



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

May 2002

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BECOME AN AGRABILITY FRIEND

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CARM'S COMMENTS: Carmen Schacht

The emphasis this month is peer support for people with similar disabilities. AgrAbility will be heading in a new direction with emphasis on the one-on-one matches. This is a very vital part of AgrAbility. I have had the privilege of working with those of you who have agreed to be a match for others. Please think seriously about this and realize that you have a lot to offer to a newly-disabled person through what you have found helps you. It often takes trial and error to find what works best for each of us. It is only through suggestions and experience that we can work this out.

When I came home from the hospital 13 years ago, I was depressed, anxious and full of doubts as to what I would be able to accomplish. It didn't take long to have people around who offered suggestions as to what had worked for others and to try

things. Soon, I was able to be a very productive person even with a disability. My special desire is that each of you with a disability will find the fulfillment I have found through peer support. Try peer support, you will like it. (CS)

AGRABILITY FRIENDS—A NEW FOCUS: Brenda Reeves

I am pleased to report that the Iowa AgrAbility project has been refunded for another four years. One of our main goals is to strengthen the volunteer program that matches "veteran" AgrAbility consumers with people who are more recently disabled and new to the program. This volunteer program, called AgrAbility Friends, is an important way for individuals to receive encouragement and support from others who have already "been there."

Many of the people involved with AgrAbility have been providing support to others for years. Warren Koch was involved in a car accident over thirty years ago, long before Iowa AgrAbility was established. As a farmer with quadriplegia, he was one of the first people to become involved with the program, and has been providing support to others for nearly 15 years. According to Warren, "People sometimes get the idea that if they're disabled, they can't do anything. By talking to somebody who has approximately the same injury and is doing

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things, it helps a person see that they can do it, too. The important thing to do as a volunteer is to just listen and talk and find out what the person is having trouble with.”

Mark Lynch is an AgrAbility consumer who was involved in a corn bin accident 20 years ago that resulted in a below-the-knee amputation. In recent years he has been asked to provide support to three different individuals who were new to AgrAbility. Mark says that he really values being able to help people. “I think the support program is real good,” says Mark. “Doctors and everyone can tell you things, but until you can talk to someone who has been through it, you just don’t know what to expect.”

One of the new AgrAbility consumers with whom Mark was matched was John Herman. According to John, “When you talk to someone who has a similar situation, it always helps a lot.”

Iowa AgrAbility is currently undergoing an effort to identify individuals who are interested in becoming a volunteer Friend and offering support to another person who has a similar disability or situation. Earlier this month AgrAbility staff sent letters to people who have volunteered both recently and in years past to determine if they are interested in continuing. Letters will also be sent to those individuals who expressed an interest in volunteering when they returned the general survey that we sent to them last summer.

The role of a volunteer Friend is to offer friendship and support to new AgrAbility consumers who have expressed an interest in being matched. The volunteer should be well enough adjusted to his or her disability (or a family member’s disability) to be able to offer encouragement to others.

All new volunteers will be required to complete an application and attend an orientation/training session before being matched.

If you did not receive a letter and are interested in volunteering as a provider of support to new AgrAbility consumers, or if you would like to receive support from another consumer, please contact Carmen Schacht at 563-547-2932. (BR)

RESOURCES:

Iowa State University Extension offers several publications containing information on how to better communicate with and provide support to others in times of need. Some of the available publications are:

SP-165 - “Expressing Kindness in Times of Illness and Death”

This publication is available online at www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SP165.pdf

SP-164 – “Responding to Death – Tips for Friends”

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SP164.pdf

PM-1214 – “Take Charge in Changing Times – Encouraging a Friend to Seek Professional Help”

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1214.pdf

PM-1273 – “Take Charge in Changing Times – How to Help When You Don’t Know What to Say”

This publication is not currently available online. Copies of all the above-listed publications can be obtained by contacting your local extension office.

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Journey of Hearts is a website for those who have experienced a loss and are going through the grief response. Visit the following site for tips on how to help a grieving person:

www.journeyofhearts.org/jofh/grief/help

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Iowa State University plant pathologists predict a high risk of Stewart's disease in this year's corn crop due to last winter's warmer-than-usual weather. The disease is especially devastating to corn being raised for seed because seed harvested corn from infected fields can't be sold in foreign markets. It also can take a toll on sweet corn, and in severe cases hybrid corn yields may be reduced. For more information go to www.ag.iastate.edu/aginfo/news/sd02.html or call ISU plant pathologist Forrest Nutter at (515) 294-8737.

Iowa Farmer Today recently won an award for its "CornCam," the first Web camera to show real-time development of a cornfield. The image updates every fifteen minutes to show the day-to-day development of a cornfield in Northeast Iowa. To view the CornCam, visit www.iowafarmer.com/corncam/corn.html The website also has links to a SoybeanCam and a DairyCam.

A six-page summary of the House and Senate conference agreement on the Farm Bill is now web-posted. See: <http://agriculture.house.gov/farmbill.htm>

Upcoming Seminars/Conferences:

*May 29 - Marketing Your Specialty Farm Product on the Web. Contact Jeanne Wiebke at 515-294-8658 or jwiebke@iastate.edu

*July 30, 31 and August 1 - Upper Midwest Grazing Conference, Dubuque (4 states) www.wisc.edu/cias/uppermidwest/ or contact Larry Tranel at 563-583-6496, Ext. 14 or tranel@iastate.edu

AGRABILITY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Freewheeler's AgrAbility Friends and Family

Potluck

June 8, 1:00 p.m.

Cedar Valley Mental Health Center
111 10th St. SW, Waverly

Everyone is welcome. Contact Carmen Schacht for more information: (563-547-2932).

Southeast Iowa AgrAbility Friends and Family

June 22, 1:00 p.m.

Contact Ron Bradley (563-724-3918) or Dennis Byrnes (563-946-3905) for more information.

To find the AgrAbility Friends and Family group nearest you, call Carmen Schacht at 563-547-2932, or access: www.extension.iastate.edu/agrability/friends-and-family.html

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IOWA AGRABILITY - A joint effort of ISU Extension and the Farm Family Rehabilitation Management (FaRM) Program of Easter Seals Iowa. The program can help farm family members with a disability stay in farming.

This newsletter from the Iowa AgrAbility Project will be sent monthly to AgrAbility families and other interested individuals. Please send comments and suggestions to:

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E-mail: breeves@iastate.edu
Phone: ISU Answerline at 1-800-262-3804
TDD: 1-800-854-1658.
Web site: www.extension.iastate.edu/agrability/

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