



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

June/July 2002

Vol. 4, No. 6

SPINAL CORD INJURIES AND EASTER SEALS' 2001 FaRMer OF THE YEAR

CONTENTS:

- CARM'S COMMENTS: Carmen Schacht
- AGAINST ALL ODDS: Brenda Reeves
- RESOURCES
- ANNOUNCEMENTS
- AGRABILITY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

CARM'S COMMENTS: Carmen Schacht

This month the emphasis is on spinal cord accidents. There are so many ways that spinal cord accidents occur. Many of them result from automobile accidents. Many times those involved are young and it was a case of losing control resulting in the spinal cord being injured in some manner. Of all of the people I know who have this type of injury, they all are determined to overcome the disability. I remember Ryan Odens last fall when he was named Easter Seals FaRMer of the Year - a very determined young man who was going to therapy a lot and working it around his farming interests, etc. I understand that his many hours of hard, hard work have paid off and he is now walking with a cane as his only assistive device. How wonderful! Farm people seem to have the type of persistence and stamina it takes to be able to overcome some of the worst effects of accidents, no matter what kind they happen to be. Hats off to any of

you who have kept farming after a spinal cord injury. (CS)

AGAINST ALL ODDS: Brenda Reeves

Ryan Odens says that he always dreamed of being a farmer. In the summer of 2000, Ryan, then 23, was just beginning to get his family's farm operation running smoothly. He and his younger brother had taken over the farm after their father's unexpected death in 1997. Then, a rollover accident in a pickup nearly killed him and left him with numerous spinal cord fractures.

Ryan spent the first month after the accident in a hospital in South Dakota. Doctors removed bone from Ryan's hand to replace two fractured vertebrae and placed rods in his spine. Soon after the accident doctors informed Ryan that he would most likely never walk again. He describes this news as "a bombshell...it was so hard to believe."

After carefully researching hospitals across the country, Ryan and his family opted to fly him to Denver for rehabilitation. He stayed there for two months, during which time he says that he never lost confidence that he would be able to continue to farm.

It was during his stay in Denver that Ryan was given the phone number to Easter Seals in Iowa. A staff member at the hospital

AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

assured him that AgrAbility could help him continue to farm whether he was able to walk or not. Miraculously, after three and a half months of intensive physical and occupational therapy, Ryan beat the odds and slowly relearned how to walk.

Ryan requires the assistance of a cane and his legs do not have their full mobility and strength. With these limitations, he knew that it would be difficult and unsafe to farm without some accommodations. After returning to Iowa, Ryan contacted Chuck Larson at Easter Seals.

With Chuck's help and funding from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, numerous modifications were made around the farm to accommodate Ryan's limited mobility. Some of these included: the addition of an electric lift to two tractors and a combine, the installation of automatic gate openers, the addition of cement to the machine shed floor for improved stability as Ryan walks, and the purchase of an all-terrain vehicle for getting around the farm buildings and scouting crops.

With the modifications and lots of help from both family and friends, Ryan has continued his dream of farming. He was back in the tractor in time for planting in spring of 2001, less than a year after his accident. He says that he couldn't have done it without AgrAbility's help.

In the fall of 2001, Ryan was selected as Easter Seals' FaRMer of the Year. He was presented the award at a banquet and says that the experience was "pretty incredible." After witnessing his perseverance and determination to continue farming, the folks at AgrAbility think that Ryan is pretty incredible, too. (BR)

RESOURCES:

The National Spinal Cord Injury Association is dedicated to helping individuals cope with the results of spinal cord injury and disease. They offer nationwide chapters and support groups along with a wide range of resources. The NSCIA can be contacted through a toll-free help line at 1-800-962-9629 or online at www.spinalcord.org/

The Spina Bifida Association of America publishes a number of informational brochures and reports about spina bifida for both children and adults and educational videotape programs for parents and health professionals. For more information please call 1-800-621-3141.

The Spinal Cord Injury Information Network is a website that lists resources related to spinal cord injuries, including family and relationships, equipment, employment, and sexuality issues. The site also provides statistics about spinal cord injuries. Visit www.spinalcord.uab.edu/

Iowa COMPASS is a nonprofit, free, and confidential information and referral service to assist individuals with disabilities and their families. They connect people with organizations that offer employment services, rehabilitation, family support, medical insurance, and many other services. For more information visit www.medicine.uiowa.edu/iowacompass or call 1-800-779-2001.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Iowa grape growers have a new extension specialist. To meet the increasing interest in growing grapes in Iowa, ISU Extension has appointed Mike White as a half-time field specialist in viticulture. Mike is located in the Warren County Extension office in Indianola and serves all of Iowa in viticulture. He can be reached at (515) 961-

AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

6237 or by email at mlwhite@iastate.edu.
For more information about viticulture, visit
the ISU Viticulture Website at
viticulture.hort.iastate.edu

The annual ISU Extension Home
Demonstration Garden Field Days will be
held in August in locations across Iowa.
Every year, extension specialists and farm
superintendents invite the public to field
days to share the knowledge they have
gained in growing a wide variety of annual
plants.

This year the gardens are featuring grape
tomatoes, zinnias, miniature vegetables, pole
beans and tropical plants. The event is open
to the public at no charge. For a listing of
locations and dates, please visit
www.ag.iastate.edu/farms/fielddays.html or
call your local county extension office.

The bugs of summer are here! Iowans
expect to see a wide variety of insects during
the summer months. Mosquitoes, ticks, and
moths, such as cutworms and European corn
borers, are some of the most common. For
more information about insect pests and
related diseases found in Iowa, visit
www.ent.iastate.edu/, and visit
www.ent.iastate.edu/imagegallery/ for pest
pictures.

The Iowa State Fair will be held in Des
Moines from August 8-18. Don't miss out
on the fun! Visit www.iowastatefair.com
for more details.

Did you know that Iowa State University
provides four "masters" programs to citizens
of Iowa: Master Gardener, Master
Conservationist, Master Woodland
Manager, and Iowa Community Tree
Steward Program? To become a master,
each program requires a specific number of
hours of intense training in research-based
materials that relate to the topic area, and
each expects in return a specific number of
hours of volunteer service to be given back

to the community. Further information about
each of the four different programs can be
obtained from the following:

Iowa Master Gardener Program
Donald Lewis, coordinator: (515) 294-1101
mastergardener.hort.iastate.edu/

Iowa Master Conservationist Program
Jim Pease, coordinator: (515) 294-7429
www.extension.iastate.edu/wildlife/programs.html

Iowa Master Woodland Manager Program
Paul Wray, coordinator: (515) 294-1168
www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/mwm.html

Iowa Community Tree Steward Program
Chris Feeley, coordinator: (515) 294-6739
www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/icts.html

AGRABILITY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Freewheeler's AgrAbility Friends and
Family
August 3, 1:00 p.m., New Hampton Library,
W. Spring St.
More details later. Hope you can join us!

Southeast Region AgrAbility Friends and
Family
Fourteen people attended the annual picnic
at Rogers Park in Atalissa. Brats, hot dogs
and Flora's delicious pork on a stick were
enjoyed by all.

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](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agrability/friends-and-family.html)

AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

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:

Brenda Reeves, AgrAbility Program Specialist

96 LeBaron Hall, Ames, IA 50011

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/

... and justice for all. The Iowa Cooperative Extension Service's programs and policies are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, and disability.

Iowa AgrAbility
Iowa State University
96 LeBaron Hall
Ames, IA 50011