

Farmer SUCCESS Spotlight: Wayne Olson

Opportunities Abound for Farmer with Assistive Technology

Wayne Olson and his wife Paula live on eight acres in northeast Oklahoma where they have a garden, a small orchard and raise chickens. Wayne had plans to expand his garden to include tomatoes, okra and cucumbers but experienced obstacles due to the physical pain he endured while operating equipment and completing farm related tasks.

Wayne contacted the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project to inquire about services that help farmers and ranchers with disabilities. He worked closely with project staff to determine and prioritize needed assistive technology that would accommodate his disabling conditions of Fibromyalgia, Myofasciitis, and two fused vertebrae in his cervical spine.

In an effort to reduce pain and fatigue that resulted from operating the walk-behind tiller, a 3-point rotary tiller was identified to assist him in cultivating the soil for his garden. The new tiller easily attaches to his tractor and provides opportunity for him to continue his role as a producer of fruits and vegetables with less negative impact to his body.



Wayne is excited about the expansion of his fruit and vegetable operation and simply can't wait for spring to arrive!



"I love it!" was all Wayne had to say about his new 3-point rotary tiller.

Now that some of the physical demands have been reduced, Wayne said he feels stronger and has energy to do more around the farm than ever before. "It also lets me plan better, knowing I can accomplish more."

His next challenge is mapping out his property to determine the exact locations for the additional gardens as well as identifying additional types of fruits and vegetables to plant beyond tomatoes, okra and cucumbers. "It's like a dream come true for me!" said Wayne, who will be very busy this winter.

Funding provided by the Oklahoma Assistive Technology Foundation's Assistive Technology Grant for Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities as well as his personal contribution toward the purchase of a rotary tiller, gave him opportunity to prep his soil bed with less physical impact to his body.

About Oklahoma AgrAbility

Oklahoma AgrAbility connects farmers and ranchers with disabilities to resources about ways to continue success in their enterprise, operation and daily life activities. Call AgrAbility at 888-885-5588 (voice/tty) or e-mail ability@okstate.edu for more information.



People of AgrAbility

Partner Corner

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension

Jan Johnston

Happy New Year! In 2011, Oklahoma AgrAbility celebrates its 9th year working with farmers and ranchers who wish to work despite a disabling condition. We are here to assist these Oklahomans to have successful careers in agriculture while continuing to contribute to their communities and state.

Oklahoma AgrAbility links land-grant OSU with non-profit OK Assistive Technology Foundation (OkAT) serviced by OK ABLE Tech to provide education and assistance to farming and ranching families with disabilities. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension, as Project lead, fulfills OSU's mission to "bring the university to you." This means local Extension Educators work along side their neighbors to address relevant issues based on research-based information. These county partnerships encourage referrals to programs like AgrAbility.

In May 2010, I joined AgrAbility as Project Director. As OSU Extension Specialist in Adult Development &

Aging, I work statewide with Educators to develop educational outreach to a variety of audiences, including agricultural families. Extension and OkAT/ABLE Tech work to remove barriers to successful farming by recommending assistive devices and individualized modifications. Together, we identify funding sources through networking efforts to assist with acquiring these devices, seeking to provide practical solutions for continued productive employment.



Here's a quote that sums up the purpose of AgrAbility. *When disability strikes a farm family, everything changes except perhaps the desire to continue farming.*

AgrAbility is here to assist those of you who have had a recent injury or an on-going condition – like arthritis – that impact your work. We join with you in fulfilling your desire to continue to farm and ranch!

Advisory Council Spotlight



Andy Fosmire is a member of the Oklahoma AgrAbility Advisory Council. He works as the Executive Director of Rural Health Projects/Northwest Area Health Education Center and has been on the AgrAbility Advisory Council for about 4 years. He also maintains a small cow/calf operation and is the President of the National Area Health Education Center organization.

"AgrAbility is an opportunity for returning farmers to get back to productive work", states Fosmire. Fosmire first learned about Oklahoma AgrAbility through his wife and asked the program to attend the annual Rural Health Conference. Oklahoma AgrAbility is an interest of his because he has a recreational therapy background and believes people should be brought back to what they enjoy after an injury. AgrAbility's focus to support farmers and ranchers with disabilities and their families helps them maintain a productive role in agriculture.

Fosmire has enjoyed seeing the impact AgrAbility makes on farmers, such as John Enns, Oklahoma State Representative District 41, and looks forward to seeing AgrAbility raise community awareness of the project and its services.



Spotlight on Oklahoma AgrAbility: AgrAbility Day at the Capitol

AgrAbility Day at the Capitol will be held Monday, March 28, 2011, from 1pm to 4pm. to increase state legislators' awareness of the importance of the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project to the success of agricultural producers who have disabilities.

In 2007, the Oklahoma AgrAbility Act was unanimously passed by a bipartisan vote and became law providing Oklahoma farmers/ranchers with disabilities access to the education, assistance and support they need to help them be more independent with their agricultural operations. The OK Legislature however, did not choose to appropriate any funds that would support expanded services for the Project and provide the program with the ability to be sustained.

During AgrAbility Day at the Capitol, the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project will have the opportunity to explain to state legislators the positive employment impact which the program has on the lives of agricultural producers with disabilities. In addition, exhibits and demonstrations showcasing the services and accomplishments of Oklahoma AgrAbility will be available in the fourth floor rotunda of the Capitol building, as well as, on the South lawn.

If you wish to attend and would like more information about how you can participate, call 888-885-5588 (voice/tty) or email ability@okstate.edu.



Senior Citizens Hearing Aid Program

The Senior Citizens Hearing Aid Program provides one hearing aid per person at little or no cost to income eligible individuals. To be eligible for a hearing aid you must be a resident of Oklahoma, 60 years of age or older and have a hearing loss of 35 decibels or greater in the better ear. The hearing loss must be determined by an audiologist that contracts with the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) but is selected by the applicant. Individuals earning above the income guidelines will be charged a co-payment. The co-payment will equal 10% of the difference between your monthly income and the monthly income guideline.

For an application, you may call the office of the Oklahoma Equipment Distribution Program located at the Oklahoma School for the Deaf in Sulphur at (580) 622-8812 or toll free at (866) 309-1717. You may also download a copy of the application at the website: <http://www.osd.k12.ok.us/preadmissions.html> Complete, sign and mail the application to the address provided on the back of the application. Income verification must be included with the application. If you currently file income tax with the IRS, provide a copy of the front page of your 1040 plus verification of the Social Security income. DRS will determine eligibility and fax an authorization to the audiologist you selected from a list of providers. You will then arrange an appointment with the audiologist; DRS will pay for the testing. The audiologist will order the hearing aid and arrange for a fitting. This program has limited funding so often by the end of each fiscal year which is June 30th, there is a waiting list.





On the Horizon: AgrAbility events

January 7-8, 2011	KNID Agrifest, Enid Oklahoma
January 19, 2011	Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program Instructor certification for OCES/FCS, OSU-Stillwater
January 20-21, 2011	Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Family Consumer Sciences Educator Conference
February 18-19, 2011	American Farmers & Ranchers Annual meeting, Norman, Oklahoma
February 20, 2011	Career Tech Open House, Drumright Oklahoma
March 28, 2011	AgrAbility Day at the Capitol, Oklahoma City
April 7-9, 2011	Southern Plains Farm Show

About this newsletter

This is a quarterly publication available via mail, e-mail and the Web at www.agrability.okstate.edu. For more information about this newsletter please contact AgrAbility at 888-885-5588 (voice/tty) or e-mail ability@okstate.edu.



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