

AgrAbility Virginia

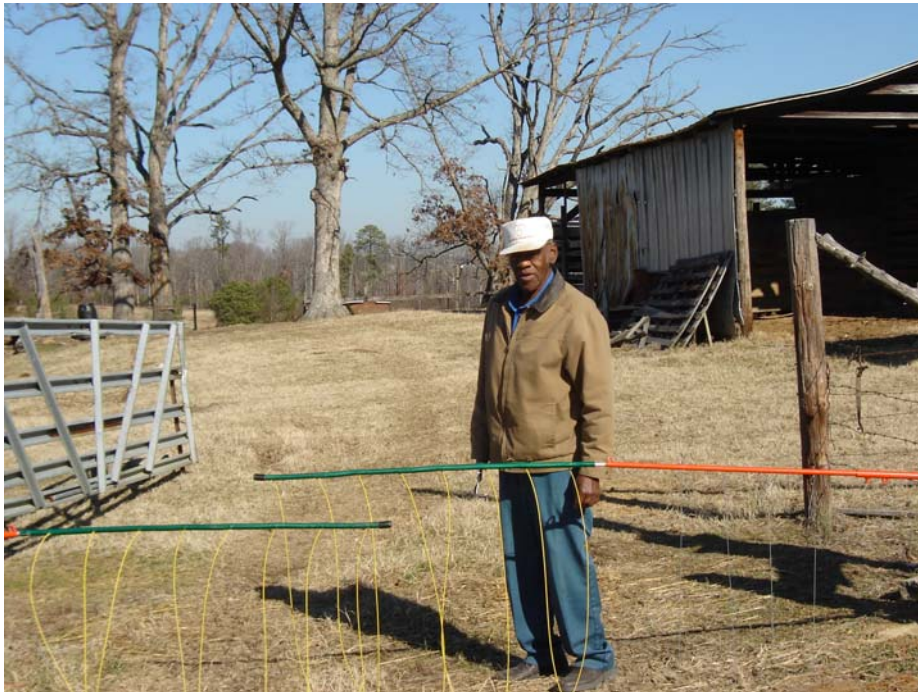


Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families¹

E-NEWS - WINTER/SPRING 2009

Contents: Featured Client: Henry; Dr. Temple Grandin at Ntl Workshop; AgriWellness and Behavioral Health; Updates on Rural Rehab Activities; AgrAbility Concerns: Looking Out for the Farmer; Need a Used Tractor?; Links of Interest: Rural Caregiving; AgriWellness; Farm-To-Table Program; Dates and Events to Note

FEATURED CLIENT: HENRY



HENRY NEXT TO ONE OF HIS FIVE NEW DRIVE-THRU ELECTRIC GATES

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Henry was referred to AgrAbility by Chris Bradshaw, District Conservationist Agent in Brunswick County. Henry is 78 years old and farms 300 acres on four different tracts, raising cattle. In his thirties, Henry lost his right hand in a corn picker, and now wears a prosthesis. He also has well-established arthritis in his hips and knees, and, in the course of working with AgrAbility, Henry had hip replacement surgery. In navigating his property from tract to tract to tend his cattle, etc., Henry has had to dismount from his truck to open five different gates. This repetitive activity was increasingly stressful, painful and time consuming. In partnership with the Department of Rehabilitative Services (counselor, Dolores Heisler, rehab engineer, Tom Rybak, and occupational therapist, John Allen), and additional assistance from a National Easter Seals Grant from Sodexo Inc. (leading provider of integrated food and facilities management services in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico), AgrAbility was able to arrange for Henry to install 5 drive-thru electric gates. These gates (see picture) don't look like much, but are a series of dangling electrodes that discourage cattle, but allow a truck to drive thru without obstruction or the use of a remote. These gates have greatly improved Henry's quality of life and his ability to work efficiently and safely.

DR. TEMPLE GRANDIN AT THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP



The 2008 National AgrAbility Workshop took place in Wichita, Kansas, November 10-13, 2008. One of the many highlights of the Workshop was a presentation by Dr. Temple Grandin, of Colorado State University. Dr. Grandin is a renowned expert on animal communication, livestock behavior, designer of cattle corrals, etc., and a highly respected expert on Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. In an insightful, witty, humorous, and very personal talk, Dr. Grandin spoke about the challenges of being autistic and functional. Relating her own personal journey with autism, the challenges she faced, the significant accomplishments she has achieved, and how emerging scientific data supports new approaches to autism, Dr. Grandin offered up hope and possibilities for people with Autism/Aspergers to be involved in farm life. She herself was very limited by her severe autism until, by chance, she was, as a teenager, put in charge of taking care of a small stable of horses. This experience opened up a completely new world of possibilities for her. More can be

learned about this remarkable woman and her work at:
<http://www.templegrandin.com/templehome.html>

Other noteworthy information from the Workshop:

- The new National AgrAbility Project Staff is with Purdue University. It's partners include Breaking New Ground (assistive technology for farmers and ranchers), Goodwill Industries (national) and the Indiana Arthritis Foundation.
- There is an increasing interest in the number of veterans of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars who are returning to farms and agricultural production, some with physical and emotional disabilities.

AGRIWELLNESS, INC. - BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SURVEY

AgriWellness, Inc. is a non-profit corporation founded in 2001. The AgriWellness Mission is: To promote accessible behavioral health services for underserved and at-risk populations affected by rural crisis in agricultural communities. Agricultural work is very stressful, unpredictable, and dangerous for the entire family. Agricultural workers, including farmers, ranchers, migrant/seasonal workers, fishers, foresters, their families, and communities dependent upon agriculture, often find it difficult to obtain behavioral healthcare they need to deal with these perils. Behavioral health services such as addictions treatment, mental health therapy and marital and family counseling are often scarce in rural areas. AgriWellness, Inc. works to address the behavioral healthcare needs of agricultural populations and communities, and to provide education about these needs. AgriWellness encourages interested health professionals, farmers, ranchers, family members, etc. to visit their website to take a short survey on Agriculture and Behavioral Health. <http://www.agriwellness.org/AWsurvey2.htm> The home page for AgriWellness is: <http://www.agriwellness.org/>

RURAL REHAB PARTENRSHIP UPDATES

- ❖ The **Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA)** is involved in two big projects:
 - 1) Virginia State Rural Health Plan - <http://www.va-srhp.org/>. **Virginia's State Rural Health Plan (VA-SRHP) is a 3-5 year strategic plan designed to strengthen the health care infrastructure in rural areas.** The plan, which is led by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Office of Minority Health and Public Health Policy (OMHPHP) and the Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA), is a collaborative effort of over 50 prominent partners who are dedicated to rural Virginia. **EVERYONE** is encouraged to provide input on the implementation of the plan! For more information, please contact Beth O'Connor at boconnor@vcom.vt.edu
 - 2) **The Annual Rural Health Summit:** For the second year, on **Thursday, March 12, in Abingdon, VA**, VRHA will be collaborating with Virginia's State Office of Rural Health to produce the Rural Health Summit. The 2009 summit will review upcoming changes in rural health policy from a national, state, and local perspective. This will lead-in to a report

about the progress and future direction of the four councils established because of the Virginia State Rural Health Plan development process.

Additional events held in conjunction with the summit will be:

- **Wednesday, March 11** - Pre-Summit Roundtable: Rural EMS
 - **Thursday, March 12** - Post-Summit Panel Discussion: Integrating Primary Care & Mental/Behavioral Health
 - **Friday, March 13** - Post-Summit Training: Models of Care - Primary Care & Mental/Behavioral Health Integration
 - For more information, registration and hotel information, please visit: <http://www.va-srhp.org/2009-rural-health-summit.htm>
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- ❖ During Woodrow Wilson's Rehab Center's (**WWRC**) regularly scheduled Holiday Break, a **Wheelin' Sportsmen** accessible deer hunt was held on January 2 and 3, 2009 in the wooded areas of the campus, allowing people with disabilities a safe and secure outdoor sporting event. Every year, during the holiday season, the Center closes, all students return home, staff is off duty, and all buildings are shut down. The shotgun only hunt for people with disabilities was conducted under the direction and control of the WWRC Police Department. This most recent hunt was the fourth held by **Wheelin' Sportsmen** at the Center. The Center worked with Dept of Game Inland Fisheries (DGIF) to obtain a permit under the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) to reduce the deer population thus allowing shotguns to be used during archery season. As a result of this hard work shotguns were used in January and 11 deer were taken. <http://wwrc.virginia.gov/wwrcnews.htm#story35>
 - ❖ **The Virginia Arthritis Action Coalition (VAAC)** The Virginia Arthritis Action Plan 2008-2012 release was delayed because of the ending of the Center for Disease Control funding. The VAAC has just is in the process of the final editing of the Plan, which will be made available online in early March. This Plan is an extensive and in-depth report on the prevalence and resources regarding arthritis in Virginia.
 - ❖ **Farm Bureau:** 1. Rural Health Essay Contest for High School and College Students. "My Future Career in Rural Health in Virginia". \$1000. Deadline: March 31. Go to http://www.vafb.com/programs/contests/rural_health.htm 2. Social Media Presence around Farm Bureau Campaign <http://saveourfood.org/Pages/default.aspx>., focusing on locally grown foods and where to find them.

AGRABILITY CONCERNS: LOOKING OUT FOR THE FARMER

With all the talk, these days, of the need to stimulate the economy to create jobs and to rehabilitate the financial markets so that money can flow back into the economy sustain businesses and homes, it interesting that there isn't a whole lot of talk about the role of the agriculture community in all of this. It is inarguable that the state of agricultural production is a keystone to prosperity in this nation. Without sustained, quality, and safe production and easy availability of food, the whole economic structure cannot be maintained. And family farmers in particular are profoundly and disproportionately affected by a myriad of concerns that impact on different segments of the population, but are concentrated in their impact on farmers. Everything from credit availability, to fuel costs, to labor availability and costs, to sources of secondary income, to healthcare access and

costs, to insurance availability and affordability, to the quality of education for their children, to access to U.S. and global markets, to the infrastructure of their rural communities, to the availability of broadband services are all significant factors determining the viability and quality of life of the farming way of life. And the viability and quality of life of the farmer affects what is produced and what is available to the rest of us. So as you follow and participate in the outcome of the work of our Congressional Representatives, as they sort out a course for strengthening our economic system, don't forget the farmers. We all need to lookout for what happens to them, for what happens to them eventually impacts on all of us. To quote Carolyn Mugar, Executive Director of Farm Aid, an advocacy organization for family famers, "we need to be proactive [in supporting the family farmer]. We cannot afford to lose even one more American farmer".

LOOKIN' FOR THAT USED TRACTOR?

Adapted from an article by Dr. Robert Grisso, Biological Engineering, Virginia Tech

Used tractors are in high demand for established farms and hobby farms. It's a good bet that many good used tractors won't take up a lot of space on dealer's lots because most of them are often spoken for before they're even available. Auctions can be a good place to find a used tractor. Don't expect to purchase the tractors at bargain prices. The cost of a good condition, 10 to 20 year old, tractor has increased in recent years, in some cases as much as 30%.

Used tractors that meet your needs can be a good investment. But finding a good used tractor takes some hard work and involves a number of steps. First, consider the brand name of the tractor. If it is not a well-known brand name tractor be sure to check into the availability of its parts, because many of those tractors are made overseas. Second, don't allow the looks of the tractor distract you from acquiring details of the use and care of the tractor. Most tractors will need some type of service after 3,000 hours of use. Third, smoke may indicate engine problems. Consult a mechanic about the color of the smoke related to different engine problems. Next, consult the book price of the tractor, to get a solid starting place for its value. Each individual piece will be different, but don't rely on someone else's opinion about the tractor's worth.

Other areas to check are tires, engine noise, oil or fluid leaks around the motor and the condition of the tractor frame. Look for breaks, welds, and areas of rust. Ask to drive the tractor. This gives you an opportunity to listen to the engine sounds, and check for any excessive vibrations. If this is your first tractor purchase and you're not sure what to listen and look for, find someone who does and is willing to go with you on a test drive. While you are driving, try to shift through each gear. If a tractor comes with a loader or other implements, try them to make sure they work properly. While the tractor is moving, apply the brakes to see if the differential locks are working and to make sure the tractor isn't jumping out of gear. **Pay particular attention to the PTO** to ensure the clutch isn't out because repairing the clutch will generally cost more than \$1,000. Finally, check out the hydraulic lifts. They can be difficult to judge, but activating the remote hose spools, while the motor is running, will allow you to hear whether or not they lug down the motor, which indicates that the pump is probably working.

Buying equipment on-line can be a benefit, because searching the Internet is cheaper and less time consuming. With the cost of fuel, purchasing a tractor that has to be shipped a long way may prove to be more expensive than buying one at a higher price that is closer to your location. Always

consider the cost of your time, renting a trailer, hiring help to bring the tractor home, and the possibility of unforeseen costs before you make your final decision.

LINKS OF INTEREST

- Information on the challenges and resources of Rural Caregiving. Video: http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntl_rural_caregiving
- AgriWellness, Inc., The AgriWellness mission: promote accessible behavioral health services for underserved and at-risk populations affected by rural crisis in agricultural communities.. <http://www.agriwellness.org/>
- **The Mission of the RCPS Farm-to-Table/School Program** is to cultivate students who are good stewards of the earth and productive community members through classroom study of horticulture and nutrition, cultivation of school gardens, and hands-on experiences at local family farms. <http://www.headwatersfdn.org/Farm2Table/>
- Farm Bureau; Local foods. <http://saveourfood.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- Arthritis-At-A-Glance Number one cause of disability in the U.S. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/AAG/pdf/arthritis.pdf>
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26544498/from/ET/>
- Establishing or supplementing the farm thru Agribusiness: <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/index.shtml>
- <http://www.Disabilitynavigator.org> a unique web resource created by and for people with disabilities and their families

DATES AND EVENTS TO NOTE

- **The Annual Rural Health Summit**, Thursday, March 12, in Abingdon, VA, <http://www.va-srhp.org/2009-rural-health-summit.htm>