



# Fact Sheet

## *Promoting Independence in Agriculture*

### **Peer Support**

The Colorado AgrAbility Project connects farm and ranch families facing challenges from injury, illness or disability with other ranchers and farmers who have come to accept their disabilities. Peer support can be beneficial to both those with a disability and to the family members or caregivers of those facing the challenge. Sometimes just having someone to talk with about what you're going through helps.

### **Overview of Peer Support**

- Since 2004, Colorado AgrAbility has provided educational workshops and training to seven Colorado farmers, ranchers and caregivers with disabilities on how to provide peer support in ways that are effective, respectful and affirming.
- Peer support provides a safe place to get information and express concerns. It can help reduce the isolation and stress that can come from facing challenges associated with an injury, illness or disability.
- Peer support is not professional counseling, therapy or technical advice, and it is not being told what to do.
- Instead, peer support allows a person the chance to talk about his or her challenges with someone else who has experienced similar stress, dealt with it, and reshaped his or her daily life in a constructive way.
- Colorado AgrAbility helps match someone with a newly acquired disability with someone who has come to accept his or her disability.
- Peer support can be via telephone or personal visit—whichever is best for the person requesting peer support.
- Talking with someone who has learned how to provide effective peer support can help a person know when what he or she is experiencing is normal and when it's time to seek professional help.

### **Process**

- Contact Bob Fetsch, Director of the Colorado AgrAbility Project, at 970.491.5648. He teaches and maintains the Peer Support Program and will be able to start you on the path to finding peer support.
- Bob will work with you to find out what you are looking for and what kind of person you would be most comfortable talking with.
- You will then be given the telephone numbers of two or three people who you can call.
- The next step is for you to call the Peer Support people of your choice. Tell them what is on your mind. Use them as a sounding board to discuss what you are going through. They will listen to your concerns, not tell you what to do, because, ultimately, you know what is best for you.

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### **Eligibility and Costs**

- Any Colorado farmer, rancher or family member with a disability is eligible to request peer support, no matter how the disability occurred.
- Any type of physical, cognitive, or illness-related disability qualifies, such as back problems, arthritis, amputation, paralysis, cancer, spinal cord injuries, brain injury and more.
- Trained volunteers provide peer support at no cost to farm and ranch families with disabilities.

### **For More Information**

- For more information about Colorado AgrAbility and peer support, contact Bob Fetsch, Colorado AgrAbility Project Director, at 970.491.5648 or [fetsch@cahs.colostate.edu](mailto:fetsch@cahs.colostate.edu).

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### **COLORADO AGRABILITY**

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This material is based upon work supported by the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture, under special project number 2010-41590-20750