Ohio AgrAbility: Working with Agricultural Workers after a Disabling Condition
Agriculture in Ohio

• Largest industry in the state
• 77,000 farms in Ohio – 91% individual / family owned
• Average age of farmer in Ohio is 57 years
• Health of farmer critical to survival of the business
Agriculture in Ohio

• Family farms are multi – generational
  • 2, 3, even 4 generations

• Multi-cultural:
  • Amish cultures
  • Migrant farm workers
Agriculture in Ohio

• Unique environment:
  • Home and workplace are the same
  • Vast area to work
  • Daily care for livestock (7 days/week, 365 days/year)
  • Seasonal work practices
  • Long work days
  • Weather
Injuries Faced by Farmers

• Head injury
• Paralysis
• Amputation
• Cut / caught in
• Blunt trauma
• Sprain / strain
• Secondary Injuries
Health Issues Faced by Famers

• Arthritis
• Hip and knee replacement
• Cardiac health
• Stroke
• Diabetes
• Cancer
• Respiratory issues
Safety Concerns for Aging Farmers

• Reduced reaction time
• Reduced balance
• Loss of Strength
• Overexertion
• Fatigue quickly
• Reduced vision
• Hearing impairment
National AgrAbility Project

The National AgrAbility Project was created through the U.S.D.A. to assist people with disabilities employed in agriculture and provide practical education and assistance that promotes independence in agricultural production and rural living.
Ohio AgrAbility Program

The Ohio State University has partnered with Easter Seals to serve Ohio’s agricultural residents impacted by a disability, by providing training, technical assistance, and become a primary source of information directly to the farmer.
Ohio AgrAbility Program

We have also developed partnerships through our Advisory Committee which includes:

- Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission
- Ohio Arthritis Foundations
- Ohio Rural Health Coalition
- Centers for Independent Living
- USDA’s Farm Service Agency

and many other health care professionals, public officials, and agribusiness professionals.
Why is the program needed?

Agricultural production is ranked as one of the most hazardous occupations in Ohio and the nation.

- Agriculture has one of the highest disabling injury rates of any industry.
- 1 out of 14 Ohio farm families experience a farm-related injury each year.
- Approximately 84% of those injuries occurred on the farm, and about 69% of them were farming operations related.
The Ohio AgrAbility Program

Why is the program needed?
Farm and rural families experience the same types of non-work related injuries and disabling conditions as the rest of the population.

✓ Off - the - Farm incidents
✓ Workplace injuries
✓ Illness or Health problems

Older farmers often experience limitations such as:
✓ vision loss
✓ hearing loss
✓ loss of strength
✓ loss of range of motion
Who is served by the program?

- The Ohio AgrAbility Program serves farmers and rural families in Ohio who have faced a wide range of disabilities.
  - head or spinal cord injury
  - back injury
  - visual impairment
  - amputation
  - arthritis
  - hearing impairment
  - stroke
  - diabetes
  - mental illness
  - respiratory impairment
  - ergonomic / repetitive motion injuries
No Cost Services:

1) Provide a wide variety of resources and information on solving specific problems and working with a specific disability.
   - worksite modifications
   - adaptive tools
   - accessibility issues
   - assistive technologies
   - health and safety information
   - secondary injury prevention
The Ohio AgrAbility Program

No Cost Services:

2) On-Site assessments and technical assistance
   - Prioritizing specific obstacles
   - Helping to find solutions to meet specific needs
   - Utilizing best practices
   - Identification of assistive technology needs
   - Applying Universal Design concepts
   - Process development
The Ohio AgrAbility Program

No Cost Services:

3) Peer to Peer Support
   - Connecting people with similar experiences for sharing ideas and support.
   - Assistive technology demonstrations
   - Family / primary caregiver support
No Cost Services:

4) Referral Information

Providing information on services available in:

- agriculture
- rehabilitation
- state service agencies
- local community
No Cost Services:

5) Training

Our staff is available to provide training on a variety of topics including:

- farming with a disability
- ag safety and health
- researched-based best practices
- farm accessibility issues
- prevention of secondary injuries
The Ohio AgrAbility Program

No Cost Services:

6) Public Awareness:
Our staff can speak or provide displays at:

- community events & health fairs
- field days & ag safety seminars
- agricultural trade shows
- civic organizational events
The Ohio AgrAbility Program

The Overall Picture

Agriculture
- Cooperative Extension
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Farm Service Agency

Rehabilitation
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- Social Security Administration Work Incentive Provisions

Business Development
- Small Business Development Centers
- USDA Rural Development

AgrAbility
- State and Regional Project
- National Project

Self-Employed Farmer
• Working with farmers with a disabling condition, to continue life on the farm.
  - Help to maintain productivity on the farm
  - Wide range of disabilities (Paralysis to Arthritis)
  - Information and resources
  - Technical assistance / on-site assessment
  - Secondary injury prevention
  - Assistive Technology and adaptive tools / equipment
  - Universal Design concepts
What is Occupational Therapy

• Work with individuals who have physical, emotional, and developmental disabilities.

• Rehabilitation for a wide range of daily functions and activities

• Find ways to reduce negative impacts of a disability, illness, or injury on everyday functioning

• Help all ages acquire or regain skills they need to live independent, productive lives
Bridging the gap with common goals

Health Care - Occupational Therapy
Agriculture – Ohio AgrAbility
Bridging the gap with common goals

• **Identify** a farmer's job tasks.
• **Evaluate** a person while on the job to determine his or her ability to complete job tasks.
• **Create** a safe, productive, and functional work environment.
• **Monitor** a farmer's progress and reassess work tasks.
Bridging the gap with common goals

• **Recommend** modifications to job tasks that the farmer can complete safely.

• **Implement** the use of assistive devices that may help a person complete a task safely.

• **Design programs** to develop strength and endurance in performing job tasks.
Creating a productive and safe work environment

Assistive technology / Adaptive Equipment
Extending Universal Design to the farmstead
  – Home ⇒ Garage, Farm shop, Barn

Entrances / Accessibility
Workplace modifications
Specialty work areas
Tools / Equipment
Livestock handling
Creating a productive and safe work environment

• Entrances / Accessibility
  – Smooth transitions from one surface to another
  – Easy to use gates
  – Remote control Doors
Creating a productive and safe work environment

- Entrances / Accessibility
  - Mobility aids (UTV)
  - Stairways vs. Ladders
Creating a productive and safe work environment

• Workplace modifications
Creating a productive and safe work environment

• Specialty work areas
Creating a productive and safe work environment

• Tools / Equipment
  – Pneumatic or Battery powered
Creating a productive and safe work environment

• Tools / Equipment
  – cushioned, thicker handles
Creating a productive and safe work environment

• Modifications for farm equipment
  – Added steps / grab bars
  – Spin Knob
  – Swivel or air-ride seating
Creating a productive and safe work environment

• Modifications for farm equipment
  – Hand controls
  – Lever Extensions
  – Lifts
Creating a productive and safe work environment

• Livestock handling
  – Modify feed processes
  – Ladders vs. stairway w/ handrail
Creating a productive and safe work environment

• Livestock handling
  – Modify handling processes
  – Livestock handling equipment
Working Together = Results

• Ohio AgrAbility can be a resource for OTs and the farmer patient.

• Occupational Therapy and Ohio AgrAbility working together can increase positive outcomes for farmers with a disabling condition.

• There are unique opportunities for Occupational Therapy to get involved in agricultural communities.
OSU Cares About Farmers
Farming with Arthritis Program

Opportunity for OSU Occupational Therapy, OSU Extension, and Ohio AgrAbility to work together to increase awareness about prevention and treatment of arthritis in our agricultural communities.
OSU Cares about Farming Arthritis Program

- Developed by OSU OT, OSU Extension, and Ohio AgrAbility
  - Educate farmers about arthritis
  - History questionnaire / Screening tool
  - Determine level of risk
  - Make referrals
  - Provide resources on prevention and treatment

*Over 500 farmer participants to date*
Moving Forward

• Ohio AgrAbility starting to work with developmental disability farm programs.
  – Working with 4 current programs in the state.
  – Expanding current work with greenhouses and gardening.
  – Creating a peer program among these farm programs.

• Developing cognitive testing for operating farm equipment (heavy equipment).
  – Post traumatic brain injury
  – Illness / health condition
  – Aging
Where can I find more information?

[Images of tractor and trailer]

www.agsafety.osu.edu
www.agrability.osu.edu
www.agrability.org

OSU Ag Safety & Health

Find us on Facebook

Your local OSU Extension office.
How can I contact the Ohio AgrAbility program?

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