



Flying High!

AgrAbility Client Finds His Business Soaring

When Sedgwick CO Agronomist Brady Haynes took a hard look at his business, he began to wonder how he could get it all accomplished and still be able to grow. A spinal cord infarct at T-10 left him dependent on a wheel chair for mobility. Brady was operating his own farm and had as an agronomist, 1500 acres across three states under surveillance.

Anyone who knows a bit about crop science will realize the challenges that this posed for him. He has to access the fields in any condition from freshly prepared, to deep mud, possible snow or ice, and when the crop is growing high. He needs to obtain soil samples, leaf samples, and observe the health of the crop. Brady needs to stay ahead of nutrient issues, hydration, pest infestation, etc.

So what to do about it? Well Brady contacted Colorado AgrAbility who referred him to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. DVR asked AgrAbility to get with Brady and perform a site assessment. Brady and his Rehab Specialist put their creative engineering minds together and found a solution. But it was not an easy fix. It required a truck bed like a Cannon Ball but not just any bed, it had to fit a tight length spec. It required a swing arm on the bed and a crate-like structure that lifted a UTV on and off the bed. And, it needed a Life Essentials Bed Lift in the back of the bed. It all had to fit and inches made all the difference on that crowded bed.

That got Brady to the fields. But.....what would he do if field conditions prohibited him from access? The answer was found in Boulder CO at Agribotix- A drone with special cameras and software to analyze crop damage from heat, cold, moisture or pests. So with that on board, Brady's business soared to new life.



April Showers Bring May Flowers

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Alpha Gamma Rho

Our wonderful CSU agriculture fraternity, Alpha Gamma Rho comes through for AgrAbility. At this years fundraiser, Alpha Gamma Rho brought in nearly \$7,000 to be donated to the Colorado AgrAbility Project so that they can make a difference in the lives of Colorado Farmers with physical limitations that make farming more difficult.

NIFA New Four Year Grant Cycle

Congratulations are due to Dr. Bob Fetsch (CSU), Kristi Esbenshade (Goodwill Industries), and Candy Leathers (Goodwill Industries) for the hard work and long hours spent writing our new USDA/NIFA 2019-2023 AgrAbility grant proposal. Not only were we awarded the four year grant but we were advised that it was the best written of all 26 grant applications submitted.

This grant partially funds our AgrAbility Project (CAP) so that we can continue to provide on-farm services to Colorado's struggling farmers. Working with farmers, local community resources, and our wonderful CSU Extension staff, we will be bringing the message of hope to farmers and ranchers who struggle with stress, depression, substance mis-use, and suicide.

CAP commenced this grant cycle by bringing a nationally recognized specialist in opioid mis-use and suicide prevention to Colorado. Dr. Roberta Schweitzer presented a full day seminar for local AgrAbility staff and stakeholder professionals on the signs and symptoms of substance misuse disorder and suicide. The intent of this first professional seminar was to highlight the issues, raise awareness, and challenge the listener to take action and refer the contact to seek help.

We then provided one hour long seminars at locations throughout Colorado. These trainings were targeted to raise the awareness in rural Colorado and start the conversation in these communities where the problems are often more severe and are hidden by the isolation.

This year we will kick-off our 2019-2020 Winter Workshops with a seminar for professionals once again offered at the CSU campus Lory Student Center in Fort Collins. This programs featured presenter is Dr. Mike Rosman. This practicing psychologist claims to be the first to coin the title "Farm Psychologist". His practice specializes in treating farmers and farm families with depression, stress, and substance issues. Dr. Rosman also publishes newsletters on farm mental health issues. The date is set for 12-3-19. To reserve your space contact:

robert.fetsch@colostate.edu



Reeves Gives CAP a Helping Hand

We here at the CAP are so blessed by the generosity of the Christopher and Dana Reeves foundation. Their Mission is to fund programs that provide services to persons with Spinal Cord Injury. Our client base has always been comprised of many farmers with Spinal Cord or Neuromuscular Injury (SCI). So on the face of it, we should be perfect partners. CAP provides on-farm services to all clients including those with SCI. Further, CAP is rather thinly funded to deliver services across the entire state of Colorado.

The good folks at Reeves agreed and encouraged us to write a grant to submit to them for funding. So our grants department did so and we were funded. Those funds permitted us to have access to travel dollars that we were otherwise short of. It enabled us to provide trainings of a broader nature than before and to an expanded audience. We were a good match and so we went forward with some SCI programming across our state from the western slope to Cortez, and on to Sterling.

Well that was last year. Among other things we learned that year was the existence of one glaring deficit in our repertoire- teaching aids. Showing pictures of a tool and explaining it verbally goes only so far in helping the participant to grasp its value to them.

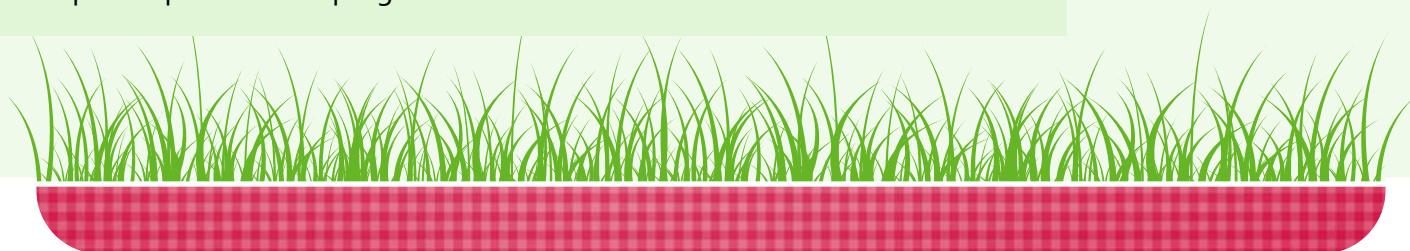
Unfortunately CAP does not have line item funds for teaching aids. We barely have enough funding to do what is required in our basic services. We would value some teaching aid dollars but we just don't have it. That was until we were doing the wrap up of the prior Reeves grant. It appears that we had not spent close to \$6,000 of the grant funds.

Our wonderful grant department went to work. With many grants, if the money is not spent during the grant cycle, it must be returned. So working with our grant writer Elizabeth, our Director Kristi Esbenshade and the grant team at Reeves, we made a proposal. Could we keep the funds and spend them on teaching aids for SCI clients if we can spend the money in the next 30-90 days. The Reeves Foundation countered with a proposal that we can do so as long as the aids can be made available for short term loan to SCI clients.

We agreed and today are spending the money to enhance what we can do at Winter Workshops and professional programs.



AgrAbility has been challenged to find sources for aids to teaching that stimulate the conversation. This wonderful gift from the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation makes a difference " says Project Manager Candy Leathers



How Did He Get from There to Here?

A Cowboy Finds Himself Underwater

When US Navy Vet Ron Kroll first heard about the Colorado AgrAbility Project, it was on behalf of a young autistic lad, the son of his Significant Other. One would never know that Ron who grew up a cowboy had been a Navy diver assigned to dive across the world including dives in the dangerous rivers of South Vietnam supporting Naval Special Warfare. At that time Navy Diver Ron Kroll was as adept with a SCUBA tank as he was with a saddle. But that changed. He left the navy and returned to his love— ranching

One never knows how things in life come together. As strange and disconnected they seem it was that tour of duty in the Navy that qualified Ron for some special CAP services. The Project was fortunate enough to be granted some funds from the state of Colorado Department of Military and Veterans affairs to purchase Assistive Technology for disabled veterans who were in production agriculture. A tough life had dealt Ron some blows and he was up to the challenge but still struggled with deficits that made walking long distances over uneven terrain hard. In addition he lacked arm strength and had never quite recovered from a horse accident.

Ron was dragging hose up to near a 1/4 mile from his well to the farthest stock tank. He also carried 50 pound buckets to some animals. Well it was cutting short his life as a rancher. The CAP team went out to the ranch and made an assessment. The recommendation was for a water line to be installed from the well to the farthest stock tank. An application for funding was written and approved. A local vendor was able to come out to do the work. Even with the help from the DMVA, Ron still had challenges. Through a referral from CAP, Ron applied for services from the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. They were able to make him eligible for services and Mr. Kroll was able to obtain additional much needed ranch equipment. Now Ron says this water system and the livestock handling equipment will extend his ranching life for 10 more years. Say's Mr. Kroll "Looking back, I don't know how I ever did it!"

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