

Wyoming AgrAbility promotes success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families

Situation:

Wyoming is a state with no history of support services specifically for production agriculture families with disabilities. The high occupational injury rate among agriculture, the lack of disability expertise, and the lack of services necessary to accommodate disabilities deprive many individuals from continuing productive lives in agriculture. Through education, networking, and assistance, the Wyoming AgrAbility project builds the service capacity for Wyoming communities to meet the needs of farm/ranch families affected by a disability, develops a network of professionals to support farmers/ranchers with disabilities, and provides rancher/farmer access to assistive technology (AT) products and services to maintain their operations.

The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) partners with Gottsche Rehabilitation, Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, Wyoming Independent Living Rehabilitation, and the Center for Rural Health Research and Education on the Wyoming AgrAbility project.

Project members address the three AgrAbility goals:

1. Provide direct education and assistance to ranchers/farmers annually; use Web-based technology and in-person training of professionals and service providers; establish an AgrAbility Web site; conduct a needs assessment.
2. Establish an AgrAbility advisory group and develop a peer network of ranchers and farmers.
3. Provide on-farm technical advice to 10-25 clients annually; make AT devices available; make the Wyoming Assistive Resource base available to ranchers/farmers.

The project, which started in 2007, continued efforts on marketing AgrAbility to increase referrals and direct assistance to producers and their families through displays at numerous meetings and conferences.

- More than 900 AgrAbility brochures were distributed through Wyoming and the Intermountain West. The publication, *Selected Resources from Wyoming AgrAbility*, informs agencies and organizations of Wyoming AgrAbility materials and information. Nine hundred fifty copies were distributed.

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- In partnership with UW CES, educational news articles for farm safety and health week were developed.
- Wyoming AgrAbility again partnered with UW CES' small-acreage initiative to include articles on ranching and farming with disabilities in the newspaper insert *Barnyards & Backyards* with circulation estimates for 19 rural newspapers totaling 76,213.
- An AgrAbility newspaper insert was included in 21 Wyoming newspaper outlets with an estimated 140,000-plus readership. Efforts included general media releases to 33 regional media outlets and targeted radio spots to 20 Cowboy State News Network stations for 360 spots.
- Educational presentations were delivered to approximately 184 ranchers/farmers, agricultural and healthcare professionals, and UW students.
- Fifty-six independent living specialists, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and occupational therapists, were trained on rehabilitating ranchers and farmers.
- Five hundred forty educational fact sheets and AgrAbility brochures were distributed at healthcare and agriculture conferences and awareness presentations.

Consultative services included help in managing chronic pain, low vision, work modifications, assistive technology modifications, back pain, and knee replacements.



Impacts:

Wyoming AgrAbility provided consultative services to 22 individuals, including eight work-site visits. Consultative services included help in managing chronic pain, low vision, work modifications, assistive technology modifications, back pain, and knee replacements. Additional research and technical assistance included infant ventilator, health insurance, autism, saddle adaptations, multiple sclerosis, stroke, post-secondary education accommodations, and AT funding options.

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