



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

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FOCUS ON HARVEST!

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During September and October we've decided to focus on the harvest season. One of the projects the AgrAbility program can help with is modifications to make combines more accessible. This month we feature two consumers with different combine modifications for their individual needs. In addition to a short list of farm safety publications, Dr. Steven Freeman has shared some important combine safety reminders. Look for more safety tips in the October Chit Chat and have a safe and healthy harvest! (EH)

COMBINE MODIFICATIONS

Nine years ago, **David Primus** had his leg amputated because of cancer. For just about that long he has been farming with modifications that help him work safely. With ideas on modifications from AgrAbility, he and his neighbor were able to change the ladder on his combine to steps. They did the same thing on two tractors, along with changing the usual brake pedals

into hand brakes. David says that while these modifications are great, the all-terrain vehicle that Easter Seals staff recommended makes the most difference. "I wouldn't be able to work without the Gater to help me get around the farm," David stated. David is preparing for another harvest on his north-central Iowa farm of around 300 acres. If you are interested in talking to David, you can call him at 641-868-2118.

Ryan Odens also has made modifications to his combine and a tractor that enable him to plant and harvest over 1,000 acres each year. These modifications were needed because just over four years ago Ryan became paralyzed as the result of a car accident. Doctors told him he would never walk again. Amazingly, after three and a half months of intensive physical and occupational therapy, Ryan beat the odds and slowly relearned how to walk with the use of a cane. AgrAbility staff first recommended an all-terrain vehicle as a way to help get around the farm and scout crops. AgrAbility staff also suggested a lift for his tractor and a platform lift for his combine. With these modifications and lots of help from both family and friends, Ryan has continued his dream of farming. If you'd like to know more about Ryan, contact him at 712-348-5551. (EH)

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COMBINE SAFETY FOR A GOOD HARVEST

By Dr. Steven Freeman

Fall harvest is the most hazardous season on Iowa farms. Ensuring that harvest equipment is properly serviced and ready before harvest starts can reduce the potential for farm injuries involving combines and other harvest machinery. The best place to start is by reviewing the operator's manual. Using the combine's manual as a guide, be sure to inspect the following (and repair and/or adjust as needed):

- Hydraulic system (including all connections, hoses, and cylinders)
- All belt and chain drives
- Steering
- Brakes
- Wiring

Lighting and Marking: Make sure field lighting and road lighting are adequate and ensure that the combine is equipped with all the lighting and marking safety devices (e.g., slow moving vehicle emblems and reflective tape) recommended by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers and required by state and local laws. Be sure to remind all operators to use the appropriate hazard lights and turn signals when traveling on roads.

Ladders: Keep ladders free of mud and debris. Always go down a ladder facing the machine with at least three points of your body in contact with the ladder at all times.

Guards and Shields: Replace any damaged or missing shields. Nuts and bolts holding shields in place may vibrate loose during operation so be sure to check that all shields are appropriately secured.

Fire Extinguishers: Every combine should be equipped with a functioning fire extinguisher. The extinguishing agent in ABC dry chemical extinguishers (ABC

refers to the classes/kinds of fires) can settle over time. Extinguishers should be shaken prior to every season to make sure that the chemical is still loose and check the pressure gauge to ensure the extinguisher will work if needed.

Finally, it is important to make sure that combine operators are also ready for the demands of the harvest season. Some simple suggestions to keep operators working safely include:

- Get plenty of sleep.
- Eat nutritionally balanced meals.
- Take a 15-minute break every two to three hours.
- Substitute nutritious snacks for soft drinks and candy bars. Caffeine and sugar provide a short boost, but will also increase fatigue and slow reaction time as the effect wears off.
- Check in with family on a regular basis using a cell phone or CB radio. (SF)

RESOURCES

The following Iowa State University Extension publications are from the *Safe Farm: Promoting Agricultural Health and Safety* series:

Harvest Safety Yields Big Dividends (PM 1265H)

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1265H.pdf

Manage Stress To Increase Farm Safety (PM 1265L)

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1265L.pdf

Reduce Farm Accident Risks on Roads (PM 1563E)

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1563E.pdf

If you do not have access to the internet you can ask for a copy of the publication at your local Extension office by using the letter/number combination listed above.

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You can also visit

www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/farmsafe.html

which is ISU Extension to Agricultural and Natural Resources **Farm Safety website** (EH)

SUMMER EVENTS WRAP-UP

AgrAbility Family Fun Fest

In June, the Iowa AgrAbility project held its first AgrAbility Family Fun Fest and invited all past consumers and their families from across the state to join together for the day. A central Iowa family hosted this event at their farm and donations and a small registration fee for lunch was collected. At the fun fest, consumers had the opportunity to: get to know each other and share experiences and knowledge, meet AgrAbility staff, explore an actual size universal design bathroom exhibit, and gather information on additional resources. The program also included a presentation entitled, "Simplify Your Life" from Beth Fleming, Iowa State University Extension Family Life Specialist.

Approximately 45 people were in attendance, some driving as many as 250 miles. There were kids as young as five and adults over 60. Families report that they enjoyed meeting and learning from each other at this event. In a follow-up evaluation, participants were asked if they would recommend the event to another AgrAbility family and the reply was an overwhelming YES. In fact, one person commented, "This was a great event; gives us a new circle of friends and support people." Iowa AgrAbility staff members plan to continue holding this event annually with the guidance of a consumer advisory committee.

AgrAbility staff would like to thank the consumers who served on the advisory committee, with a huge thank you to the Strum family for hosting the event!

Freewheelers Picnic

In August, I was able to attend the Freewheelers picnic in northeastern Iowa. The Freewheelers are a group of people with disabilities and their spouses. They meet three or four times a year for a lunch and conversation. Many of the consumers have been served by AgrAbility in the past, but some are other people in their communities that they've invited to join their group. Amazingly, they have been meeting for almost 10 years. The Freewheelers welcome new members to their group at anytime. The hospitality I received was fantastic.

Farm Progress Show

The Iowa AgrAbility Project recently displayed a new universal design bathroom exhibit at the Farm Progress Show near Alleman, Iowa. County and State Extension staff, Easter Seals Rural Solutions Staff, and AgrAbility consumers demonstrated the features of universal design and talked to visitors about the AgrAbility project. Several people indicated interest in receiving services from AgrAbility. According to estimates, there were over 100,000 people at the show each of the three days, including a campaign stop by President Bush!

A special thanks to everyone who help with the display or stopped by to see us! (EH)

UPCOMING EVENTS

EXTRA SPECIAL Freewheelers Luncheon:

Come and see what we are excited about!
Saturday, October 2nd at 1:00pm
Waverly Pizza Ranch
Everyone shares expenses

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DONATED GLOVES

We have recently received a donation of four women's black left-handed winter gloves from a person with an amputation. If you or someone you know could use the left "half" of these gloves, please contact Erin at 515-294-8522. We thank the thoughtful donor of the gloves!

IOWA AGRABILITY - A joint effort of ISU Extension and the Rural Solutions 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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Iowa AgrAbility Project

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