



Baling Wire

Client Story: Farmer gets Assistance with Accessibility

After a back injury, persistent pain and leg weakness made difficulties for Byers, Colorado farmer Nancy Meier.

Meier suffered an injury to the lumbar area of her back from a non-farm related incident. Even after endless physician visits and multiple therapy appointments, the pain limited how Meier was able to participate in work and daily skills.

Colorado AgrAbility staff met Meier and through grants was able to help her make her environment more accessible

by removing physical barriers on her therapy pool and entrance into her home.

Meier purchased a therapy pool so that she could continue to perform daily water therapy which gives her the ability to do other tasks on the farm and in the home. Lifting the heavy pool cover on and off each time she wanted to do therapy was causing more pain to Meier. She enlisted the help of a local fabricator and a plan was

created so that an electric wench could lift and stow the cover with the touch of a button. Colorado AgrAbility assisted with covering the cost of materials and labor from a Sodexo/National Easter Seals Rural Outreach mini grant.

Another environmental barrier for Meier was getting in and out of her own home. Steep concrete stairs created pain with each step and made Meier feel like a prisoner in her

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We're back...Grant funded for the next 4 years!

Colorado AgrAbility Project is proud to announce that funding has been awarded for the next four years from the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture to provide education, assistance, and networking at no cost for Colorado farmers, ranchers and family members with disabilities.

Colorado AgrAbility has been providing these serves

for the past 12 years. The mission is to promote independence in agriculture.

Services for farmers and ranchers include: on-site assessments from an occupational therapist; recommendations for assistive technology, home modifications, and equipment adaptations; explore funding sources;

offer peer support; and provide referrals to other professionals that can help with physical, emotional and mental health needs.

Colorado AgrAbility is a partnership between Colorado State University and Goodwill Industries of Denver.

(See page 2 for more information on new partner)

Cont. Client Story

own home. Colorado AgrAbility utilized their PARTNERS Program; a funding opportunity created from donations, and helped defray costs associated with building a sturdy ramp. Now Meier can enter or exit her home without aggravating pain.

Outgoing and always on the move, Meier is still learning how to slow down and listen to her body so that she can complete tasks that she feels are important and that she has the ability

to do herself like making meals for the family or doing laundry in her adapted washer/dryer. Another skill she has learned is how to modify tasks like feeding calves with several small buckets and using a golf cart to drive to the barns instead of walking. Meier's attitude of "just doing what you can" and willingness to change her environment has allowed her to keep participating in work on the farm and in the home.



Goodwill AgrAbility Project Keeps Farmers Working in Colorado

By Jeni Anderson, Goodwill Industries of Denver – Traditional and Social Media Specialist

[DENVER, CO] – In the United States, farmers and ranchers rank second among laborers with disabilities from work-related injuries. In conjunction with Colorado State University Extension, the Colorado AgrAbility Project has joined Goodwill Industries of Denver to provide assistance, education and equipment solutions to families who have difficulties from injuries, illnesses or medical conditions.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), more than 200,000 farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers acquire occupational injuries each year that limit their ability to perform essential work tasks. In response to these statistics, the AgrAbility Project was created to help individuals with disabilities and their families who are engaged in production agriculture to maintain optimal production and experience enhanced quality of life.

"Goodwill is dedicated to supporting our community through programs that reach out to the most underserved populations, so the AgrAbility project is a perfect addition to our existing programs," said Goodwill Industries of Denver Interim CEO George Bogdeweicz. "We are thrilled to welcome this highly skilled team to our organization."

Goodwill Industries of Denver joins 22 local providers across the United States to provide services to farmers and ranchers with disabilities as part of the USDA's national AgrAbility program.

About Goodwill Industries of Denver:

Goodwill Industries of Denver seeks to reverse the cycle of poverty for at-risk youth, struggling families and individuals with disabilities. When you shop or donate at Goodwill thrift stores, you help create opportunities for over 30,000 individuals each year to change their lives, while building a strong, sustainable community. Discover the good at www.goodwilldenver.org.



Professionals' Workshop

Colorado AgrAbility will be hosting the 4th Annual Professionals' Workshop on July 9-10, 2010.

Rehabilitating the Colorado Farmer & Rancher workshop is a two day educational presentation and hands-on demonstration for healthcare professionals, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, extension agents, rural physicians and case managers, and others who work with agricultural producers.

The goal is to promote an understanding of the vocation and culture of farming and ranching to assist Colorado producers who have sustained an injury, illness, or medical condition return to farming and ranching.

This course has been approved by the American Occupational Therapy Association for 1.5 continuing education units.



Cost

\$175 registration fee for professionals and \$75 fee for students, please register by July 2. Lunches both days are included.

Where

Colorado State University's **ARDEC** facility: 4616 NE Frontage Road Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Directions- From the intersection of Mulberry St. (HWY 14) and I-25, Drive north on I-25 to Exit 271 (Mountain Vista Drive), Proceed east to the East Frontage Road, Turn left onto East Frontage Road, Travel 3 miles north to County Rd. 56, Turn right on County Rd. 56, Turn left into Building #4053, Workshop is held in the classroom.

How to Register

Contact Jill Sump at 303-385-7636 or email at jsump@goodwilldenver.org

Agenda

Friday July 9, 2010 9:00 AM—5:00 PM

- Welcome, Introductions, and Pre-Evaluations
- Colorado AgrAbility Overview
- Farm Culture
- Introduction to Agriculture: Terms, Tasks, Seasons
- Farm Environments and Tasks
- Livestock Handling
- Case Study

Saturday July 10, 2010 8:00 AM—5:00 PM

- Farm/Ranch Operations and Equipment Tour
- Farm Site Assessment, Accessibility and Assistive Technology
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Resources
- Capstone: Case Studies Session
- Case Studies Group Reports



Colorado State-Wide Assistance

Throughout our travels and networking across Colorado we have met and learned about agencies or individuals who have specific skills to assist farmers and ranchers. Colorado AgrAbility does not endorse any of these agencies or individuals but merely is passing them along to let people know these exist.



- Massage to relieve chronic pain and fatigue
- Social security disability representation
- Assistance to help people continue farming and ranching
- Adaptive fishing

Massage to Relieve Chronic Pain and Fatigue

LaRetta Mallory-
970-302-9428 or Facebook
website: LaRetta's Special
Touch Therapeutic Massage
and Spa

LaRetta is a Licensed Practical Nurse and Certified Licensed Massage Therapist and willing to travel the state to teach farmers and ranchers how they can reduce chronic pain and fatigue.

Entry from Facebook page: "I have recently developed a training presentation that I have used myself to control my chronic pain and muscle fatigue without medication. I have been diagnosed and live with chronic pain related fibromyalgia for over ten years. Once I started my massage classes and learned the principle of acupressure

and its benefits during massage I started looking around me to see what my surroundings were and if they could help me apply acupressure to my trigger points. I now teach my massage clients their trigger points and give them suggestions of what and how to apply acupressure throughout the day to minimize

stressing their muscles. Tools we have in our surroundings include round door knobs, corners of the wall to sitting on the wheel well in the pick up and doing a back stretch. At night, stretches for in the shower to isometric stretches in bed to enhance relaxation for a good nights rest."

Social Security Disability Representation

Knouse Consulting-
800-336-5713,
info@disabilityreps.com

Judy Knouse and her husband Bob started Knouse Consulting over 5 years ago to provide disability claimants with ethical and competent representation for their

Social Security Disability cases. Knouse Consulting combines a thorough knowledge of the Social Security Administration rules and regulations with a solid understanding of medical and vocational issues as they relate to a claimant's physical

and mental limitations.

Consulting services include:
-Timely filling of required forms

-Summary and brief preparation for the Administrative Law Judge hearing

-Prepare you to testify at

your hearing

-Cross-examination of Social Security experts at your hearing

-Request that Social Security pay for medical evaluations

-Review of your benefit calculations for accuracy

Assistance to Continue Farming and Ranching

The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has offices throughout the state. Counselors there can develop a “plan of employment” that will enable a person to return to work of his or her choice after sustaining a disabling condition.

Most AgrAbility clients are

simply trying to keep doing what they’ve always done—working their land and livestock. For them, DVR’s Self-Employment Program is often beneficial. Counselors there focus on the unique needs of an owner/operator, considering the person’s physical barriers as well as the financial hurdles that are often

present.

Any plan developed will include ways to fund special equipment if necessary for the employment goal. Among other options, DVR does have the ability to provide funding directly.

AgrAbility has worked closely with DVR for years. Together we’re helping keep

Colorado farmers and ranchers, well, farming and ranching!

You can find your local DVR office by checking your local phone book, online at dvrco.com, or by contacting Vince or Jill at Colorado AgrAbility (please see our phone numbers on the back of this newsletter)

Adaptive Fishing

It may be difficult to believe sometimes, but there IS more to life than farming. How about fishing, for example? Sustaining a disabling condition doesn’t mean giving up on this activity any more than on farming.

The Arsenal Anglers Fishing Club consists of avid fishermen who have also made it a priority to increase the options available for fishing

enthusiasts who have a spinal cord injury (SCI). The Anglers host accessible fishing at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and also lead excursions on rivers in Colorado, Wyoming and Montana.

To facilitate people’s ability to fish after an SCI the group volunteers time to design and build customized fishing rods tailored to the specific needs of a particular

person’s injury. A recipient pays only for the materials involved, which can still be a significant cost. The organization encourages other fishing clubs to pool resources for their members’ use toward this end. If local funds aren’t available, Colorado AgrAbility may be able to find ways to defray one’s expense.

Fishing from a boat is also possible thanks to the

group’s design of wheelchair-accessible rafts. A larger version can float 2 people in wheelchairs, a couple friends and the group’s gear. In low water conditions, smaller, anchored, rafts can be used by an individual with standby assistance from friends who are wading.

For more information visit accessiblefishing.org or call Peter Pauwels at 720-298-0725.

The Arsenal Anglers’ river trips are already booked for this season. Contact the club if you’d like to participate next year, or if you’re interested in getting your own adapted fishing rod.



Photo: accessiblefishing.org

Help for Low Vision

Each year during the winter months we at Colorado AgrAbility present a series of workshops around the state for farm families and local professionals who work with them. The past season’s featured topic was “Living with Visual Impairments...” Participants learned about high-and low-tech equipment that can help with day-to-day activities for work or home use.

Below are some highlights!

Products shown or described are for illustrative purposes only. No endorsement is implied.

Tips *before* buying special equipment:

- Increase task illumination—shed a little more light on the subject!
- Decrease glare—glare can reduce visibility and increase eye fatigue.
- Increase contrast—work with dark objects against a light background, and vice-versa.

Low-Vision Resources

Howard Fund

Provides financial assistance to assist Colorado citizens who are blind to obtain employment and/or increase their independence.

303-866-4626

AGA Low Vision

Vision-equipment experts who provide in-home evaluation, consultation and product sales.

719-550-1547 or agalowvision.com

Audio Information Network of Colorado (AINC)

Makes printed materials like newspapers, magazines and newsletters accessible via television, telephone, pre-tuned receivers, and internet.

877-443-2001 or aincolorado.org

Examples of assistive technology:

Talking products:

Measuring devices can “speak” their information instead of the user having to view the readout. Tape measures, watches, scales and more can be found with this feature.



Photo: maxciaids.com

Lighted products:

Some hand tools are available with light sources built-in. Tool-specific lights, like the screwdriver light shown here, are available to fit your existing tools as well.

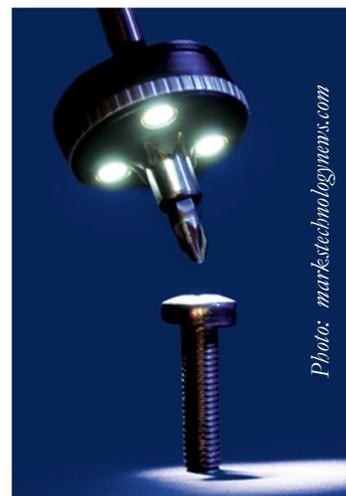


Photo: markttechnology.com

Tactile products:

These can add a line, bump or other shape you can feel to a smooth surface for identification or orientation. Spot n’ Line pens (pictured) allow you to draw your own marks, while self-sticking “bumps” are also available.



Photo: sightconnection.com

Stress Management Tips

By Brian Luebbering, OTS

Farming and ranching is unlike any other occupation for a number of reasons, one of which being the wide variety of challenges and difficulties often faced by those in agriculture. With these struggles often comes stress, a familiar feeling on many farms and ranches. Stress is a normal physical reaction from your body that occurs in an effort to protect you from a threat. Stress is not always a bad thing. In fact, stress can be helpful for motivating a person to do their best. However, when you constantly feel overwhelmed, it can be damaging to your health, mood, productivity, relationships, and quality of life.

How Much is Too Much?

The following are common signs for dangerous levels of stress:

Behavioral/Emotional Signs of Stress

- Irritability/Violence
- Withdrawal/Isolation
- Unable to relax
- Sadness/Depression
- Alcohol abuse
- Lack of concentration
- Reduced activities/Change in routine
- Feeling worthless, hopeless, or helpless



Image from interests.caes.uga.edu

Physical Signs of Stress

- Panic attacks
- Headaches
- Ulcers
- Frequent sickness
- Exhaustion/Sleep Disturbances
- Backaches
- Eating irregularities
- Nausea/Dizziness

Occupational therapists (OTs) believe involvement in meaningful activities is an important part of a healthy life, and therefore, work with individuals to gain the abilities needed to participate in these activities. Let the Colorado AgrAbility Project OT know if you would like more tips on coping with stress.

Tips for Dealing with Stress

Coping with the Loss of a Loved One

We all react differently to loss, but it is important to understand sadness is a usual and necessary emotion. Despite the difficulties, it is still possible for you to manage.

- Remember other people have been through it before
- Your friends want to help you, so keep in touch with them. Ask for help and look for comfort in the community.
- Keep to a routine. It may help to accomplish tasks, especially during long days or when you are feeling down.
- Live one day at a time, give yourself permission to grieve
- Your experience can help others

Re-evaluate Your Priorities

1. What needs to be done today? The next few days? Within a month? Perhaps never?
2. Make sure to do what is meaningful to you. Each morning, pick one thing you most want to accomplish that day and make it the priority.
3. Balance work and leisure. Something as simple as reading the paper is important for maintaining healthy levels of stress.
4. If you are anticipating a busy or hard day, build in time before and after your work for rest. It puts too much strain on your body and mind if you go full speed all the time.
5. Plan ahead. Make a to-do list and focus on the most important tasks. Highlight the finished tasks so that you can focus on what you accomplished rather than what needs to be done.

If you or someone you know is experiencing significant difficulties coping with stress, please take the time to talk with someone. You can find local resources by checking your yellow pages under "Counselors". In addition, there are professionals available to talk with and ask for help finding local resources available 24/7 at 1-800-SUICIDE.

Colorado AgrAbility Project

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Visit us on the web for more information and events!

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



***Note: If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or would like to receive it via email please notify us by emailing jsump@goodwilldenver.org or calling 303-385-7636

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