



# AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

Spring 2006

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## CELEBRATE IOWA AGRABILITY

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### CONTENTS

- ◆ THE FUTURE OF IOWA AGRABILITY
- ◆ FAMILY FUN FEST – JUNE 24<sup>th</sup>
- ◆ PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES
- ◆ JOIN THE FREEWHEELERS
- ◆ ITEMS OF INTEREST & UPCOMING EVENTS

### THE FUTURE OF IOWA AGRABILITY

Since 1991, Iowa AgrAbility has helped farm families affected by disability find innovative solutions so they can remain on the farm. More than 1,000 farm families have received assistance through this partnership of Iowa State University Extension and the Rural Solutions program of Easter Seals Iowa.

Iowa AgrAbility staff members and activities have changed through the years. Yet the central focus has remained the same – providing information, advocacy, and referral services to farm families and farm workers with disabling injuries or health conditions. Our project has become a nationally recognized successful program dedicated toward empowering farm families across Iowa.

In March 2006, the Iowa AgrAbility project received notification that the U.S.

Department of Agriculture did not renew funding for our state project this next year. With this funding decrease, there will be some changes in the program. For example, the AgrAbility Program Specialist position with ISU Extension and the newsletter publication will be discontinued.

However, there will still be services available for individuals and families in agriculture affected by disabilities. Easter Seals Rural Solutions Program will continue to provide on-site farm assessments and follow-up services for farm families. In addition, Iowa State University Extension will provide resources and consultation on universal design and housing accessibility, as well as information on various farm and family related topics. The Universal Design and Housing Accessibility website ([www.extension.iastate.edu/universaldesign](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/universaldesign)) and the on-campus Universal Design Learning Lab will continue to be available for interested individuals and groups.

We extend our thanks to you for your ongoing support of the Iowa AgrAbility project. Please be assured that we will continue to explore alternative funding sources.

### FAMILY FUN FEST – JUNE 24<sup>th</sup>

Please be sure to attend the Family Fun Fest on June 24, 2006, at the farm of Lon and Sandy Strum. This event will offer a chance to share stories with AgrAbility farm families from across Iowa. A separate invitation and registration form for the Family Fun Fest has

been included with this newsletter. We look forward to seeing you in June!

### PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES

Does your family have a safe place to go if a tornado is spotted in your area? If your home were on fire, does your family know how to evacuate safely?

We cannot know when an emergency or disaster may occur. However, it is possible to prepare so that your family will know what to do in an emergency.

Many resources are available to help with family emergency planning. The following resources provide information, checklists, and other tools to help your family prepare for the unexpected.

- ♦ *Prepare.org*: The American Red Cross and other organizations provide information to help prepare for natural & human-caused disasters. Information targets seniors, children, people with disabilities, and animal and pet owners. Visit: [www.prepare.org](http://www.prepare.org). Also see the Red Cross guide titled "Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities": [www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/disability](http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/disability).
- ♦ *s.a.f.e.t.y.first*: Easter Seals offers planning tools and resources to help everyone, especially individuals with disabilities, address personal safety in emergencies. Visit: [www.easterseals.com](http://www.easterseals.com).
- ♦ *Iowa Guide to Keeping You Safe*: This Iowa Department of Public Health resource guides families in making a plan for communicating and coordinating actions in case of an emergency. It also provides tips for creating an emergency kit. Visit the Protect Iowa Health website: [www.protectiowahealth.org](http://www.protectiowahealth.org).
- ♦ *Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Disabilities*: The National Organization on Disabilities offers this brochure of useful tips and resources on how to prepare for disasters. They also offer specific information for individuals with mobility, sensory, or developmental or cognitive disabilities. Learn more at: [www.nod.org/emergency](http://www.nod.org/emergency).

### WANT TO BE A FREEWHEELER?

**Freewheelers** is a peer support group. Most of us live in the northeast part of Iowa. We are a group of people with different disabilities who enjoy getting together to support each other.

We usually meet for lunch (e.g., pizza, potlucks, or other types of food) and socialize afterward. We have played bingo and other board games, but our favorite thing is just catching up with each other's happenings. We have had many excellent speakers. We always have good ideas for each other on how to deal with our disabilities. We don't usually meet in the winter months, but start in April. We met in April of this year and will meet again in July and October. Many will also plan to attend the AgrAbility Fun Fest on June 24, where we will meet other people with disabilities from all over Iowa.

We always welcome anyone who would like to get to know a group of great people! For more information on the Freewheelers, contact Carmen Schacht at [cschacht@iowatelecom.net](mailto:cschacht@iowatelecom.net) or call 563-547-2932. (submitted by Carmen Schacht)

### ITEMS OF INTEREST & UPCOMING EVENTS

- ♦ *Low interest loans*: The Iowa Able Foundation announced they now offer loans at 2% interest for the purchase of assistive technology and home

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## AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT (Vol. 8, No. 1)

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modifications. This loan program is available for persons with disabilities and older Iowans. Learn more by calling

1-800-765-3022 or online at:  
[www.iowaable.org](http://www.iowaable.org).

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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