seals Colorado and Colorado State University, teamed up with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) within the Colorado Department of Human Services to ensure Baucke got the help he needed.

An analysis of Baucke's abilities by AgrAbility found that a Flatbed Lift, manufactured by Life Essentials of Brookston, Indiana, would be the

ticket for Baucke. AgrAbility Case Manager Vince Luke compares the lift to a cherry picker. "You can control not just the up and down, but also the back and forth and the side-to-side movements. This makes it a very versatile lift," Luke explained.

"My sons will love not having to babysit me anymore," Baucke said. "I can get in and out of the tractor by myself, which is a 300 percent improvement."

In addition to using the lift to get in vehicles, Baucke

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## *About Colorado AgrAbility Project*

The Colorado AgrAbility Project is a partnership between Colorado State University Extension and Easter Seals Colorado funded by a grant from the USDA.

- History: The AgrAbility Project was written into the 1990 Farm Bill. Currently 22 states offer this project.
- Mission: Promote Independence in Agriculture.
- Serve: Any farmer, rancher, or family member who has a disability, injury, or illness who has difficulty with activities in the home or on the farm/ranch and lives within the state of Colorado.
- Provide: On-site assessments from an occupational therapist, make recommendations for assistive technology, home modifications and equipment adaptations, research funding sources, offer peer support through our Neighbor-to-Neighbor Support Program, and provide referrals to other professionals that can help with physical, emotional, and mental health needs.
- **All services from Colorado AgrAbility Project are free of cost!**

## *Cont. Farmer Gets a Real Lift*

can also maintain equipment again because of the lift. The lift also has a hook that connects to a special attachment on his electric wheelchair. This makes it possible to use the lift like a crane to place the chair in a compartment on the bed of the pickup so it can go everywhere Baucke drives.

Baucke learned about AgrAbility at a Yuma workshop the organization sponsored to educate farmers and ranchers about the program's focus on helping agricultural workers with disabilities stay on the job.

AgrAbility referred Baucke to DVR to see if assistance could be provided to purchase the flatbed lift. DVR helps individuals with disabilities obtain and maintain employment. This was a great fit for Baucke as he wished to continue as a farmer but was limited by his disability. "Baucke's case was really about helping a person return to his passion and to continue to provide for his family," Andrew Winders, rehabilitation counselor with DVR, said.



## *PARTNERS Program*

As mentioned in the spring newsletter, the PARTNERS Program provides assistance to AgrAbility clients in the form of technology solutions or adaptations to existing equipment which allows farmers and ranchers to more easily live and work with a condition, illness, or injury. Individuals can apply for up to \$1000 toward the cost of the solution and have the option to payback any amount they were awarded.

Colorado AgrAbility is very fortunate to offer this program which is unique from most other state AgrAbility projects. Thank you Spalding Community Foundation for your generous renewal donation which will help provide assistance for another 20-30 agricultural producers and their families in Colorado.

If you would like to get more information about PARTNERS Program or are interested in making a donation please contact Colorado AgrAbility 303-937-7713 x224.

### **Thank you**

**Spalding  
Community  
Foundation  
and  
National  
Cattlemen's  
Beef  
Association**

## *More Project Support*

Another organization that we would like to draw attention to is the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. For the past few years this organization has held an annual golf tournament with proceeds going to three non-profit organizations.

Colorado AgrAbility has been fortunate to be one of these chosen few organizations. AgrAbility is very appreciative of their support, generosity and great golfing spirit.

Thank you National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

## Winter Workshops— Coming to your area Nov-Feb

**What:** Plan now to attend this free workshop. It's for farmers and ranchers and their family members with chronic conditions, injuries, or disabilities who want to continue or start farming/ ranching.

The workshop is also for professionals who work with agricultural individuals and families with disabilities, e.g. Extension Agents, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, County Health Nurses, Chiropractors, home health care providers, etc.

Workshops are from 9- noon with a free lunch provided!



**Topics:** -What is AgrAbility and who is it for?

-What can ranch/ farm families get from AgrAbility?

-Explore the Toolbox with over 500 equipment modifications for farmers and ranchers and learn about AgrAbility resources

-Identify agricultural stressors and learn tips on how to balance your roles and tasks

-Discuss low vision and adaptations that are available to assist with visual difficulties as well as other medical conditions

-Brainstorm ways that could solve your farming/ ranching difficulties

### When/Where:

- Durango: Tuesday November 3, 2009 (Noon to 1:00 p.m. for professionals only) Mercy Regional Medical Center Conference Room A at 1010 Three Springs Blvd. with Myoung Fry (970) 764-3340.
- Cortez: Wednesday November 4, 2009 Cortez Public Library at 202 N. Park St. with Tom Hooten (970) 565-3123.
- Pagosa Springs: Thursday November 5, 2009 Archuleta County Fair Grounds at 344 Hwy. 84 with Bill Nobles (970) 264-5931 X 2388.
- Meeker: Wednesday January 20, 2010, Meeker Extension Office at 779 Sulphur Creek Road with Bill Ekstrom (970) 878-9490.
- Walden: Thursday January 21, 2010, North Park Medical Center at 350 McKinley Street with Debbie Alpe (970) 723-4298.
- Monte Vista: Tuesday January 26, 2010 San Luis Valley Information Center at 947 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. with Eleanor West (719) 852-7381.
- Trinidad: Wednesday January 27, 2010 Trinidad Junior College Sullivan Student Center at 600 Prospect Ave. with Dean Oatman (719) 846-6881.
- Pueblo: Thursday January 28, 2010 Pueblo Zoo at 3455 Nuckolis Avenue with Marvin Reynolds (719) 583-6566.
- Aurora: Wednesday February 10, Arapahoe County Fairgrounds at 25690 East Quincy Avenue with Dale Edwards (303) 738-7907.
- Yuma: Thursday February 11, First Presbyterian Church at 110 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. with Dennis Kaan (970) 345-2287.
- Sterling: Friday February 12, Logan County Extension Office at 508 South 10<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1 with Bruce Bosley (970) 522-3200, ext. 285.

### PRE-REGISTER

Please register no later than one week prior to the workshop, so we can provide you with a free box lunch. If fewer than 5 people pre-register, it may be canceled. If so, we will attempt to call you, or you can call us to confirm that the workshop will be held.

For more information contact: Bob Fetsch - (970) 491-5648, [fetsch@cahs.colostate.edu](mailto:fetsch@cahs.colostate.edu), or his assistant at (970) 491-5889.

# Rehabilitating the CO Farmer & Rancher Workshop— Recap

On June 26-27, 2009 Colorado AgrAbility hosted a workshop in Ft. Collins, CO at CSU's working Agricultural Research Development and Education Center (ARDEC). Twenty-four participants attended this 15 contact hour course that was pre-approved for continuing education from American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). Attendees were from a broad range of healthcare and employment specialists.

Carla Wilhite, OTR/L, asst. professor at Univ. of North Dakota— Casper College was the guest speaker, who taught about the OT process and how to look at all contexts of a person.



Educational experience was split between classroom and hands-on learning. AgrAbility staff presented topics related to farm culture; introduction to agriculture; farm/ ranch environments and tasks; farm site assessment, accessibility, and assistive technology; Colorado DVR; and resources.



Hands-on learning at the state-of-the-art cattle handling facility designed by Dr. Temple Grandin



Participants also learned about farm machinery, hitching devices, accessibility options into tractors and combines, and safety precautions.



ARDEC staff also educated participants on crop irrigation systems including: gated pipe, siphon tube, lateral pivot and center pivot.

# An Organized Workshop=A Safer Workshop

By Rachel Powell, OTS

In the workshop, farmers and ranchers spend countless waking hours creating, fixing, and improving agricultural equipment. Many farmers and ranchers with conditions such as low vision, paralysis, or back pain encounter extra challenges and difficulties that increase the risk of injury which keep them from working in their shop.

**Good shop organization can be key to improving efficiency throughout the day allowing shop time to be well spent.**

## Benefits of an Organized Shop:

1. Decrease the amount of time searching for tools
2. Move around the shop with ease
3. Improve overall safety

### Are you finding it difficult to get around the shop?

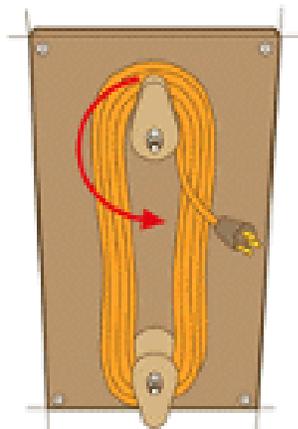
- Clear away the junk and create clear access lanes to make it easier for someone using a cane, walker, or wheelchair to maneuver around the shop.

### Are you constantly tripping over long cords and hoses?

- Store air hoses and long cords on reels mounted to the wall.

### Do you have difficulty differentiating the pliers from the wrenches?

- Color-code similar tools by wrapping the handle with brightly colored tape.



\*extension cord rack photo from woodmagazine.com



### Do you have tools such as wrenches, screwdrivers, and pliers that get lost in the clutter of drawers?

- Create a place for each tool by outlining their shapes with bright paint and hang them from a pegboard mounted on the wall.

- Right after using the tool, or before moving on to the next project, replace the tool to its designated spot.

\*tool outline photo from neverlosetools.com

### Are you having a hard time seeing the project you are working on?

- Decrease the glare by putting appropriate covers on all bare light bulbs. Use a sheer curtain to filter outside light.

- Use gooseneck lamps or tools with built-in LED lights to increase visibility for specific tasks. Screwdrivers, drills, and tweezers can all be purchased with these add-ons.

\*screwdriver light photo from leevalley.com



## Colorado AgrAbility Project

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We're on the Web!!

<http://www.agrability.cahs.colostate.edu/>

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Colorado  
State  
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Extension



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