

News from the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project

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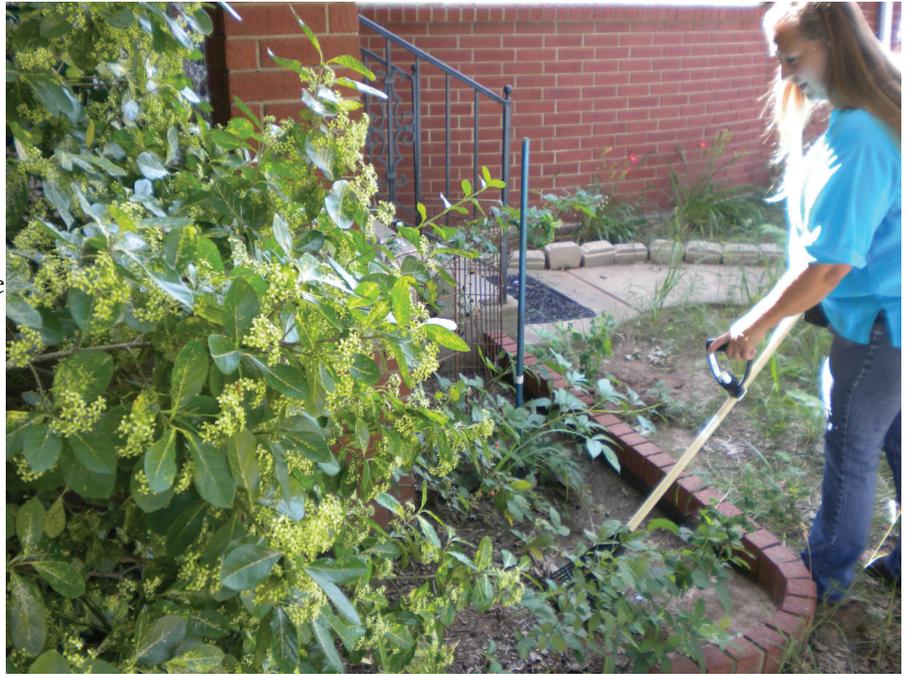
Farmer SUCCESS Spotlight: Dee Shouse *Living by the B.A.S.I.C.S. to Help Give Back*

Dee Shouse of Perkins, Oklahoma lives by the code B.A.S.I.C.S. “Belief, Attitude, Skills, Initiative, Community, and Service is what my life revolves around. I love giving back to my community and farming allows me to do that.” However, in 2006 Dee was involved in a vehicular incident that was life changing for her and almost took her away from this lifestyle altogether. As Dee recovers from her accident, she continues to experience weakness, pain, and fatigue while completing tasks with her hands and back. Dee’s farm operation with her husband Randy includes raising sheep, chickens, and Macedonian Shepherd dogs. They have also rescued three horses recently.

When Dee first heard of the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project while attending a “Women in Ag” meeting, she was a little skeptical. “It’s hard when people look at you differently being young with physical limitations. I didn’t want to face that in my life and didn’t care for people to call me disabled.” Dee went on to note that “I can’t imagine my life without the farm, so I decided to give AgrAbility the chance to see if they could help me.”

The Oklahoma AgrAbility Project collaborated with Oklahoma ABLE Tech’s Assistive Technology Lending Lab to assist Dee in identifying tools that would ease her pain when completing farm tasks. These tools included an ergonomic shrub-rake, weeder, wool knee and elbow warmers, extended shoe horn, and long arm-reacher. For opening doors and gates, Dee borrowed items designed to help reduce pain and effort of doing so. “Everyday offers its own unique challenges, but AgrAbility has helped me keep moving.”

The Oklahoma Assistive Technology Foundation’s (OkAT) Assistive Technology Grant for Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities made it possible to purchase



Dee Shouse proudly uses her ergonomic shrub-rake which allows her to complete her farm tasks.

assistive technology items Dee needed to complete daily living tasks in the home as well as on the farm.

With the help and resources the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project has provided, Dee hopes to eventually develop a general store type business where she can sell her herbs, chicken eggs, feed and seed. She would also like to create therapeutic opportunities for traumatized individuals, in particular children, to interact with her animals. When asked if she had any advice to give somebody about AgrAbility she noted “they offer new ways for living, both long term and short term, and I couldn’t have asked for anything more.”



Partner Updates



Kevin Bell, M.S.
Oklahoma AgrAbility
Program Coordinator

Kevin is the new Oklahoma AgrAbility Program Coordinator. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Allied Health and Nutrition in 2007 and a Master of Science degree in Nutritional Sciences in 2009, both from Oklahoma State University. He

began his career as a Wellness Coach for the city of Dallas, TX and worked face to face with his clients and their health goals. He returned to Oklahoma State University in May 2010 as part of the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project team. As Program Coordinator, Kevin creates and updates educational materials, display items and presentations. He also designs promotional materials, the quarterly newsletter, news releases, and maintains the project Web site. Kevin also fulfills networking and educational opportunities with the agricultural component of the Project by attending conferences and giving public speaking events about AgrAbility.

If there are any questions/comments/concerns, please feel free to reach out to Kevin by e-mail at kevin.g.bell@okstate.edu or by phone at 405.744.6725.

SAVE THE DATE!

Oklahoma AgrAbility will present a continuing education conference for rehabilitation professionals Friday and Saturday October 8-9, 2010. The course "Rehabilitating Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers," will be offered at the Oklahoma State University, Seretean Wellness Center in Stillwater.

Speakers for the conference include Lynn Jeffries, PT, PhD, PCS Director of the Langston University School of Physical Therapy, Oklahoma AgrAbility Project members from Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and Oklahoma ABLE Tech, as well as invited speakers from the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.

The brochure for the course will be distributed in August. Please save the date and contact AgrAbility Assistant Stacy Bauter for additional information. stacy.bauter@okstate.edu, 405-744-5054 or 888-885-5588 (voice/tty).

Langston University **Small Farmers Conference**

"Small Farmers and Ranchers at the Crossroads" was the theme of the 19th Annual Small Farmers Conference held May 26-28, 2010 at Langston University-Oklahoma City, 4205 N Lincoln Blvd. Keynote speakers were Pearl Reed, U.S. Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Administration, and William Buchanan, USDA Risk Management Agency's Director for Civil Rights.

"Oklahoma AgrAbility-Farming with a Disability" was presented by Program Manager Sandra Stevenson at the conference, highlighting state-wide education, direct assistance and networking in an effort to support farmers and ranchers with disabilities and their families.

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Arthritis and Agriculture

Oklahoma farmers and ranchers face many challenges every day. Dealing with Mother Nature, pest control, and farm equipment not working the way it should are just some of them. One of the major issues facing Oklahoma's farmers and ranchers today is arthritis. Did you know that over 812,000 Oklahomans have been diagnosed with arthritis? This number includes farmers and ranchers, because whether it is working cattle or planting crops, farmers and ranchers put a toll on their body. Arthritis has the potential to take farmers and ranchers away from their everyday duties.

What is Arthritis?

Arthritis literally means "inflammation of a joint." It results in swelling, redness, pain, and loss of motion. It causes pain in joints and limits moving around. It can also pose problems in an individual's muscles and tendons, making them tender and stiff. The most common form of arthritis is called osteoarthritis, which affects joints usually on one side of the body. Common risk factors include:

- If you have a Family History
- If you are age 40 and older
- If you are Overweight
- If you have previous Joint Injury
- If you have Muscle Weakness

Helpful Ways to Manage

Managing arthritis can be done by numerous methods. The first step is to receive a proper diagnosis from your doctor. Once this is in place, an appropriate treatment plan can be designed. Such treatments may be heat and cold remedies, exercising and stretching technique, medication, or treating your body to better sleep and rest. Sources of assistance come in the form of rehabilitation also. Physical, Vocational, and Occupational Therapists can help provide information and hands on treatment to help you cope with arthritis.

Helpful Available Resources

The good news about arthritis is that it can be managed in a way that will keep you working. The Oklahoma AgrAbility Project and Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service can offer arthritis information and resources to help you. Oklahoma ABLE Tech partners with AgrAbility to help make assistive technology devices

more available and accessible to individuals with disabilities and their families. Assistive technology or AT is available to aid you in living independently with arthritis. AT is a tool or gadget designed to help increase, maintain, and improve functional capabilities for people with disabilities, such as arthritis. Ergonomic handles are a type of AT that has been designed to help you hold on to tools with greater ease to reduce pain. Other examples, like gardening tools, have been developed to help decrease stress on joints. These tools are useful because they require little force to operate and make it easier on the individual to garden at their leisure. Larger equipment, such as a tractor lift seen in the picture below, can help get farmers in their tractors with greater ease and comfort.

There is no magic cure for arthritis. However, many farmers and ranchers still manage to work despite having arthritis. You are not alone and there is help available. If you need assistance for you or a member of your family, please contact Oklahoma AgrAbility. Call us toll free at 888-885-5588 Voice/TTY or email us at ability@okstate.edu.





On the Horizon: AgrAbility Events

- July 11-15, National Association of County Agricultural Agents, Tulsa
- July 18-20, Oklahoma Home & Community Education State Conference, Oklahoma City
- July 28-30, 89th Annual 4-H Roundup, Stillwater
- August 2-3, 43rd Annual Oklahoma Career and Technology Education Conference, Tulsa
- October 8-9, Rehabilitating Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers Conference, Stillwater

In the News: Spotlight on Oklahoma AgrAbility

Every Thursday, July 8 – August 12, 2010 Stillwater, OK.
 Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program. This is a Life Improvement Series that will be hosted by the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project. Certified instructors Sandra Stevenson, AgrAbility Project Program Manager and Elicia Pollard, Langston University School of Physical Therapy, Assistant Professor will teach participants knowledge and skills needed to better manage their arthritis.

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.

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.

SUMMER Friendly Resources

For information about arthritis help, good nutrition and physical activities, and understanding long-term care issues, visit the resource page at <http://agrability.okstate.edu/ResourceCenter.html>.

access to Agriculture is provided by the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project, 1514 West Hall of Fame Stillwater, OK 74078; 405-744-2398; www.agrability.okstate.edu.

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