

Oklahoma AgrAbility

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Focus on A Farmer: Joe Williams

Joe and Pat Williams, owners of Hillside Farms in Barnsdall, live on the same farm where Joe's grandfather operated a dairy, hand-milking 90 head of cattle twice a day.

The husband and wife combination now manage a 12 head cow-calf operation, run goats and produce corn, squash, tomatoes, okra, onions and green beans throughout their 75-acre property. While completing farm tasks was already demanding, it became even more so after Joe became disabled.

A trip and fall into the barn door in 2008 left Joe with a broken back and surgery that resulted in right-side paralysis. While Joe continues to recover and has regained his ability to walk short distances, obstacles and barriers remained both on the farm and in the home.

To continue his full-time employment on the farm, Joe was in need of assistive technologies that would reduce those obstacles and barriers and provide greater opportunity for him to independently complete tasks.

The Williams' contacted the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project for assistance and ideas, and participated in the on-farm site assessment that provided recommendations for needed accommodations.

A priority for Joe was improving the way he fed large round hay bales to his cattle. "We don't have a tractor big enough to pick up big round bales of hay, so I have to get off the tractor and hand crank the bale buggy to lift it up and down," Joe said. An electric winch was identified to lift and set the bale and to reduce physical demand to his body. Williams is pleased with the accommodation and stated, "The only problem I have now is I get a blister from pushing the button!"

Accommodations to the home included a bath transfer seat, grab bars, an overhead trapeze bar to assist with bed transfers, and a ramp with rails at the front of the house. Joe's truck is now equipped with running boards that assist him when climbing in and out of his vehicle, while the banding kit and storage/feed bins reduce obstacles experienced when providing care to his cattle. As for only walking short distances, Joe now travels to his various worksites around the farm on his new scooter.

In reference to the collaborative efforts of Oklahoma AgrAbility and Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, the appropriately identified funding source, Joe said, "I don't even know whether I would be farming now, it would be so hard. They've helped us so much."

- Sean Hubbard and Sandra Stevenson



A bale buggy with an electric winch attached to Joe's tractor helps him transport hay bales.

Photo by: Sandra Stevenson

About Oklahoma AgrAbility

Oklahoma AgrAbility educates and connects agricultural families who are living with a disability with resources to secure assistive technologies for continued independence and success in their operation and daily life activities.



Spotlight on Current Issues

Challenges Continue for Cow-Calf Producers in Drought Regions



The historic drought in 2010 forced many cow-calf producers to liquidate all or part of their herds. For those producers who were able to retain cows, the challenges of managing through the drought will extend through the winter and into next spring. Water supplies may be the most critical factor for some producers this winter although recent rains did replenish ponds in some areas.

Many producers have had to buy hay and are using a wide variety of feed resources to carry cows through the winter. These feed resources often vary widely in quality and producers are encouraged to carefully monitor nutrition on cows to maintain productivity.

The greatest danger of roughing cows through a drought is that the costs of the drought are not avoided but merely postponed and show up later in reduced productivity due to low pregnancy rates and reduced calf crops. It is critical that producers know the nutritional value of feed resources, particularly for feeds that are unfamiliar or from unknown sources. Testing forages is a cheap investment that can ultimately reduce the cost of the drought.

Hopefully, producers already completed pregnancy examinations and know all cows will indeed produce a calf. The extremely high temperatures last summer reduced pregnancy rate in some instances. Producers should carefully monitor the body condition of cows this winter. Maintaining an adequate nutritional program will help ensure the birth of healthy, vigorous calves, and that cows will rebreed on schedule.

Producers can utilize their local extension office for help with forage testing, developing nutritional programs to maintain herd productivity. In addition, visit www.oces.okstate.edu for online resources.

- Derrell S. Peel, OSU Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

People of AgrAbility

The Oklahoma AgrAbility Project won an award at the National AgrAbility Training Workshop Nov. 8-10 for highest attendance. Six Oklahoma staff were pleased to escort two farm families from Oklahoma along with 13 Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Service partners to the workshop in Indianapolis. In addition, Linda Jaco, Project Co-Director and Director of Sponsored Programs at the OSU Seretean Wellness Center, received "The Breaking New Ground Achievement Award" for major contributions to the lives of Oklahoma farm families with disabling conditions.

Spotlight on Assistive Technology:

Gate wheels make gates easier and safer to operate. They preserve the structural integrity of a new gate and can extend the usability of an older gate by providing support, and lessening the effects of weathering. Gates open and close more smoothly because the gate wheel eases the weight and momentum of a gate. A gate wheel also increases safety when small children are involved because small feet can become trapped under a gate dragging on the ground.



Partner Corner: Charles Rohla

Charles Rohla is an Assistant Professor in Agriculture Research at The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, focusing on pecan production. He joined the Foundation in 2006 and has served on the AgrAbility Advisory Council for one year. Rohla grew up on a stocker cattle operation in NW Oklahoma and he and his wife currently operate a horse and hay operation in SE Oklahoma.



Photo by: Ag Com Services

Rohla first heard about AgrAbility at a youth farm safety day event. "I was amazed at the resources available to farmers and ranchers," he said. He chose his profession to help ag producers become more profitable in their enterprises, and feels AgrAbility is an exceptional and unique resource allowing farmers and ranchers the ability to stay active and successful in Agriculture. Rohla's experience in crops, livestock and forage production brings a diverse agricultural background to the AgrAbility Advisory Council. He interacts with many farmers and ranchers on a monthly basis and is able to see the needs of these individuals. He believes many producers would simply give up without the positive support from AgrAbility.

- Stacy Bauter



Funding Spotlight: Operation Round Up®

An Oklahoma Electric Cooperative Program, Operation Round Up,® is a charitable program offered by many utility companies across the country to provide financial assistance and improve the health and well-being of those in need. The Oklahoma Electric Cooperative established this program in Oklahoma over 10 years ago and since that time more than \$1.5 million has been awarded to assist individuals and organizations experiencing hardships. The program is funded through customers agreeing to have their utility bill rounded up to the next whole dollar amount. Resulting contributions average \$6 a year per participating customer. Multiply that amount by thousands of people across the state who contribute, and Operation Round Up® is able to assist both families and non-profit organizations in need.



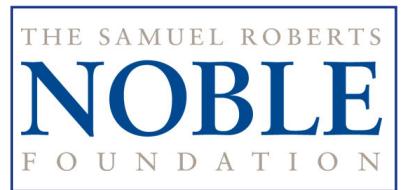
In addition to individuals, community Projects and local nonprofit organizations such as food pantries, volunteer fire departments and rural ambulance services can also receive assistance. Each electric cooperative service determines exactly how their Operation Round Up® program will serve their community. Common categories are health care, personal need, disaster relief and education.

To apply for Operation Round Up® funding, contact the local electric Co-op or a local community action agency. The non-profit foundation managing the program for the electric Co-op reviews applications on a case-by-case basis. Awards vary by state and by utility company. Awards range from a few hundred dollars up to \$20,000 or more for organizations. Applications should be submitted as early as possible since funding for Operation Round Up programs are limited.

-Julie York

Resource Spotlight: The Noble Foundation: From the Laboratory to the Field

In 1945, the seeds of the Noble Foundation were planted by Lloyd Noble when he brought together a small group of specialists to offer soil testing services and advice to farmers and ranchers in two southern Oklahoma counties. This original group ultimately grew into the Noble Foundation's Agricultural Division.



Today, the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation consists of three divisions: Agriculture, Plant Biology and Forage. The Ag Division assists more than 1,700 ag producers and other managers of natural resources in achieving their financial,



production, stewardship and quality-of-life goals through consultation, education, research, and demonstration. The Noble Foundation's 800-acre research campus includes more than 110 researchers and scientists with doctoral degrees. The Division's consultants serve a 47-county area within a 100-mile radius around Ardmore that includes counties in both Texas and Oklahoma.

The division provides consultation services to producers and land managers in the areas of forage, livestock, soil and crops, ag economics, horticulture and wildlife & fisheries. These services are provided at no charge to their "cooperators" and have an estimated economic impact of more than \$15 million per year.

The Agricultural Division also offers a helpline call-in service to the public world-wide. The Agricultural Division regularly hosts public and cooperator-specific educational seminars and hands-on workshops covering a broad range of agricultural and agribusiness interests. Over 50 years after its creation, the purpose of the Noble Foundation remains to enhance agriculture and land stewardship and to benefit mankind. Together, Noble Foundation agricultural specialists and scientists move science from the laboratory to the field, giving life to discovery and improving agriculture in Oklahoma, the United States and the world.

- Julie York/Photo credit: Broderick Stearns/The Noble Foundation





On the Horizon: 2012 AgrAbility Events

January 13-14	KNID Agrifest, Enid
February 3-4	Therapeutic Recreation Association of Oklahoma State Conference, Stillwater
February 11	Five-State Women in Ag Conference, Guymon
February 23	Dept. of Rehabilitation Services Academy, OKC
February 28	AgrAbility Project Centra Training for OCES
March 6	Southeast District OHCE Meeting, Ada
March 16	Northwest District OHCE Meeting, Enid
March 20	Northeast District OHCE Meeting, Sapulpa
March 30	Southeast District OHCE Meeting, Altus

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**Save the Date ~ Celebrate our 10th anniversary with us at:
AgrAbility Day at the Capitol ~ March 26, 2012**

Scan this QR code to access our website with any free smart phone app.

GOING GREEN! The Oklahoma AgrAbility Project supports initiatives for a healthier tomorrow. Let us know if you would be interested in receiving our newsletter electronically by emailing ability@okstate.edu with the subject line "Email Newsletter." We will then discontinue mailing you a hard copy.



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