

# Making Career Decisions Following a Disability

## A Guide for Farmers and Ranchers



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## **A Guide for Farmers and Ranchers**

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## Purpose

Breaking New Ground has developed this resource, *Making Career Decisions Following a Disability — A Guide for Farmers and Ranchers*, to provide rural professionals practical materials for helping farmers and ranchers make vocational decisions. Vital to this process is properly assessing and understanding farmers and ranchers needs, resources, values, skills and interests before assisting them with career changes.

By design, information on employment and career decisions (the focus of this resource guide) is precluded by a discussion of the prevalence of disabilities in agriculture, characteristics of agricultural production and the importance of farming as a lifestyle as well as an occupation. Please take time to review this information in Chapter I. Hopefully you will find the remaining chapters to be a practical and useful source for handouts and thought provoking activities to aid farmers and ranchers with disabilities in making career decisions.

The information in this resource was presented at the 1992 National AgrAbility Conference. The final product is one that has been field tested and provides material to be used by both the farmer or rancher with a disability and the rural professional.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks go to all who contributed to this resource. There were many authors and editors who shared their expertise. Appreciation is extended to Denise Heath who retyped the many drafts. A special thank-you goes to the farm families who shared their stories, and especially to Rick Buckland who contributed the article, "What Happened to a Dream." Appreciation is expressed to Purdue University Placement Service and Caterpillar corporation for contributing self-assessment tools and sample job applications. Also a thank-you to Therese Willkomm for taking the time to read the materials and give her suggestions.

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### DISCLAIMER

The Breaking New Ground Resource Center and Purdue University do not endorse, recommend, or certify any of the techniques, products, or modifications described in this publication as being safe or effective in solving a particular problem. Every individual with a physical disability has unique needs and various levels of abilities. Consequently, the potential hazards associated with each workplace modification or anticipated activity should be carefully assessed and eliminated where possible. Where specific hazards cannot be removed, they should be appropriately guarded against inadvertent contact. Appropriate warnings should be used where needed and operator instructions provided.

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## Foreword

"What Happened To A Dream" was written by Rick Buckland a farmer who sustained a spinal cord injury (SCI) at 2 years of age. Rick farmed for more than 30 years with a SCI, but he says the greatest obstacle he faced was losing everything he knew, losing his way of life. "What Happened To A Dream," offers a glimpse into the experiences of a farm family confronting the challenges of losing a way of life.

### What Happened To A Dream

*By Richard Buckland*

I was quietly watching as men were preparing dynamite charges. My family had owned this farm for five generations, but someone else owned it now. How had this happened? An explosion rang in my ears, and I watched a silo made of concrete and steel fall to the earth. Was this the end? That sight was painful for me, so it was easy to drift back into myself to search for the answers.

I remember that November afternoon in 1976 when the entire family had agreed to meet to discuss the development of a new dairy complex. My brother Dan, an architecture major at Ball State University, had done his senior thesis on the proposed project. His presentation was observed intently by local bank officials, who, along with family members, had amassed themselves in our dining room.

The major points of the presentation were eagerly received. A nine-acre lake would be needed for water, housing for six hundred milking cows, a rotary milking parlor that would milk one hundred cows per hour, and a manure handling system that would meet the new federal regulation. Everything looked like the project would work. The bankers began a series of questions:

"Rick, you're the money manager, right?"

"Yes, that's what they tell me."

"Can you show me a cash flow projection?" he asked.

"I'll need some input from you to answer that," I replied.

"What do you need to know?" he queried.

"Interest...how high will it go?"

"It will never break double digits," he said without hesitation. In retrospect, that was the moment I should have heard the cold steel door slamming shut behind me.

"If I figure ten percent we'll be safe, right?"

"If it works at ten percent, you've got the loan."

"I'll have the projections ready for you to look at in a few days." The paper chase was over, and in the spring the real work would begin.

The spring of 1977 found us with a list of subcontractors and a stack of purchase orders waiting to be activated. This became a time of frustration for me. I lived less than two hundred yards from the building site but rarely got to see how things were progressing. My day called for me to be at the old dairy at two a.m. and not to return home until nine p.m. Only contacts made by C.B. radio kept me apprised of what was going on. Thousands of tons of dirt were moved and hundreds of yards of concrete were poured that spring. Spring quickly turned to summer and the piles of lumber and siding soon took form. I remember them telling me the lake was almost half full.

"KBK 6505 unit 2 to unit 1." It was my brother Dan.

"Unit 1," I replied with anticipation.

"We're ready for the electricians." This was the call I had waited for all summer. Calling the electricians meant we were two-thirds complete. The target date of mid-September for moving the herd seemed very real now.

As summer slipped into fall, we found moving day quickly upon us. Our strategy for that day was well planned. A caravan of stock trailers, supplied and manned by friends and neighbors, would be used to load each animal upon completion of the morning milking. One load after another disappeared into the early morning haze, and by seven a.m. the cows were gone. Only two loads of baby calves remained on the farm. As I waited for a trailer to return, my heart sank a little. During my entire life there had always been cows on this farm. It was the one constant that gave me stability in the midst of insanity. Now it was gone.

The move was complete and a meal befitting the occasion was being served: chicken, potato salad, baked beans, soda pop and a cake that celebrated the fact that we had made it was shared by all. Just as we sat down to eat we heard the cry "Cows Out!" Paper plates slid in every direction in hopes of avoiding the stampede to the stairs that led to the barn. My mother stood holding her sides, laughing as she and her friends watched the response to the false alarm. We had now immersed ourselves in our dream and reality was upon us.

We soon found that reality can be quite frightening. The very first night, a cow was killed by the electronic manure removal system. The next day the installer assured us that a minor adjustment would eliminate the problem. Three and a half months later, twenty-seven cows had been killed or maimed, and the elaborate system had to be removed. This unplanned stress on the herd resulted in a loss of over two thousand pounds of milk per animal. That well-documented cash flow, that great flowing river that would carry us to the sea of success, was beginning to meander.

The state of the art silage system, which had been a bright spot in the overall plan, could not get the job done. It seemed that the designer had done all of his testing on twenty-foot-diameter silos and assumed they would function equally well in a thirty-foot-diameter structure. He was wrong! When restitution was sought, he quickly declared bankruptcy and returned to England. With silos full of feed and no way to get it out, supplemental feed had to be purchased. The cash flow had receded from its banks even more. No longer a mighty river, there was no resemblance to even its meandering kin, for now it was merely a quiet stream.

Just fifteen months into our loan we were informed that the interest, which we were assured would never break double digits, was now at twelve and one half percent and would reach between fourteen and sixteen percent before the end of the calendar year. Our cash flow resembled a muddy creek bed in July.

Our dream had turned into a nightmare, but the worst was yet to come.

The farm was operated by my dad, my brother, and me, with help from my wife and mother when needed. Dad was the glue that held everything together. This was our family's dream and as long as dad believed in it, we knew it would all work out sooner or later. It seemed as if a great chess match were being played, and one by one the key pieces were being removed. My father died as a result of an accident while returning from delivering a load of milk to the local dairy. That winter I hit a tree while going to work, resulting in some loss of the use of my right arm. My wife tried to cover for me. She did the milking and fed the calves. Then the same snow that had taken me out of the game also took my wife out of it. While carrying a bucket of milk to feed the calves, she fell and tore the ligaments in her ankle. What more could go wrong? The next spring began the year of the drought. With me on my back, my wife just out of her cast, my brother looking as if he were twenty years older than he was, and delinquent bank payments before us, we received the inevitable call. The bankers had decided they wanted to have a meeting.

I sat frozen as the plan was given to me one step at a time. First the eight hundred head of livestock would be sold, next the machinery would be liquidated, finally, the sheriff would sell at public auction the total sum of twelve hundred acres of land.

A dream is about change, but now I know that change means a journey into the unknown. For me the memory of what could have been lingers. The river has run its course and now disappears into the sea. This dream, like the river, becomes part of something greater. My life has been altered by these events, but like the sea, it goes on.

## **I. Introduction — Working in Agriculture**

Although the focus on this resource is on making career decisions and seeking off-farm employment, it is important to review four general factors that greatly influence farmers and ranchers. These factors include: prevalence of disabilities in the rural agricultural community, characteristics of agricultural production, farming and ranching as a lifestyle and the trends in rural employment.

### **A. Prevalence of Disabilities in the Rural Agricultural Community**

There are 2.2 million farm families in the United States who are responsible for the production of food and fiber essential to all of us. In addition, there are about 5-7 million agricultural workers who assist in this task on a full-time or seasonal basis. History has shown that the agricultural-related sector of the population is particularly susceptible to disabling injuries. A recent report from the National Safety Council has classified agriculture as one of the most hazardous occupations in America (Accident Facts, 1991 Edition). If accidents involving children in the agricultural workplace were included, agriculture's injury rate would be even higher.

The following statistics indicate the prevalence of disabilities within the rural agricultural community:

#### **1. Farm Related Injuries**

- 64% of all farm work injuries are severe injuries (Hoskin and Miller, 1979).
- 1% of the non-fatal farm injuries occurring each year prevent the farmer from continuing to work due to a permanent disability (National Safety Council, 1991).
- 2% of full-time farm operators and workers have suffered permanent disabling injuries due to farm-related accidents (Accident Facts, 1986 Edition).
- 17% of the disabled operators indicated they are unable to perform agricultural-related tasks.
- 19% stated they are hindered or limited in their ability to perform necessary farm-related tasks.

- 19% stated they require assistance to perform necessary tasks in their farm operations (Tormoehlen, 1981).

## **2. Off-Farm Injuries**

- Of the severely disabled farmers/ranchers contacting the BNG Resource Center (over 13 years), motor vehicle and recreational accidents each accounted for more disabilities than farm-related mishaps.

## **3. General vs. Farm Population**

- 9% of the general population suffers from some form of serious physical disability, in comparison the proportion of farm operators and farm workers who are disabled suggests that 15%-30% are limited due to physical disabilities (Facts about Disabled People).

## **4. Type of Disabilities**

Farmers/ranchers can be affected by a variety of principal disabilities which restrict their ability to perform their jobs.

- 66% of Indiana farm operators were affected by at least one physical impairment.
- Over 30% cited musculoskeletal impairments.
- 25% indicated hearing impairments.
- 24% cited cardiovascular impairments.
- 22% indicated respiratory impairments (Tormoehlen, 1981).

## **5. Scope of Problem**

- Over 13 years, the BNG Resource Center at Purdue University has responded to over 11,000 individual requests for information regarding rehabilitation technology from farm and ranch family members and rural rehabilitation professionals.
- In 1991, approximately 1,100 separate requests for information were received from all 50 states, 7 Canadian provinces, and 9 foreign countries.

- The BNG Resource Center has estimated that over 520,000 farm/ranch family members and agricultural workers in the United States have physical disabilities which hinder them from completing essential farm tasks.
- This population is probably the most isolated from rehabilitation services and resources.
- Experience has shown that for every disabled individual who reaches out for rehabilitative assistance by taking the time to call or write a letter, there are many more who remain underserved and isolated from the potential benefits of rehabilitation.

## **B. Characteristics of Agricultural Production**

In order to properly serve rural families it's important to have a general understanding of today's agricultural industry. Over the past thirty years, agricultural production has changed as dramatically as any segment of our society. However, the general public's understanding of how our food is produced has not kept pace. Less than 2.5 percent of the United States population currently lives on farms or ranches. Many incorrect perceptions have developed concerning how farmers work. In fact, it is fair to suggest that most people today have little understanding of what actually takes place on a modern farm or ranch.

Following are common characteristics describing present day agricultural production:

1. **Agricultural workplaces are generally in rural, less populated areas.** The time spent traveling for work-related activities can consume a substantial portion of the day. Pick-up trucks and telephones are important business tools.
2. **Agricultural workplaces are, in most cases, the living environment for the farm or ranch family.** Farm and ranch families generally live and work in the same location.
3. **Agricultural work takes place under all types of environmental conditions.** If the farm or ranch is located in the northern part of the United States, the workplace temperatures can range from -60°F in winter to 100°F in summer.
4. **Agricultural production today is technology-intensive.** At one point in history it took a farmer approximately 500 hours to manually raise an acre of corn. Today the same acre can be produced in 4 hours.

5. **Agriculture is big business.** When a new tractor can cost as much as \$50,000-\$70,000 and a combine \$100,000-\$150,000, the opportunities for starting a farm operation outside of an established family business have been greatly reduced.
6. **A broad range of people are involved with agricultural production.** Agriculture involves people with a wide range of age, educational backgrounds and cultural differences.
7. **Agricultural production involves a tremendous diversity of tasks.** Task analysis has identified literally thousands of different skills required in the course of a year's work on a modern farm.
8. **Agricultural production remains dominated by males.** More than 85 percent of the most severe injuries on farms and ranches involve males.
9. **Farmers and ranchers generally work alone.** Many of the tasks associated with modern agricultural production are designed so that they can be completed by one person.
10. **Agricultural production is becoming increasingly regulated, though not nearly as much as most other industries.** Many workplace regulations do not apply to agriculture, and since most farms and ranches are small family-owned businesses they do not benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, Social Security programs, Worker's Compensation programs or workplace safety programs.

### **C. The Agricultural Lifestyle — Not Just a Job**

Central to understanding the farmer is recognizing the farmer's occupation as a way of life (Case, 1986). For many farm families life revolves around the farm. Farming has been described as "a distinctive occupational pursuit characteristically associated with a self-determined lifestyle more closely integrating job and family arrangements than any other line of work" (Molnar, 1985). Farming provides an opportunity for husband and wife to share a common profession that tightly links family life and work (Farmer, 1986). Farms are often multigenerational, with grandfather, father, mother, son, brothers, sisters and spouses all working together. Farm work is often intermingled with hobbies and community activities such as 4-H, FFA, and farm organizations. The farm operation, the land, and even the family home are often an integral part of the farmer's heritage and identity (Farmer, 1986). It is this comprehensive perspective that results in the emotional and

social upheaval experienced by those leaving the family farm. This involuntary transition is perhaps more significant than for any other group of displaced American workers because farmers are leaving not only an occupation, but a multigenerational way of life (Ferguson and Engles, 1989).

Central to understanding the agricultural lifestyle is understanding the people involved in agriculture. A survey sponsored by Progressive Farmer and the University of Alabama helps shed some light on the farmer's personality and lifestyle. The survey summarized the following eight characteristics common to farm families:

- Rural families are guided by life philosophies of optimism, self-determination, and a strong belief in God.
- They are fiercely independent and value freedom.
- They share a high value on privacy and space.
- Rural people have a great love for nature and the land.
- Most rural people are healthy in all aspects of their lives.
- Community support and involvement are a part of daily rural life.
- Rural families cope with stress and problems in several positive ways.
- Families from the country are strong families (Progressive Farmer, August 1990).

Another way to gain insight into the farmer's personality is from the career counselors perspective. Those involved with career counseling are familiar with Holland's occupational codes. Holland suggests that individuals of a specific vocation have similar personalities. He suggests that job satisfaction depends on the individual's personality and vocation being compatible. From these assumptions Holland classifies individuals into six personality types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (Isaacson, 1979).

The Holland occupational code for farming and related occupations is realistic, investigative, and enterprising (RIE). It follows the traditional and accepted view of the farmer as independent and self-reliant (Benesch, 1986, Ferguson and Engles, 1989). Farmers are generally stronger in natural and mechanical activities, and weaker in social situations; and exhibit relational and coping mechanisms that are direct and uncomplicated.

#### **D. Trends in Rural Employment**

Nearly 2/3 of the people with a disability in the United States are unemployed. This unemployment rate is greater than any other major demographic group (Business Week, October 28, 1991). On the other hand, two separate surveys completed by Breaking New Ground recently found the unemployment rate of disabled farmers very low (around 9%). In 1990, the Breaking New Ground Resource Center conducted a nationwide survey of Employment Experiences of Farmers/Ranchers with Physical Disabilities. The surveyed group included 1,700 farmers/ranchers with serious physical disabilities who had contact with the BNG program between 1980 and 1990.

Four hundred and thirty-six farmers/ranchers responded, representing a 25.6 percent return rate. Of the 154 responding farmers who had looked for off-farm employment, 115 had (off-farm) jobs at the time of the survey. Nearly a third (26.7%) of the off-farm jobs were in agricultural services; 18.3% were in manufacturing; 43.5% were in non-agricultural services; and 14.8% were in government.

Farmers with disabilities have some unique disadvantages in finding off-farm jobs. The BNG survey showed 50.0 percent of the responding farmers believed that their disability was a major barrier to obtaining off-farm jobs, while 47.0 percent believed that a lack of local (generally rural) jobs was a major problem.

Regardless of difficulties, many of these farmers did find jobs. The BNG survey showed that 75 percent of those who looked for off-farm jobs found them. Moreover, most of the jobs were full-time, averaging 36.4 hours per week.

The future forecast for employment prospects for agricultural operators indicates that while some job opportunities may exist in manufacturing and agriculture, the more likely source will be the service sector in rural areas, according to a study by Ziyong Yu, graduate research assistant, and Deborah Brown, professor of agricultural economics at Purdue University.

In studying employment opportunities for the physically disabled, they noted that off-farm income has become increasingly important for all U.S. farmers.

The study also reported:

- Most new jobs through the year 2000 are expected to occur in service industries and most service jobs are concentrated in large metropolitan areas.
- Total agricultural and manufacturing employment, which is a disproportionate share of rural employment, is expected to decline.
- In agriculture, jobs as gardeners, grounds-keepers, and farm managers were expected to increase.
- In manufacturing, jobs in meat production, in the paper industry and in the wood industry were expected to grow through year 2000.
- The construction industries were also projected to need large numbers of employees; particularly carpenters, electricians, painters, paperhangers, and plumbers.

Based on data from a 1990 survey by Breaking New Ground, Table 1 on the following page lists the types of jobs held by farmers/ranchers with physical disabilities.

<b>Table 1. Off-Farm Jobs Held by a Sample of Farmers and Ranchers with Physical Disabilities.<sup>1</sup></b>		
<b>Type of Job</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Services:</b>		
<b>Marketing &amp; Sales Occupations:</b>	68	59.1
Sales (real estate)	28	24.4
Sales (auctioneer, distributor and other)	9	
Ag Seed Dealers	8	
Ag Product Sales (livestock, hay)	3	
Ag Feed Dealers	1	
Ag Equipment Dealers	2	
<b>Financial Occupations:</b>	10	8.7
Financial Services	7	
Ag Banking/Commodity Broker	3	
<b>Managerial &amp; Management-Related Occupations:</b>	14	12.2
Management (unspecified)	6	
Ag Manager	1	
Foreman/Supervisor/Manager	7	
<b>Education &amp; Entertainment Occupations:</b>	8	7.0
Teacher	5	
Writer/Artist	3	
Entertainment (own nightclub, batting cage, craft business)	3	
<b>Other Services:</b>	16	13.9
Ag Custom Work (including baling)	3	
Ag Greenhouse/Landscaping/Forestry	3	
Ag Trucking	3	
Electrical Work	1	
Small Appliance Repair	3	
Printing Services	1	
Runs a Salvage Yard	1	
Communication Operator	2	
Computers/Data Processing	4	
<b>Specialty Ag Products:</b>	4	3.5
Truck Gardening	2	
Speciality Livestock/Llamas	2	
<b>Manufacturing:</b>	14	12.2
Maintenance	4	
Engineer	2	
Skilled Craftsman (e.g., welder, tool & die worker)	4	
Assembly Line Worker	4	
<b>Government Job:</b>	17	14.8
Township (supervisor, treasurer, assessor)	7	
County (recorder, commissioner, auditor)	7	
State	1	
Federal (post office)	2	
<i>1 Based on data gathered in a national survey conducted by the Breaking New Ground Resource Center in 1990.</i>		
<i>2 The percentages are calculated based on 115 farmers who have off-farm jobs. Some farmers have more than one off-farm job.</i>		

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## **II. Evaluating Career Options Following a Disability**

### **A. Your Role as a Rural Rehabilitation Professional**

As a professional you may need to function as the instructor, encourager, educator, as well as a referral source. Some individuals will assume responsibility for these tasks themselves and will be further along in understanding themselves and making well informed career decisions. Others will need more active involvement on your part.

Farmers are characterized as realistic personality types by Holland's occupational code. The realistic type is described as genuine, honest, practical and persistent. However, realistic people tend to dislike educational or therapeutic activities. They are independent and often do not seek outside help for emotional or psychological problems (Benesch, 1986).

Often a farmer has observed and participated in the "world of work" from a singular perspective — as the "boss." Therefore, it is important to provide information about jobs, and how to acquire occupational information, pursue and obtain a job, deal with a disability in the hiring process and simply how to be an employee.

To work most effectively with the farmer/rancher seeking off-farm employment it is important to have adequate background information. Being well informed will give you a better "feel" for the individual's situation and allow the farmer to explore the options available to him. The **Personal Data Sheet** (at the end of this chapter) is a form that can be used to gather general information about the farmer/rancher and allow the rural professional, to determine what resources or referrals may be most beneficial.

As a rural rehabilitation professional you can assist the farmer/rancher in many ways. The following suggestions may help you to be more effective in the career decision process.

#### **1. Explain the Career Decision Process**

Immediately after sustaining a severe injury the entire family may experience the pain of stress, changes, depression and the inability to make any type of decision. In a simple format, layout the possible options that are available concerning his future career. The **Career Decision Roadmap** at the end of this chapter may be a useful tool in this process.

## **2. Empower Farmers/Ranchers to Make Decisions**

After assessing the possible career options in the first step, assist the client in evaluating their resources. Use **The Resource Inventories** in Chapter III and help identify their resources that could be used on the farm or at another occupation. The **Transferable Skills Inventory** in Chapter V will also be helpful in identifying their skills. After completing these tasks the farmer has (1) an awareness of his possible career options, (2) an assessment of his farm and family resources, and (3) a list of his transferable skills. Now the farmer/rancher is empowered to make decisions that will lead to possible farm and or off-farm alternatives.

## **3. Provide Continual Support**

The return to a normal lifestyle may take a few months to several years, depending on the type of disability, degree of family support, and the availability of professional resources. As a rural professional you may be the only one who understands the stress the farmer/rancher and his family are experiencing. It is important to provide continual support during the rehabilitation process, the career decision process, home renovations, and during the adjustment period of the family's relationships. You may need to refer the client to another professional for counseling, financial planning or emotional support. Setting up an appointment for the newly injured farmer to meet with a peer with a similar disability may also be a very beneficial means of support.

## **4. Accountability**

You will likely experience a great deal of satisfaction by providing your client with information on career options, by helping him identify skills and resources and by providing support and services. However, it is also important that you serve as the sand in an oyster that works to make the pearl.

The rehabilitation and recovery process is difficult. It may be easy for the farmer/rancher to give up on himself and dwell on all the negative problems. Encourage him! Remind him of his potential, skills, opportunities and available resources. Don't let him wallow in self-pity — instead nudge him on to complete one simple task at a time. Each step can lead to another accomplishment or another alternative.

## **B. Career Decision Roadmap**

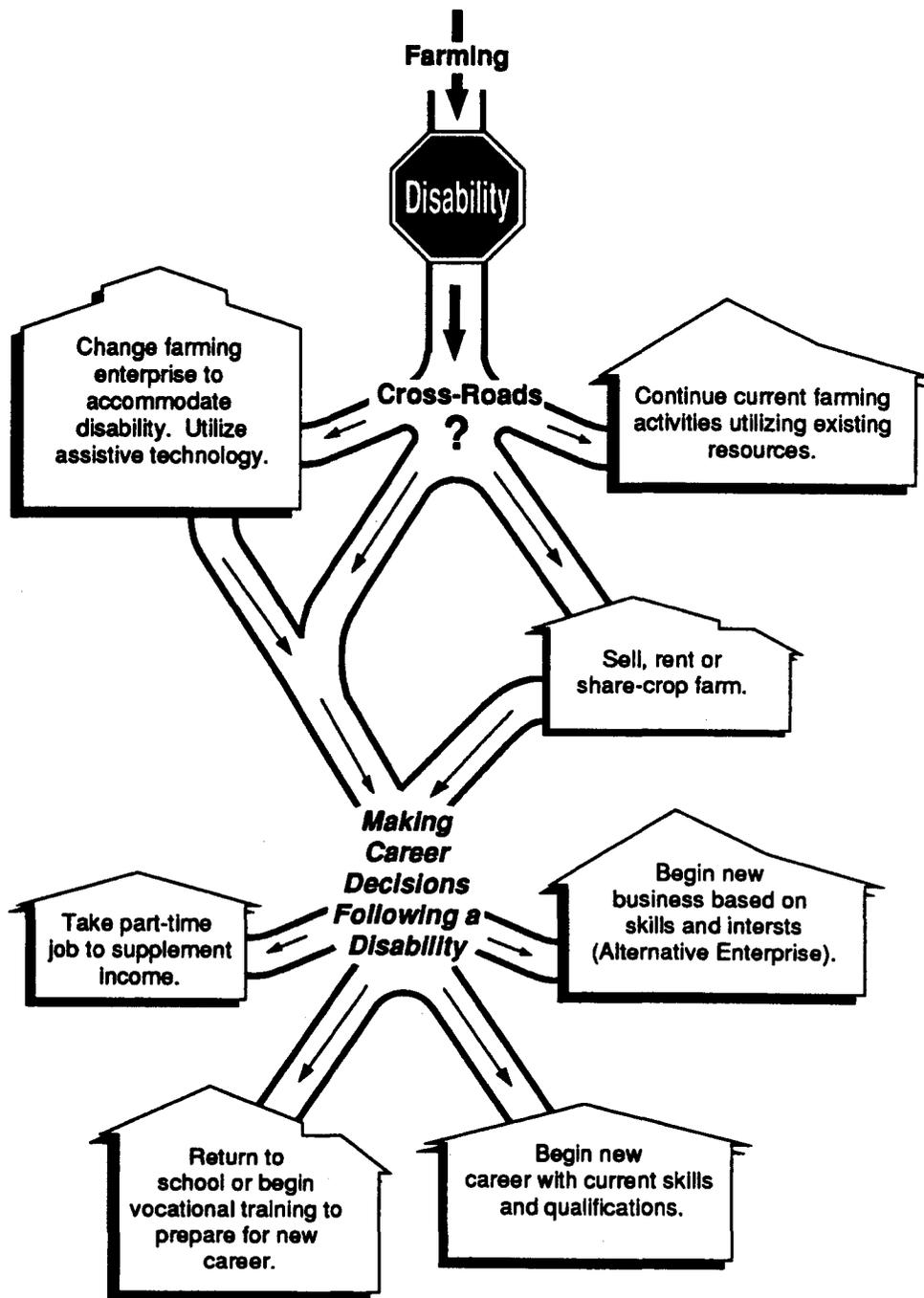
As mentioned earlier in section A of this chapter, explaining the career decision is an important step towards getting the farmer/rancher back on the road to normalcy. The initial shock and lack of awareness of available resources may leave the farmer and his family without hope, goals or plans for the future.

Providing the client with a simple "roadmap" can assist him in making career decisions (see **Career Decision Roadmap** on the following page). By simply providing the career options you will assist in bringing focus to the decision process.

The **Career Decision Roadmap** is by no means an all encompassing summary of every possible career alternatives. However, in a simple format it can assist the farmer in "visualizing" his options. It may help the farmer in addressing the basic questions, "Will I continue to farm?;" and If so, will I need major equipment modifications?; Will I need to develop an alternative enterprise to supplement my farm income?; Should I seek off-farm employment?; and, Do I need more training or education?"

The **Career Decision Roadmap** helps in making only one step of many on the return to a productive lifestyle after a disabling injury. Once the farmer begins to assess his career options, help him identify the resources available to him, by using the materials in Chapter III, "Identifying Resources."

# Career Decision Roadmap



# Personal Data Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M \_\_\_ F \_\_\_ Birthday: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Veteran: Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_

Besides yourself, how many wage earners are in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own or rent where you live now? Own \_\_\_ Rent \_\_\_

How many years have you been farming? \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Off-farm work experience:***

Employer/Job Title	Dates	Salary	Duties/Responsibilities
--------------------	-------	--------	-------------------------

## ***Education and training:***

What is the highest grade completed in school? \_\_\_\_\_

List any additional training or education received since high school:

Military service (including technical training received) and approximate dates:

List any other formal non-farm skill training (vocational technical school, apprenticeship classes, etc.):

**Leadership skills:**

List organizational involvement and indicate any offices held:  
(e.g. Farm Bureau, Grange, Extension, 4-H, leadership programs)

**Job interests:**

Check the jobs that interest you:

- |  |   |                                       |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agribusiness        | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication and Media      | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Forestry | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Manufacturing         | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Services  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Service Self-employed | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |

Explain your disability and its significance in your job search and future employment.

What types of accommodations do you need to accomplish the type of job you are seeking?

Overcoming barriers -- what do you think you need help with?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deciding what to do            | <input type="checkbox"/> Obtaining job leads      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving my skills            | <input type="checkbox"/> Earning my diploma       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with medical problems  | <input type="checkbox"/> Obtaining other training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving my job search skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Overcoming my disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Securing a job                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

Do you have transportation available? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Involvement with other agencies (VR, SS, etc.). Please list.

Benefits received from other agencies:

Check any of the following that you need more information on:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government programs      | <input type="checkbox"/> Handling utility bills                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food stamps              | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran's benefits                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security benefits | <input type="checkbox"/> FHA, VA, or other mortgage information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement planning      | <input type="checkbox"/> Investment counseling                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical counseling       | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress counseling                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family counseling        | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal counseling                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other :                  |   |

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### III. Identifying Resources

#### A. Overview

The time following a disabling injury is a critical time of transition. The period of physical recovery can be a stressful time of physical and emotional adjustment for the entire family. The reality of a physical disability may also require a reevaluation of career goals. Supplemental off-farm employment and off-farm careers are viable options for farmers and ranchers following a disabling injury. Often overlooked, however, is a farmer's desire and ability to continue farming or to adopt an alternative agricultural enterprise. Because of the importance of the farm and agricultural lifestyle to a farmer's identity and sense of self-worth, serious consideration to practical and economical means for keeping the farmer actively involved in the farm/ranch operation should be considered.

Take an inventory of the family's current resources. Evaluating the desires of the entire family and their willingness and ability to support a farm operation is necessary. Also, a simple inventory of financial, physical and labor and management resources should be completed.

#### B. The Role of Family

The family may be the most important resource in assisting an individual with a disabling injury to return to a "normal lifestyle." The importance of the family and the possible family stress that may be experienced in re-establishing community acceptance and involvement are discussed in the text *Perspectives on Disability*. "In many instances, parents and other family members must become advocates for their disabled counterparts in attempting to solicit the most positive care and involvement available. In many cases, the disabled encounter economic, educational, and social constraints which inhibit, if not prevent, them from achieving acceptance and integration into society...**disability in any area often leads to family crisis**" (Nagler, 1990).

The August 1990 *Progressive Farmer* magazine included an article which stated "other than immediate family, farm families rely on support from four groups to help deal with stressful events. Listed in order of helpfulness, rural people turn to friends, church, relatives and the Cooperative Extension Service."

In a survey of farmers with spinal cord injuries, producers were asked which individuals had been most helpful in achieving greater independence in the community. The

respondents overwhelmingly ranked their spouse as the most helpful. The "other" category included frequent responses identifying other family members such as cousins and uncles. The "professionals" who typically might serve the disabled population ranked lowest (see Table 2). Responses were weighted 1st = 3, 2nd = 2, 3rd = 1, then ranked with 1st being the most helpful (and receiving the highest total weight) (Field, 1992).

	Total Weighted Value
1. Spouse	205
2. Parent	119
3. Neighbor/Friend	79
4. Physical Therapist	74
5. Children	73
6. Other	53
7. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	31
8. Occupational Therapist	30
9. Clergy/Pastor	17
10. Physician	7
11. Extension Agent	6

According to Johanna Shapiro in the article *Family Reactions and Coping Strategies in Response to the Physically Ill or Handicapped Child*, a healthy family is one that is able to cope with the demands of illness or disability. She notes that family coping responses include:

- seeking resolution
- expressing feelings
- reducing anxiety
- maintaining family integrity
- religion and faith
- establishing independence and self sufficiency
- building and utilizing interpersonal relationships (Nagler, 1990).

Research concludes that families best able to cope share common characteristics. These characteristics include:

1. **Effective communication between family members**, including the expression of feelings. This means they are encouraged to discuss any topic or express any feeling within the family and are listened to and accepted.

2. **The ability to work and play together as a family**, while at the same time encouraging individual family members to do things on their own.
3. **Positive self-esteem is encouraged**. Praise and recognition are given and received on a continuing basis.
4. **Pride in the family and priority time for family activities**. Time is spent together on a regular basis. Family time is an important time.
5. **The family acts as a support network for its members**. Most of these families prefer the support of family and close friends in times of trouble.
6. **A willingness to accept temporary help from outsiders**. These families are open to suggestions and sources of information that may be of help.
7. **Flexibility in family roles**. Family members are willing to share responsibility for some roles and take turns performing others. They don't get stuck in patterns. Other family members help out around the house or do shopping, cook dinner or care for the children while family members work outside of the home.
8. **Problem-solving skills**. Problems are resolved as they arise. There are no unresolved issues to add to the stress of daily life (Sperry and Reed).

### C. **Farm/Ranch Resources**

Returning to the farm following a disability involves a close evaluation of the farm's available resources, including land, buildings, machinery, labor, capital and management. The goal of the evaluation process is to identify the resources that are most limiting and then to organize the farm in such a way as to minimize the use of limited resources and maximize the resources that are most readily available. Although all of the resources available to the farm should be evaluated, this section will focus on the resources which will likely be most impacted by a disability: capital and labor and management. The **Resource Inventory** included in Chapter III should help you identify the resources available on the farm.

1. **Capital Resources** — A formal definition of capital resources would be "accumulated goods and assets devoted to the production of other goods." It can be measured by several methods including earning capacity, debt ratio and cash flow.

You may simply want the farmer/rancher to evaluate his past ability to make a profit. Have the client ask himself several questions. Have I had a profit for the last 5 years and am I able to pay current and long term debts? What are my total debts? What are my total assets? How much income could I receive if I sold or rented all the assets and land?

2. **Labor and Management Resource Requirements** — Labor resources include those individuals who perform manual labor, operate equipment, keep books or do other defined tasks. Management resources include those people who play a decision-making or supervisory role on the farm. One person can be both manager and laborer (Schuck, 1988). In evaluating labor one must consider both the quantity and quality of labor available to the farm. Quantity of labor can be measured in days, weeks, or months of labor available from the operator, family members, and hired labor. Quality of labor considers any special skills, training and/or experience that may affect the success and profit of certain enterprises. The assessment of the management resource should include not only overall management ability but also any special skills, training, strengths, and weaknesses of the manager. Good management is reflected in high yields and more efficient use of resources.

#### **D. Tools for Evaluating Farm/Ranch Resources**

Three worksheets have been developed that can be used as guides for evaluating a farmer's current situation. As the professional you may want to sit down with the farmer and pencil in some general numbers to initiate the process of evaluating the resources on the farm or ranch.

The **Resource Inventory** should be used to get a general inventory of the farms resources. How much land, livestock, equipment and buildings are owned and available to the farm. Now that one family member is disabled it is important to assess the other sources of available labor. What is the farm's current financial situation? Utilize the **Resource Inventory** worksheet and determine if this farm is "healthy" financially. Now that one of the major partners has a disabling injury, can the farm continue to be successful with the existing resources?

The second worksheet, **Identifying, Strengths and Weaknesses** can assist the farmer or rancher in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of all who contribute to the farm labor pool. In completing this worksheet it is especially important to evaluate the "Needed" column. What are the new needs for the farm/ranch to continue successfully.

Are the needs reasonable? Can they be met by existing family members or will additional help need to be hired?

The third worksheet can assist the family in realistically assessing the labor resource requirements. Simply writing down the labor needs by month and by task and evaluating "how much new labor" will need to be hired is important. This process can help the family see by task and by month how much labor they will need to hire or if it is possible to continue to work the existing crop acreage and livestock. Use the **Labor Resource Requirements** worksheet at the end of this Chapter to assist you in this process.

#### **E. Case Study**

Pete farms around 900 acres of corn, soybeans and wheat. He also works as a sales representative for a seed company. In 1988, Pete fell from the side of his grain truck while securing a tarp, sustaining a spinal cord injury.

Until 1985, three years before his injury, Pete's parents co-signed operating loans to help him obtain the capital needed to farm. After 1985, Pete established a sound credit record and was able to acquire his own operating loans without the help of his parents. During his recovery, his parents and neighbors assisted by completing essential field work. This assistance enabled the farm to continue to make payments on loans, and helped compensate for the lost capital due to medical expenses. Following the injury, vocational rehabilitation provided the capital needed to make modifications to Pete's home and farm buildings to improve the accessibility of the farm.

Pete is both the manager and a laborer on the farm. Although he performs both roles, he places a much greater emphasis on managing the farm now than he did before the injury. He commented, "I have learned to hone in on my management skills." He realized after the injury that he had to accept and work within his physical limitations. Although he could still complete many of the essential farm tasks, these became time-consuming, and sometimes resulted in fatigue and additional injuries.

Pete mentioned that with full-time labor some of the inefficiencies of the part-time laborer are eliminated. A full-time laborer has a one-time cost associated with training. A full-time laborer is present on the farm all of the time. He becomes familiar with daily routines and less dependent on the manager for detailed instructions regarding how and when to perform each task. One drawback to full-time labor, though, is finding enough

work for the individual throughout the year. Part-time labor, on the other hand, is hired only as needed. According to Pete, one must weigh the cost of hiring a full-time laborer against some of the inefficiencies and problems of employing part-time labor.

Pete utilized his management skills by focusing more attention on fertility management. He had planned, before his injury, to evaluate this program more closely. After the injury, he needed to find ways to improve bottom line profits. With better management of the fertility program, he was able to save money for reinvestment in the farm operation and to hire part-time labor.

Pete commented that the transition years (the time between the injury and when the operation resumes near-normal operation) can be difficult years. But with hard work and determination an individual can continue to farm following a disability.

# Resource Inventory

Record available resources in the resource column. For example, labor resources may include full-time labor (myself, wife, son, daughter, mother, father) and part-time labor (hired laborer 1, hired laborer 2). In the amount column, enter the amount of each resource available in a normal year. For example, full-time labor for yourself might be 2000 hours, and a part-time laborer might be 500 hours.

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Size</i> <i>(Building/equip.)</i>	<i>Amount/No.</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Cropland</i> Row crops Small grains Pasture Other				
<i>Livestock</i> Cattle Swine Sheep Other				
<i>Buildings</i> Livestock Machinery Other				
<i>Machinery</i> Trucks Tractors Implements Other				
<i>Labor</i> Family Other				
<i>Capital</i> Earning capacity Debt ratio Cash flow Other				
Miscellaneous				

# Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses

This handout can aid you in identifying your strengths and weaknesses. Mark the column that best describes your skills. Do the same for others who currently contribute labor to the farm. The last column in the table is used for identifying skills needed, but currently unavailable on the farm. A check mark should be placed in this column if all other active participants on the farm are weak in a specific skill category. This information can help identify the qualifications for additional hired labor.

<i>Skills</i>	<i>You</i>		<i>Other 1</i>		<i>Other 2</i>		<i>Needed</i>
	<i>Strength</i>	<i>Weakness</i>	<i>Strength</i>	<i>Weakness</i>	<i>Strength</i>	<i>Weakness</i>	
Crop management							
Livestock management							
Marketing							
Purchasing							
Mechanical ability							
Building construction skills							
Personnel management							
Financial management							
Securing resources							
Physical endurance							
Emotional endurance							
Decision making							
Accepting risks							
Others							

# Labor Resource Requirements

This handout can be used as a guide to estimate the amount of labor currently needed to perform various tasks on the farm. By determining the total amount of labor required to perform each specific task, one can decide how much additional labor may or may not be needed on the farm. Enter your best estimate of the number of hours needed or available for each category.

<i>Labor Resource Allocation by Use</i>													
<i>Month of the Year</i>													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept.	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
<b>HOURS NEEDED TO COMPLETE TASK</b>													
<i>Cropland</i>													
Corn													
Soybeans													
Wheat													
Other													
<i>Cropland (Total)</i>													
<i>Livestock</i>													
Cattle													
Swine													
Other													
<i>Livestock (Total)</i>													
<b>Enterprise Totals (Cropland + Livestock)</b>													

Labor resource allocation worksheet continued from previous page.

<b>LABOR HOURS AVAILABLE</b>													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept.	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
<b>Full-time Labor</b>													
Person 1													
Person 2													
<b>Part-time Labor</b>													
Person 1													
Person 2													
<b>Available Labor (Total of Part and Full)</b>													
<b>Excess or Deficit Labor (Subtract available labor from enterprise labor requirements)</b>													

\* Source: Schuck, Nancy G., Wayne Knoblauch, Judy Green, Mary Saylor. "Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises," Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Services (NRAES-32), Cornell University, October, 1988. Kay, Ron, Professor, 1981, "Farm Management, Planning, Control and Implementation", Texas A&M.

## **IV. Alternative Enterprises — Opportunities on the Farm**

### **A. Definition and Role of Alternative Enterprises**

Farmers with physical disabilities face the same difficulties as other farmers — markets, weather, high input costs, and many others. Their physical impairment, however, presents an additional challenge to overcome in remaining a successful farmer. To continue farming, farmers with disabilities may have to make major and expensive modifications to the farmstead to accommodate their physical condition. In many cases, the farmer feels unable to continue his current farming operation, but may still desire to remain productive.

Because most farmers already have a wide variety of skills (purchasing, selling, mechanical, management and record-keeping) the easiest transition from full-time farming following a disability may be to diversify and introduce a new enterprise on the farm. This strategy allows the farmer to remain independent, manage the business, work outdoors, remain on the farm and maintain the existing support system and lifestyle.

Alternative agricultural enterprises are defined as income producing ventures started by farmers or rural residents which take advantage of family resources, interests, and talents not fully utilized in existing farm operations. These enterprises can involve both farm production and farm-related ventures, or may have little relation to agricultural production. Crops, livestock, or production practices considered non-traditional for a geographic region, innovative processing or marketing strategies, and home or farm-based businesses would be included in the broad category of alternative enterprises.

Alternative enterprises provide the opportunity for a farmer or rural resident with a physical disability to expand his or her earning potential. At the same time, an alternative enterprise can be tailored to a person's needs or interests, and be made to accommodate specific physical abilities. The variety and scope of alternative enterprises available to farm families is limited only by the imagination.

In 1989, the Breaking New Ground Resource Center began a study on the feasibility and potential of alternative enterprises for farmers with disabilities. A survey of Breaking New Ground clients found 27.2% utilized some type of alternative income source. In addition, nearly one-half of the survey participants indicated an interest in starting or expanding some type of alternative enterprise. These results indicate that alternative enterprises can be beneficial for farmers with physical disabilities.

As part of the Breaking New Ground study, on-site visits were conducted and case histories were developed for selected farmers with disabilities who were utilizing alternative enterprises. The visits were conducted in several midwestern states. A wide variety of enterprises were examined, including production oriented ventures, direct marketing, sales or service ventures, on-farm manufacturing, and others. The farmers in this group had a wide range of disabilities, including spinal cord injuries, arm or leg amputations, visual impairments and musculoskeletal impairments. In most cases the alternative enterprise examined provided a supplemental income to a more traditional farming operation or off-farm job. But in some instances, the "alternative" enterprise was the individual's primary source of income. See a partial listing of possible alternative enterprises on the following page.

# Alternative Farming Enterprise Ideas

## FIELD CROPS

Bird seed (sunflowers, etc.)  
Corn snack foods  
Fresh/stone ground flours & grains  
Indian corn, mini or regular sized  
Organically grown grains (all types)  
Popcorn, white and colored  
Sunflower for oil and birdseed  
Wild rice

## FISH AND GAME

Bait fish  
Buffalo  
Deer farming (production of venison for restaurant trade, not white tail deer species)  
    Fallow deer  
    Red deer  
    Elk (Wapiti)  
Fish bait  
Game farms for tourists  
Guinea fowl  
Mallard duck for meat  
Peacocks for feathers  
Pheasant rearing  
Rabbits  
Trout

## FOREST PRODUCTS

Apple tree firewood  
Balsam pillows, stuffed  
Christmas trees  
Firewood  
Furniture  
Ginseng herb  
Nuts  
Shiitake mushrooms  
Toys from wood

## POULTRY

Chicken eggs  
Ducks  
Free range poultry  
Geese  
Organically raised poultry

## FRUITS

Apples  
Berry products  
Blackberries  
Blueberries  
Dried fruit  
Grapes  
Homemade jams, jellies  
Mulberries  
Raspberries  
Strawberries

## HORTICULTURAL/NURSERY

Dried flowers  
Cut flowers  
Herbs (potpourri and culinary)  
Potted plants  
Bedding plants

## LIVESTOCK AND ANIMALS

Donkeys, miniature  
Fox, red  
Goats for milk  
Goats (Angora) for hair  
Honey and beeswax  
Horses, trail rides  
Llama  
Mink  
Rabbits (Angora) for hair  
Sheep (colored wool for spinning)

## SERVICES AND RECREATION

Antique shop  
Bed and breakfast inn  
Boarding (large and small animals)  
Boat storage  
Campground  
Child care  
Composting municipal waste  
Custom machinery work  
Custom slaughter  
Farm sitting  
Festivals during harvest  
Gift and crafts shop  
Hunting, fishing, hiking guide  
Museum of old farm equipment  
Petting zoo  
Recycling, bottle return center  
Restaurant  
Seed and supplies distributor  
Small engine repair  
Taxidermy  
Tours by public of farm  
"Working" vacations on farm/ranch

## VEGETABLES

Asparagus  
Baby vegetables  
Garlic  
Gourds, ornamental  
Gourmet vegetables  
Hydroponically produced crops  
    (out of season)  
Mushrooms  
Organic vegetables  
Oriental vegetables  
Peppers  
Pumpkins  
Sprouts from beans, mustards, etc.  
Sweet potatoes

\* This list of alternative enterprises is excerpted from the "Innovative Farming Ideas List," a publication of the Farming Alternatives project at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Breaking New Ground and Cornell University make no claims regarding the feasibility or profit potential of any of these ideas.

## **V. Self Assessment — Identifying Marketable Skills and Career Options**

### **A. Introduction**

Farmers have traditionally given little thought to career development, because of their expectations to continue farming until they retire. This attitude has socialized them to their occupation (Molnar and Dunkelberger, 1981) with little thought of self-assessment or career exploration. Unfortunately, a farmer can be his own "worst enemy" regarding future employment prospects because he often will not seek assistance.

There are many assessment tools available to help you identify interests, abilities and values. You may want to involve the counseling services of a government agency or university to help in this evaluation. These services are often free or low cost and offer a broad assortment of services including personalized counseling, job training, and testing.

The assessments included in this guide have been prepared for use with the farmer/rancher with a disability. Information can be gathered orally, or the pages can be removed from the binder, copied and given to the individual to complete. At times a combination of these two methods is most effective.

### **B. Interests, Abilities and Values**

One of the first steps in securing employment involves self awareness. A career decision is an important one, especially if it involves a change in lifestyle, as does a change from farming to off-farm employment. The individual must understand himself, his family and his values.

An assessment of interests including related jobs, hobbies and volunteer work, is a good place to begin this process. Farmers can do many things but often think of themselves as "just a farmer." A farmer performs a variety of jobs in his work and many of the skills learned are transferable to other occupations. Work with your client to analyze his skills and understand how they transfer to other employment situations. Sometimes the farmer down-plays or simply overlooks his greatest assets.

This is also a time to discuss and evaluate the effect of the disability on skills. Discuss the disability as it affects the individual's ability to pursue interests, and analyze related interests as well as "unexplored" areas of potential interest. For example, a person may not have expressed an interest in computers because of limited exposure to them. However, after experiencing a disability that results in limited mobility, time and necessity could serve as catalysts to developing an interest in computer skills.

Be cautious of the common mistake of believing the farmer can be "molded" to fit the required qualifications for a job. It is important to remind clients that people experience much more satisfaction and success when they are doing a job that coincides with their interests.

Be sure to encourage the farmers/ranchers to evaluate their values. What are the items that they feel are most important? Time with family, making money, staying in a rural community or some other values. Identifying interest, abilities and values will assist the client in finding a job that "fits" his personality.

### C. Transferable Skills

Unlike job-related skills, which are used only in one specific type of work, transferable skills can be used in many occupations. These are universal or functional skills — **they can be transferred from one job to another without much effort or training.** If you are able to use a skill in one job, you are generally able to transfer that skill to another setting even though that setting may be unrelated to your education or previous employment. It is for this reason that transferable skills are often more important than job-related skills.

Suppose that a farmer is making the transition from farm work to a career more suitable to his physical capabilities. As a part of his responsibilities he maintained financial and production records for the farm. Due to a disability, he must now do work that requires minimal physical strength. He applies for a position in a local bank. The employer of the business is not necessarily interested in the farmer's ag-related skills. Nor is the employer interested in the farmer's ability to pull engines, adjust timing or replace brakes. However, the employer is interested in the farmer's transferable skills: general bookkeeping and ability to work with numbers. For example, can the applicant use computers? Can he keep accurate records and reconcile financial reports? Can he prepare basic accounting statements?

How can you identify transferable skills? Many job seekers fail to recognize transferable skills acquired through everyday living, jobs or hobbies. There is a tendency to focus on job-related skills and to overlook transferable skills acquired on the job.

Have the farmer complete the activities/task on the **Agricultural Skills Checklist** and identify those tasks in which he is most proficient. On the left side of the **Summary of Agricultural Skills** list all the tasks identified from the list as well as duties and responsibilities related to previous employment, volunteer activities, and hobbies. On the right

side of that line, list the skills or tools used to accomplish each task. Upon completion, analyze the lists to discover which skills appear most often. These are transferable skills that can be considered for future employment.

Once you have identified these tasks and activities that you are most proficient and that can be utilized in another occupation you are ready for the next step. Using the **Power Words** list, develop **Employee Asset Statements** than can be used in cover letters, resumes and interviews. All of these forms and activities are included at the end of this Chapter.

#### **D. Transferable Skills — Software Programs**

There are a number of software packages that can assist in the area of identifying transferable skills. These programs may be available through the state vocational rehabilitation office, the rehabilitation unit of insurance companies, rehabilitation facilities, or through private rehabilitation specialists.

The general format for these programs involves first entering information describing the pre-injury education/mental aptitudes and physical disabilities of the individual into the computer. This is followed by entering post-injury attributes. The software then provides job titles and/or descriptions for suitable occupations within the limitations of the individual job seeker. Whether occupations are present in the geographical area of the job-seeker is not part of the package in many cases. However, packages that include labor market data such as QUEST will provide the number of jobs matching those demands within a particular area, either by city, county or state. This package also supplies the average wage for these occupations within the given area. It does not state job openings, only positions with similar demands. Occupations are often grouped and do not specifically follow the Dictionary of Occupational Titles codes, but can be cross referenced.

All of these software packages are helpful as tools, but can not serve as the definitive basis for a job match. It is essential that the disabled individual be considered for all of the more "intangible" qualities such as personality, likes and dislikes, and work ethic, as well as the quantifiable attributes such as lifting capabilities and formal education. **A computer and software package can not replace the functions of a rehabilitation professional and a farmer with a disability working together to determine the best possible job match.** (See resources in Chapter XI for information on software packages.)

## **E. Career Awareness and Action Program — Self Assessment Activity**

A farmer/rancher, through the course of his life, learns problem-solving techniques; how to define a problem, consider alternative solutions, select the best one, and complete the task by some action. The same problem-solving skills may be used to help make decisions about a job search and career.

As the professional, you should point out that he has already made a number of decisions which have and will continue to influence his career. He has decided his current occupation; he selected where he lives; he chose certain community and/or work activities. All of these decisions will affect his job search and career goals to some extent.

This activity is designed to help the farmer/rancher look at variables about his background, accomplishments, activities, skills, interests, and values in a systematic way. It will help him to assess these variables and translate some of the information into a career action plan, including job factors he should stress in his job search and goal setting for his career. The **Career Awareness and Action Program** is a self assessment activity that is included at the end of this Chapter.

# Agricultural Skills Checklist

<b>TASKS</b>	<b>Self-Check of Proficiency</b>												
<b>FARM MANAGEMENT</b>	Grade your proficiency <b>Low Med High</b>												
<p><b><i>Record Keeping</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish accurate enterprise records</li> <li>Prepare a budget sheet for crops and livestock</li> <li>Make cash flow projections for several years</li> <li>Construct farm map of fields and major soil types using SCS maps</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>											
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>											
<p><b><i>Financial Management</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present a loan purpose and indicate available collateral</li> <li>Calculate the effective rate of interest on installments loans and determine repayment capacity</li> <li>Determine major sources of farm production credit</li> <li>Complete a farm business profit and loss statement</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>											
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<p><b><i>Marketing</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculate livestock shrink in hauling short and long distances</li> <li>Compare storage versus selling at harvest</li> <li>Determine daily cash, future prices and best time to market</li> <li>Market commodities forward contract, delayed pricing or hedging</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>											
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<p><b><i>Computers</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use computer to generate production and accounting reports</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>											
<p><b><i>Labor</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate effectively with workers</li> <li>Determine the most economical and efficient use of labor</li> <li>Prepare annual labor requirements chart by enterprises</li> <li>Complete employee payroll</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>											
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<p><b><i>Estate Planning</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine probable income for retirement programs</li> <li>Determine steps for implementing an estate plan</li> <li>Develop a means of orderly transfer of property</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>											
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# Agrcultural Skills Checklist

TASKS	Self-Check of Proficiency
<b>CROP PRODUCTION</b>	
<b><i>Plant Nutrition and Growth</i></b> Interpret soil analysis to determine fertilizer needs Determine optimum cropping system within soil erosion limitations Determine nutrient deficiency symptoms	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Fertilization</i></b> Select the most economical fertilization system, apply and store materials	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Preparation</i></b> Select method of ground prep. considering conditions/erosion potential	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Diseases and Pests</i></b> Identify crop diseases and determine control methods Identify common insects and determine control methods Identify common weeds and weed seeds and determine control methods Calibrate and operate sprayer and granular applicator for volume output	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Planting and Harvesting</i></b> Identify planter parts and attachments and their functions and determine proper planting rate Determine crop maturity (moisture, grain condition, etc.) Adjust combine to correct field losses to acceptable level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION</b>	
<b><i>General</i></b> Identify production management systems, record production information Select sires on performance data Select female animals for breeding program	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Feeding</i></b> Identify the feeds commonly used for animal rations	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Housing and Handling</i></b> Analyze housing system for livestock and select ventilation system	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

# Agricultural Skills Checklist

<b>TASKS</b>	<b><i>Self-Check of Proficiency</i></b>
<b><i>Diseases and Pests</i></b> Identify animals which show symptoms of a health problems	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS</b>	
<b><i>Agricultural Equipment Maintenance</i></b> Read equipment manuals to determine setup procedures for equipment Repair and replace parts of tillage equipment, planter, harvesting equipment and grain handling equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Small Engines</i></b> Maintain, repair, and adjust ignition system, lubrication and fuel system	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Buildings</i></b> Develop plan for improving a used building & determine best use of space	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Concrete</i></b> Grade site for pouring, place, hand float and finish concrete	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Electricity</i></b> Plan wiring layouts for individual building Select wire and electrical supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Hand Tools</i></b> Correctly and safely use and maintain hand tools	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Miscellaneous Tools</i></b> Portable Electric Power Tools Portable Air-powered Tools Major Power Tools Woodworking Gas Welding Metal Fabrication Sheet Metal Fabrication Painting Soldering Arc Welding	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

\* Adapted from "Proficiency Record of occupational Tasks for Agricultural Production," J.E. Cummins and R.D. Roediger, Ohio State Extension Service, 1986.

# Summary of Agricultural Skills

Activity	Related Skill
<b>Example:</b> <i>Determine types of crops to plant, when to harvest and when to sell or store crops.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <i>Crop management skills</i></li><li>✓ <i>Marketing skills</i></li><li>✓ <i>Decision-making skills</i></li></ul>

(Add additional pages if needed.)

# Power Words

Select three or more transferable skills (identified in the previous exercise) that you feel will influence potential employers. Now you need to develop "employee asset statements" that can be incorporated in an interview, cover-letters and resumes. Below is a list of strong, active verbs which can help "sell" the transferable skills in the employee asset statements you create. Choose the words that help describe each transferable skill.

<b>act</b>	<b>analyze</b>	<b>assemble</b>	<b>adapted</b>
<b>administer</b>	<b>build</b>	<b>brought</b>	<b>assist</b>
<b>communicate</b>	<b>create</b>	<b>control</b>	<b>balance</b>
<b>compared</b>	<b>coordinated</b>	<b>design</b>	<b>classify</b>
<b>develop</b>	<b>diagnose</b>	<b>defined</b>	<b>decide</b>
<b>documented</b>	<b>evaluate</b>	<b>estimate</b>	<b>directed</b>
<b>figure</b>	<b>fix</b>	<b>facilitate</b>	<b>expanded</b>
<b>influenced</b>	<b>identified</b>	<b>interview</b>	<b>invent</b>
<b>implemented</b>	<b>improved</b>	<b>increased</b>	<b>initiated</b>
<b>inspected</b>	<b>interpreted</b>	<b>investigated</b>	<b>judge</b>
<b>learn</b>	<b>manage</b>	<b>maintain</b>	<b>motivate</b>
<b>negotiate</b>	<b>observe</b>	<b>organize</b>	<b>perform</b>
<b>plan</b>	<b>prioritize</b>	<b>problem-solve</b>	<b>produce</b>
<b>promote</b>	<b>reconcile</b>	<b>remember</b>	<b>repair</b>
<b>research</b>	<b>schedule</b>	<b>sell</b>	<b>service</b>
<b>speak</b>	<b>teach</b>	<b>train</b>	<b>write</b>

# Employee Asset Statements

Let's review our steps thus far.

- A. You have identified your transferable skills.
- B. You selected three or more skills to promote in your job search.
- C. You have selected strong, active verbs to use in your "asset statements" to "sell" your skills to potential employers.

Let's put all this to work for you! Here is how you develop those employee asset statements that will show an employer that you are the best candidate for the job!

## *Example One :*

1. Identify your transferable skill:  
*Record keeping/computer skills*
2. Use it in a sentence relating to your former employment or activity:  
*"I keep all the records for the farm on my computer."*
3. Now transform that sentence into an employee asset statement by using the "power words" from the list in the previous activity, **Power Words**:

*"I implemented a computerized record keeping system that allows me to analyze farm production and financial records."*

## *Example Two :*

Transferable skill:     marketing crops  
Statement:             "I make decisions when to sell the crops."  
Employee asset:        "I manage and develop the crop marketing plan."

Your employee asset statements can be used:

- 1) in your cover letters; 2) as part of your **resume** and 3) as comments during **interviews**.

The significance of a transferable skill varies according to the job for which you are applying. As you apply for different jobs, you may want to emphasize different transferable skills. This may require going through the skill identification/asset statement process again to develop the employee asset statements that are pertinent to a specific job.

## *Conclusion*

To derive satisfaction from your life's work, you must recognize your skills and interests. Appraising all your skills job-related and transferable is key to career planning. Since you spend most of your life working, you will want to select a career that best utilizes your skills and offers you the highest return in personal satisfaction. Hopefully, through these exercises, you are now more able to realistically evaluate yourself and appropriately apply that knowledge in your career planning.

# Career Awareness Program and Action Plan

This activity has been designed to help you understand and articulate your interests, skills, and values. There are no shortcuts to understanding who you are and what you want to do. There are no right or wrong answers -- only what is right or wrong for you. With the short answer and check list items you will be able to review your past and present experiences in a manner that will help you plan what you want to do. Each section builds on the previous one, so it is important to work through the program in sequence. And, WRITE out your responses as you go -- don't rely on memory!!

## **Background :**

To provide some basic information which might influence your career choice, complete the following:

1. Father's occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Father's highest level of education \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Mother's occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Mother's highest level of education \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Number of moves your family made \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Types of communities in which you lived:  
\_\_\_\_\_ rural \_\_\_\_\_ suburban \_\_\_\_\_ metropolitan

## **Accomplishments:**

Assessing your accomplishments is an important step in helping you understand your skills, values, likes and dislikes. In a few words, describe your accomplishments in the spaces below. An example might be a winning exhibit in a 4-H county fair.

1. High School and College Accomplishments (academic or extra-curricular):
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Other Training Accomplishments (academic or extracurricular):
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Volunteer Accomplishments**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Work Accomplishments**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Accomplishments (hobbies, recreation, clubs, etc.)**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**Activities:**

In addition to the accomplishments above, you have been involved in other activities that have provided good learning experiences just because you participated. For example, you may have worked on an assembly line several summers.

**1. High School and College Activities (academic or extra-curricular):**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Other Training Activities (academic or extracurricular):**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Volunteer Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Work Related Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Any Other Areas (hobbies, recreation, clubs, etc.)**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills:**

Now that you have identified some of your accomplishments and activities, you should determine the skills or abilities you developed and used. For each accomplishment you listed, state what important skills you used. If you used the same skill in more than one accomplishment, list it wherever appropriate.

In the example of winning a prize with your 4-H fair exhibit, the important skills might be: researched and developed an appropriate topic; designed the presentation.

**1. Skills Used in High School and College Accomplishments**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Skills Used in Other Training Accomplishments**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Skills Used in Volunteer Accomplishments**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Skills Used in Work Related Accomplishments**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Skills Used in Other Areas (hobbies, recreation, clubs)**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Skills Used in Past Work Experiences**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

Now list the important skills for each of the activities you listed. Again repeat all skills where appropriate. In the example of factory work, you may have learned to work on a team, to be responsible for your part of the process, and to be on time to work.

**1. Skills Used in High School and College Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Skills Used in Other Training Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Skills Used in Volunteer Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Skills Used in Work Related Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills Used in Other Areas (hobbies, recreation, clubs)**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills Used in Past Work Experiences**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

***Interests:***

In your experiences there are some things you enjoyed and others that you did not. For each accomplishment, write what you liked and disliked about it. You may find the same likes and dislikes in several areas; record them wherever appropriate. In the 4-H fair exhibit example, you may have liked researching the topic and working on the project while you disliked completing the record book.

**LIKE**

**DISLIKE**

**1. School Accomplishments**

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| a. _____ | _____ |
| b. _____ | _____ |
| c. _____ | _____ |

**2. Other Training Accomplishments**

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| a. _____ | _____ |
| b. _____ | _____ |
| c. _____ | _____ |

**3. Volunteer Accomplishments**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Work Related Accomplishments**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Any Other Areas (hobbies, recreation, clubs)**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

For each activity you listed, list your likes and dislikes. The example of the factory job might be that you liked the feeling of being responsible for the product, while you disliked the repetitive nature of the job.

**LIKE**

**DISLIKE**

**1. School Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Other Training Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Volunteer Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Work Related Activities**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Activities From Any Other Areas**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**Values:**

Values are those things you believe in and strive for. They are basic and important yet sometimes difficult to identify because you may not be consciously aware of them. The purpose of this section is to identify some of your values, particularly in relation to work and career, in order to clarify their importance. Some examples might be you value: your dependability; the freedom to do what you want; quality rather than quantity; rural setting; remaining on the farm.

List as many of your values as you can:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now rank the top five from most important to least:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills Summary:**

Now review the section on skills. Usually there are patterns. If you find very few or no instances where the same skill is repeated, you may have used different words to represent the same skill. You may also want to list additional accomplishments and activities, or experiences in them, so that you can expand the section on skills. Write down the five skills which appear most frequently:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Likes and Dislikes Summary:**

Review your likes and dislikes in the same way you reviewed your skills. Write the five likes and the five dislikes which appear most frequently:

**LIKE**

**DISLIKE**

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 1. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 5. _____ |

# Career Action Plan

The previous sections have concentrated on your experiences to help you understand yourself better. As you make plans for your job search and a career, your chances of success will be enhanced if you consider your plan based on what you know about yourself.

This section includes important items you should think about in this phase, focusing on "what do you want to do?"

## **Job Factors:**

Rank the five most important job factors -- think only in terms of what is related to the job.

- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| _____ challenge                   | _____ travel                  |
| _____ opportunity for advancement | _____ educational opportunity |
| _____ training program            | _____ prestige                |
| _____ salary                      | _____ work environment        |
| _____ security                    | _____ co-workers              |
| _____ initial job assignment      | _____ type of boss            |
| _____ hours per week              | _____ frequency of moves      |
| _____ size of company             | _____ job location            |
| _____ type of industry            | _____ seeing results of job   |
| _____ independence of action      | _____ others (list)           |

---

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Considering the job factors you have ranked above and keeping in mind your skills, interests and values, describe in a few written sentences the characteristics of an ideal job for you:

**Non-Job Factors:**

There are other items that you can and should evaluate which encompass the time spent away from work. From this list rank the five most important non-job factors for you:

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| _____ climate                     | _____ commuting distance         |
| _____ proximity                   | _____ frequency of moves         |
| _____ cultural activities         | _____ cost of living             |
| _____ recreational activities     | _____ adult education activities |
| _____ spouse's career opportunity | _____ public schools             |
| _____ type of community           | _____ other (list)               |

Considering the non-job factors you ranked above, describe the characteristics of your ideal non-job environment:

The ideal job and the ideal non-job environments you have described make up your desired lifestyle. As a way of further understanding this lifestyle you may want to compare it with your responses in the Background section in order to see how your family background and lifestyle have influenced it.

When you are looking for your first or entry level job, it is important to recognize that you may not fulfill all of your ideal lifestyle needs right away. You may even have to make some hard choices between some of your ideal lifestyle needs and the need to work and get started in your career at a far less than ideal job. Nevertheless, it is important and worthwhile to have a good idea of what is right for you to serve as a map through your job search and to help you realistically evaluate your opportunities as they present themselves.

There are long range implications to the employment decision you will soon make. While many entry level positions are similar, they may lead to entirely different points when you have progressed two or three steps in a career path. Therefore, it is to your advantage to identify some short and long range goals to be used as "bench marks" to measure your career progress. Of course, additional experience, new information and changed circumstances will make it necessary to review and modify your goals from time to time.

**Goal Setting:**

I plan to interview employers from the following organizations (list names of organizations or types):

I plan to interview \_\_\_\_\_ number of employers.

Ideally, I plan to accept a job by \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

For the first year of off-farm employment, my goals are:

Some of the goals I want to accomplish in five years are:

---

\* This document was adapted with permission from the Purdue University Placement Service.

## **VI. Marketing Yourself — Tools for the Job Search**

### **A. Introduction**

A very real concern is that most farmers lack experience in seeking and securing a job. Heffornan and Heffornan (1986) interviewed displaced farmers and found that most were raised on farms and had no other employment experience. It is obvious that farmers need information about the world of work and must develop the skills for making contacts, completing an application and interviewing for a job (Heffornan and Heffornan, 1986).

As the professional assisting farmers/ranchers in seeking off-farm employment it may be important to remind clients of the following items:

- Many jobs are not listed in the want ads
- Jobs go to the best job hunters
- Employers often hire people they know
- You should know what you want to do and where you want to be located (Williams).

Utilize the **Job Search Barometer** included at the end of this chapter to assess the clients readiness to start a job search. This simple tool can quickly help you identify what areas of the job search the client needs assistance with the most. Then by training, practicing, teaching or reading, the client can develop the necessary skills for a successful job search (see **Resume Writing Tips, Employment Application Tips and Interview Tips** at the end of the chapter).

### **B. The Resume**

The resume is an advertisement for the job seeker. Its function is to tell the prospective employer about an individual's experiences, skills and qualifications. The resume has become the principal marketing tool in the early stages of a job search. The resume can be especially important to someone in production agriculture because it lists not only employment history but more importantly experience and acquired skills.

Your client may be in a unique situation if he has always worked on the family farm. The process of finding a job may be a new experience. This is all the more reason to invest time in writing an effective resume. The most helpful guidance at this point may be to provide information and offer guidelines for creating an effective resume "tool".

The two major approaches to resume writing are the **chronological** and the **functional** (an example of each is included at the end of this chapter). The chronological is organized according to dates of employment while the functional is organized to accentuate the qualifications of the applicant with little emphasis on specific dates. A combination resume combines major areas of qualifications with dates and place of employment. The functional design is generally desirable for the self-employed farmer with little non-farm work experience but a strong list of skills and qualifications. There are a variety of appropriate and useful resume formats.

An individual is not legally required to mention a disability on the resume, but it can be mentioned in a positive way to avoid creating an obstacle during the interview. If the person has developed positive skills in overcoming his disability or has been involved in any disability related organizations, this could be mentioned as a casual way of introducing the disability in the employment process. An individual may decide not to mention a disability at this time but instead approach it during the interviewing process.

Encourage the client to seek the input of others while he is writing the resume. These may include business friends and people he knows through work, church or farm organizations. Agency or university programs that offer employment assistance are an excellent place to find someone to critique a resume. You can be a resource by offering feedback and helping the client focus on transferable skills from agricultural tasks.

There are many excellent books on resume preparation. These provide the detailed instructions necessary to assist you in advising individuals in the process of composing an effective resume. Some public employment agencies and local organizations offer workshops on resume preparation. There are also inexpensive software programs available to assist with producing a resume as well. Encourage your client to carefully gather information, spend time writing and rewriting, and solicit feedback from others to produce the best end product. The investment made in having a resume professionally typed and printed is well worth it. A brief overview of **Resume Writing Tips** is at the end of this chapter.

### C. Cover Letter

A cover letter is a vital supplement to the resume. The cover letter is a means of introducing the applicant and is often the first impression of the applicant the employer receives. It is best to carefully tailor the cover letter to a specific job — it is an important link to the potential employer. The applicant should obtain a job description for the

specific job if one is available. This is helpful in deciding how best to describe the skills and characteristics in the letter. For example, a person applying for a position in sales with a fertilizer company would use the cover letter to emphasize his experience with chemical and fertilizer application on the farm, as well as his ability to interact comfortably with people.

When it is not known if there is a specific job opening, a letter of inquiry can be useful. The company should be researched by checking resource materials (including newspapers) at the library and talking to employees, clients/customers and others in a position to provide reliable information about the company.

In assisting the farmer/rancher, it is wise to discuss introducing the disability in the job seeking process. If it is not mentioned in the resume, it could be mentioned in the cover letter. It is important to remember that qualifications and interest in the job are the central feature of this letter. It is appropriate to refer to a disability, but do not focus on it. Avoid using any medical or negative words. Describe the disability casually, then quickly return to the purpose of the letter. This approach keeps the initial contact a positive one. (See **Sample Coverletters** at the end of this chapter.)

#### **D. The Employment Application**

For many people who have farmed or worked in a farming business all their lives, filling out a job application is a new and sometimes frightening experience. The following simple guidelines can help make this step in the job search process easier:

- Encourage the farmer to gather all information and records in a readily available file.
- Create a "dummy" or practice application.
- Before completing an application, make a copy to fill out in pencil, then transfer the information to the original by typing it or using black ink.

The **Employment Application Tips** can be copied and given to your client as a guide in completing an application. A sample employment application from the Caterpillar Corporation is also included in this chapter. Reviewing this application with the farmer/rancher can help prepare him for completing an actual application.

## E. The Interview

The interview is probably the most important element in obtaining any job. Practice and preparation are the keys to a good interview. When working with someone emphasize the importance of this step in the job seeking process.

Preparation increases confidence and eases some of the anxiety most people experience with a job interview. Role playing can be very helpful and can help reinforce key points while making the inexperienced job seeker more comfortable in an interview situation. Review the list of **Interview Tips** at the end of this chapter and utilize additional resource materials. There are many good books on interviewing techniques which can supply a list of possible questions to practice (see Chapter XI).

One factor to address with your client is the issue of discussing the disability itself during the interview. Employers can ask about one's ability to perform a job, **but cannot inquire if someone has a disability**. Yet the applicant should be aware that it is to his advantage to approach the subject first, and thus have control of the discussion. The disability should be presented in relation to the job being discussed and not as a personal problem or medical condition. This allows the applicant to give a functional definition of his disability and to move on to the discussion of qualifications for the job. It is helpful to practice disability-related questions in a role playing situation so the applicant can answer them in a positive, confident manner.

### Common Questions by Employers

- Why are you interested in our company?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- How are you qualified for this position?

### Common Questions by Employees

- What are the responsibilities of this position?
- What qualities or skills are required in this position?
- Is there a training period?

# Job Search Barometer

The job search can be an overwhelming experience. Sometimes it is impossible to decide where to begin!! Studies have found that people who formulate specific ideas about the type of work they desire and the work setting where they will be most productive, are significantly more successful in securing employment than those who do not.

The JOB SEARCH BAROMETER attempts to provide a systematic method for assessing your readiness to launch a successful job search. The questions are in logical sequence so don't skip around! Score one point in the left hand column for each item you have completed. Subtotal your points in each part and transfer your subtotals to the end of the BAROMETER.

## ***PART 1: SELF AWARENESS***

\_\_\_\_\_ I have identified personality characteristics which should be considered in the type of job I am looking for:

Do I work best with people, data, or things?

Do I work best by doing or thinking?

Do I work best with close supervision?

How do I feel about supervision of others' work?

\_\_\_\_\_ I have identified my skills and interests.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know how these skills and interests might be applied to work.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have identified work settings in which I am most interested. (For example, industrial, business, government)

\_\_\_\_\_ I have summarized my personal experience in terms of work, education, and avocational (non-work setting) activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have considered personal preferences about:

Geographic locations

Setting type (urban, suburban, rural)

How much travel I will accept

Any health restrictions

\_\_\_\_\_ **SUBTOTAL**

## ***PART 2: JOB ANALYSIS***

If you have a career objective requiring additional training, and are considering going back to school score the following three items:

\_\_\_\_\_ I have discussed my plans with a counselor knowledgeable in my career field.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have written for applications in time to meet early deadlines.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have taken, or arranged to take, the necessary exams or test.

***Job Analysis***

\_\_\_\_\_ I have listed three or more types of employers in each of the work settings I am considering.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have talked to professionals and others associated with my field for advice and suggestions.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have sought out and checked all sources of information about hiring patterns of organizations in which I am interested, and sources of information about persons whose backgrounds are similar to mine to see what organizations hired them.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have completed my resume.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have developed an appropriate strategy to contact employers.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have drafted a basic letter of introduction and inquiry which can be used as a basis for writing to specific employers.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have obtained at least three persons to serve as references for me and have given a current resume to each.

\_\_\_\_\_ **SUBTOTAL**

***PART 3: INTERVIEW PREPARATION***

\_\_\_\_\_ I have studied all the literature and/or resources available about employers with whom I desire an interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have formulated for each interview the specific information I wish to get from the interview:  
type of work involved  
nature of training, if any  
career patterns typical in the organization  
other information I am specifically interested in acquiring

\_\_\_\_\_ I have thought out for myself the answers to commonly asked interview questions, such as:  
my short-term career objectives  
my long-term career objectives  
why this employing organization interests me  
why I chose my career area  
elaborate on my interests, accomplishments, qualifications  
what I expect of a job  
what I expect to contribute to a job and/or the organization

\_\_\_\_\_ **SUBTOTAL**

**READING THE BAROMETER:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Subtotal Part 1: Self Awareness**

A subtotal of less than 6 indicates you should clarify your thinking further in the area of self awareness before launching a job search.

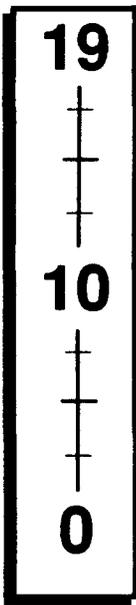
\_\_\_\_\_ **Subtotal Part 2: Job Analysis**

A subtotal of less than 8 suggests a limited investigation of job opportunities.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Subtotal Part 3: Interview Preparation**

A subtotal of less than 3 indicates you are not prepared to interview.

**TOTAL**



← Congratulations! You are well prepared to begin your job search.

← You should prepare further before starting to look for employment.

\* The Job Search Barometer was adapted with permission from the Purdue University Placement Service.

# Resume Writing Tips

- Your resume should include the following:
  1. Your name, address and telephone number.
  2. Your career/job goal.
  3. Your work experience, special skills, leadership and community activities.
  4. List references or state "References Available Upon Request."
- Present information in an organized manner.
- Your resume should be visually appealing, concise (usually one page) and easy to read. The use of white (blank) space helps make a resume more attractive and easier to read.
- Use "power words" and active verbs to describe your qualifications (see *Power Words* handout in chapter 5).
- Correct grammar is important. Verb endings should be similar and in the correct tense.
- Avoid excessive use of words such as I, a, an, and the.
- Avoid jargon, acronyms and abbreviations.
- Write and rewrite. The end product should be flawless. Check for spelling, punctuation and typographical errors.
- Solicit feedback from three other people. Revise and rewrite.
- Use quality paper and have your resume professionally printed (copy centers offer this service), or use a letter quality printer.
- Always include a cover letter with your resume (see example in this chapter).
- Remember, you are not required to give personal information unrelated to job performance such as age, marital status, etc.

P.O. Box 52  
Brownsville, IN 47325  
(317) 458-7360  
November 20, 1992

Mr. Richard D. Smith, Principal  
Union County High School  
1200 Middle School  
Brownsville, IN 47325

Dear Mr. Smith:

I will be graduating in June of next year and am seeking a position as a social studies and economics teacher at the secondary level. I have been active in this community in numerous ways in the past and would like to continue to make a difference as a member of your faculty.

My experience as a teacher in the corporation's Saturday School has inspired me to pursue my dream of teaching and motivating youth. For over twenty years I have worked with the children of our community and have assumed leadership positions in a variety of local organizations as detailed on my resume. I am currently a student at Indiana University East where I am active in numerous campus organizations and have worked on special projects with the administration.

Enclosed is a resume for your reference and review. I would like the opportunity to meet with you and will call next week to discuss a convenient time.

Sincerely,

Richard Buckland

**Richard Buckland**  
**P.O. Box 52**  
**Brownsville, IN 47325-0052**  
**Home (317) 458-7360**

### **CAREER OBJECTIVE**

Seeking a position utilizing my education and leadership experience teaching social studies and economics to secondary students.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Worked with youth for 22 years through community leadership and coaching positions.

Demonstrated leadership at Indiana University East as chairman of the Student Affairs Committee, Chancellor's Committee for Future Development, member I.U. East Writers, member of the History Club

Consulted in the creation of barrier free design for the Indiana University East campus

Managed and coordinated construction of 800 herd dairy milking facility including complete barrier free design throughout the facility

Responsible for financial coordination of 800 head, 1200 acre dairy farm, including cash flow projections, income statements, balance sheets, and coordination with lenders, purchasers and personnel

Demonstrated public service commitment through church, 4H, county and university organizations and affiliations

### **EDUCATION**

Indiana University East, Richmond, Indiana, 1990 to present

Major: education, economics and social studies

Degree objective: Bachelors with teacher certification

Intended graduation date: 1994

### **EXPERIENCE**

#### **Financial Manager**

Buckland Dairy Farm, Richmond, Indiana  
1962 to 1982

#### **Office Manager, Bookkeeper, Grain buyer**

Boston Feed and Grain, Boston Indiana  
1965 to 1966

### **COMMUNITY**

Lay Minister, Sunday School teacher, President of Trustees and Administrative Board President for church, 4-H leader for 17 years, coached Little League for 22 years, coached Youth Football

### **REFERENCES**

Available upon request

16447 State Road 38  
Hagerstown, IN 47346  
(317) 489-5753  
November 20, 1992

Mr. Robert Jones  
Farm Progress Show Coordinator  
Indiana Prairie Farmer  
4944 Delaware Street  
Indianapolis, IN 47777

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am writing to you at the suggestion of Bill Field, director of Breaking New Ground at Purdue University. Bill felt my unique background would be of value to your organization as you incorporate the Americans With Disabilities Act into your planning of agricultural events.

As a farmer with a spinal cord injury I have a unique perspective of the ADA ramifications for agriculture. This has enabled me to effectively serve in a variety of professional positions relating directly to accessibility for individuals with disabilities in rural communities and agricultural businesses. Additionally, I have been working with Easter Seals of Indiana and Breaking New Ground to increase public awareness of farming with a disability.

Enclosed is a copy of my resume. I would like to arrange an interview at your earliest convenience and will call to discuss this matter with you.

Sincerely,

Edward W. Bell

**Edward Wayne Bell**  
**16447 SR 38**  
**Hagerstown, Indiana 47346**  
**(317) 489-5753**

## **CAREER OBJECTIVE**

Provide professional ADA consultation to agricultural manufacturers and suppliers for local, state, regional and international exhibitions.

## **EXPERIENCE**

### **Farmer Liason**

Indiana Easter Seals - Breaking New Ground, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN  
1992 to Present

Evaluated ADA accessibility for agricultural events, 4-H fairgrounds and extension facilities; Presented at the Spring and Fall 1992 Agricultural Extension Training; Guest speaker at the 1992 National Agribility Training Conference; Presented formal and informal programs on the Breaking New Ground program and farming with a spinal cord injury

### **Manager and operator**

Triple B Farm, Hagerstown, IN 47346  
1980 to Present

Manage production of specialty fruit and vegetable crops including fertility levels, herbicide selection and application, cultivation and harvesting; Developed aggressive marketing and distribution strategies for consumer sales of specialty crops; Researched and evaluated consumer food trends and developments in fruit and vegetable seed stock; Directed personnel selection, time prioritization and task allocation for specialty fruit and vegetable production and retail sales; Responsible for financial record keeping, invoicing, cash flows, balance sheets, and financial analysis

### **Executive Director**

Sunrise, Inc., Richmond, IN  
1984 to 1989

Director of organization providing therapeutic horseback riding lessons for individuals with disabilities

### **Independent Truck Driver**

Palladium - Item, Richmond, IN  
1979 to 1981

Delivered newspapers from presses to carriers

## **EDUCATION**

Purdue University Agricultural Winter Short Course  
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, 1981  
Hagerstown High School  
Hagerstown, IN, 1975-1979

**Sample Resume**

**BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS**

Hagerstown Chamber of Commerce  
Rotary International, Hagerstown, IN  
Farmers' Market, Richmond, IN  
Easter Seal Society, Indiana State Board of Directors

**AWARDS & HONORS**

Selected as the 1986 Indiana Handicapped Person of the Year  
Served on the Governor's Task Force for the Disabled, 1987  
Presented at the 1992 Farm Management Tour

**REFERENCES**

Available upon request

Sample Cover Letter

R.R. 2, Box 153B  
Royal Center, IN 46978  
(219) 643-3965  
January 27, 1993

Mr. John Williams  
Indiana Grain  
R.R. 4, Box 125  
Logansport, IN 47954

Dear Mr. Williams:

I am looking for an organization where I can use my experience in agricultural production. Indiana Grain seems to be such a company. Please see the enclosed resume for more details on my qualifications.

My diversified background includes experience in the areas of operating my own farm; planning the best strategies for storing, buying or selling grain; and working with and communicating effectively with various agribusiness representatives.

I have always had an interest in marketing agricultural products, and I believe that enthusiasm shows in my work. I respond well to a challenge and enjoy the opportunity to reap the rewards of hard work and dedication.

I look forward to the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss our mutual interests. You can reach me by phone to arrange for an interview.

Sincerely,

Bill Gundrum

**Bill Gundrum**  
**R.R. 2, Box 153B**  
**Royal Center, IN 46978**  
**(219) 632-3965**

### **CAREER OBJECTIVE**

Seeking a position as an account clerk/customer service representative in an agricultural business setting.

### **EXPERIENCE**

#### **Operator**

Gundrum Farms, Royal Center, IN  
1973 to 1980

Assisted with all field crop production, cultivation and grain transportation activities.

#### **Production Assistant**

Braun Corporation, Winamac, IN  
1980

Responsible for wiring harnesses for van lifts and automatic doors.

#### **Manager and Operator**

BG Plastics, Royal Center, IN  
1982 to 1985

Produced magnetic signs, molds for pictures and various products utilizing a vacume form machine. Responsible for public contact activities to promote BG Plastics.

### **EDUCATION**

#### Woodlawn Center

Logansport, IN, 1987  
Major: Six Week Job Training Program

#### Ivy Tech

Logansport, IN, 1983  
Major: Drafting

#### Ivy Tech

Kokomo, IN, 1977 to 1978  
Major: Accounting, Business Machines, Business, and Drafting

#### Pioneer High School

Royal Center, IN, 1969 to 1973

### **ACTIVITIES & HOBBIES**

Handicapped Action League  
St. Elizabeth Catholic Church  
Art and Drawing

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Pioneer High School, Art Club  
Pioneer High School, Pep Club  
Featured Article, "Working the Land: Adapting Farming for Disabled People"

### **REFERENCES**

Available upon request

# Employment Application Tips

- Read the instructions before filling out the application.
- Have a copy made of the application and fill it out in pencil, using all available information, before you do the final application.
- Print neatly in black ink or type the final application.
- Spelling and grammar should be correct. Space is limited, so be concise and brief.
- Be sure information is accurate, including dates of schooling or employment, salary and supervisor's name. It is helpful to have this information written out and kept on file to refer to when filling out applications.
- Present a positive picture by avoiding any negative statements about yourself or your former employer.
- Do not write "open" under position desired. State a SPECIFIC position.
- Do not state an unrealistic amount under "salary desired." Too high a figure might cause you to be screened out. Instead write "open" (this is more desirable than "negotiable".)
- Be sure to sign the application.
- When finished read the application all the way through again in order to catch any errors or omissions.



**U.S. Military Service**

Have you been in the Military Service?

Yes  No

Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Active Duty

From

To

Primary Duty

Highest Rank

Special Training

**Convictions (Do not list traffic violations.)**

Have you ever been convicted in a court of law?

Yes  No

If Yes, Where? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Final Action \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment Record (List most recent employment first)**

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Firm Name

Street, City, State

Describe Job Duties \_\_\_\_\_

Date Started \_\_\_\_\_

Date Left \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Leaving \_\_\_\_\_

Salary \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If current employer, may we contact for reference? Yes  No

Employer's phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR**

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Firm Name

Street, City, State

Describe Job Duties \_\_\_\_\_

Date Started \_\_\_\_\_

Date Left \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Leaving \_\_\_\_\_

Salary \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**EXAMPLE**

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Firm Name

Street, City, State

Describe Job Duties \_\_\_\_\_

Date Started \_\_\_\_\_

Date Left \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Leaving \_\_\_\_\_

Salary \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other Employment Not Shown Above:

Have You Ever Been Discharged By An Employer?

Yes  No

If Yes, Give Details

**ONLY**

Have You Had Work Experience With:

- Boring Mach.
- Grinding Mach.
- Inspection
- Robotics
- Milling Mach.
- Shearing Mach.
- Assembly
- FMS
- Metal Press
- Flame Cutting
- Welding
- Cell Experience
- Lathes
- Gear Cutting
- Transfer Mach.

**Please Read**

I understand that any false or misleading statements made by me on this application may prevent my employment or may be cause for dismissal if hired. I hereby authorize former and present employers, physicians, and others to give or verify any information they have regarding me or my employment with them, and I release them and their companies from any liability for damage resulting therefrom. I also understand that any employment which may result with Caterpillar Inc., its subsidiaries, or affiliated companies ("Caterpillar") can be terminated, with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either Caterpillar or myself unless such employment is subject to the terms of a collective bargaining agreement. I further understand that offers of employment are conditioned upon the successful passing of a drug test and the completion of a physical examination as scheduled by Caterpillar. Placement will be contingent upon the results of the physical examination and available openings.

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE**

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Class \_\_\_\_\_ Job Code \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_ Shift \_\_\_\_\_

Rate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Fac. \_\_\_\_\_ Date Employed \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_ Employed By \_\_\_\_\_

Payroll Status \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor Name & I.D. \_\_\_\_\_

Date

Thank you for your interest in employment at Caterpillar Inc. Applicants are considered for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, medical condition or disability, or veteran status.

This information will be used solely for purposes of compliance with Federal/State Requirements. It will not be used for hiring, placement or any other decision relating to terms and conditions of employment.

Social Security Number

Equal Employment Opportunity Data

To help us comply with federal and state equal employment opportunity record keeping, reporting and other legal requirements, we ask that you voluntarily provide us with the following information:

RACE/NATIONAL ORIGIN:

- White
- Black, not of Hispanic Origin
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Hispanic

**FOR**

**EXAMPLE**

SEX:

- Male
- Female

**ONLY**

AGE:

There are minimum age requirements for employment established by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Please indicate your date of birth so that placement will not result in violation of this act.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Month                  Day                  Year

Initial

First Name

Last Name

(See Reverse Side For Work Experience)

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all appropriate boxes to indicate your work experience:

**ASSEMBLY**

- (PA) Assembler - Heavy
- (PB) Assembler - Light
- (PI) Assembly & Test

**FOUNDRY OPERATIONS**

- (FB) Core Making
- (FE) Finishing (Chipping/Grinding)
- (FF) Melting
- (FC) Molding

**METAL TREATING**

- (ML) Laboratory Testing
- (MT) Metal Treating

**MACHINE OPERATIONS**

- (PV) Cells
- (PW) FMS
- (PE) Machinist - Drills
- (PF) Machinist - Gear Cutting
- (PG) Machinist - Grinder
- (PH) Machinist - Lathes
- (PX) Machinist - Boring
- (PJ) Machinist - Mills
- (PZ) Machinist - CNC
- (PK) Machinist - NC
- (PO) Transfer Mach. Oper.

**CHEMICAL PROCESSING**

- (PP) Rubber Processing/Fabrication

**FABRICATION & METALWORKING**

- (PC) Burner/Cutter
- (PD) Forge Press Operator
- (PN) Press Operator
- (PQ) Shear Operator
- (PT) Welder-Production

**QUALITY CONTROL**

- (VD) Inspection

**TECHNICIAN**

- (NB) Chemist/Chemical Tech.
- (ND) Drafting/Detailing
- (NF) Ind./Mfg. Engineering
- (NM) Tool Design
- (RE) Electronics Tech.
- (VB) Nurse - RN
- (WR) Blueprint Reading

**MATERIALS/PARTS OPERATIONS**

- (MB) Material/Inventory Control
- (MC) Material Handling
- (MO) Vehicle Operator
- (ME) Warehousing

**SECURITY**

- (VE) Fire Protection
- (VC) Plant Security/Law Enf.

**SKILLED CRAFTS**

- (RA) Air Condition & Refrig. Equip.
- (RC) Automotive Repair
- (RD) Boiler Oper./Fireman
- (RF) Electrician
- (RG) Electronics Repair
- (VA) Heavy Equipment Operator
- (RH) Instrument Repair
- (RI) Machine Repair
- (RJ) Millwright
- (RK) Plumber
- (RL) Precision Mach.
- (RM) Tool/Diemaker
- (RU) Tool Grinding
- (RR) Waste/Water Treatment
- (RW) Welder

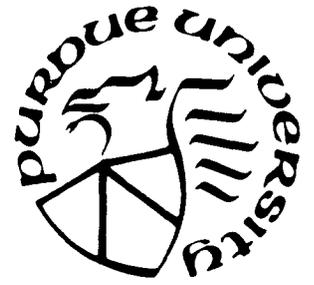
**OFFICE**

- (NA) Accounting
- (NC) Clerical
- (NE) Graphic Arts/Illustrating
- (NG) Key Entry (Production)
- (NK) Secretarial/Stenographic
- (NN) Keyboarding (Typing)
- (NO) Collections
- (NS) Office Services
- (NT) Telemarketing
- (NP) Personal Computer (Word Processing, Spread Sheet, Data Management)
- (NI) Claims Processing (Insurance/Health Care Related)
- (NU) Paralegal

**DATA PROCESSING**

- (DA) Computer Operations
- (DB) Programming
- (DC) Systems Analysis

**FOR  
EXAMPLE  
ONLY**



# Application for Employment

Purdue University, Cooperative Extension Service  
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907

Position for which application is made \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out this application accurately and completely so that we may determine your qualifications for a position with the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of application

## Personal Data

\_\_\_\_\_ Name (last, first, middle)

\_\_\_\_\_ Present Address (number and street) (city/state/zip code) ( ) Telephone (area code/no.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Address (number and st.) (city/state/zip code) ( ) Telephone (area code/no.)  
(if different from present address)

( ) Business Telephone (area code/no.) Date you could begin work \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number where you can be reached during the day ( )  
(area code/no.)

As the job will require the use of a car:

Do you have a valid state driver's license, or can you obtain one? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a car or access to one? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any geographic preferences in the State of Indiana? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any geographic areas in the State of Indiana that you are not willing to be assigned to?

No \_\_\_\_\_

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

If appointed, how many years do you expect to stay in the Extension Service? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you had any association with the Cooperative Extension Service? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, in what ways? \_\_\_\_\_

Have your parents or other family members participated in local Extension programs? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, in what ways? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you had any experience in 4-H Club Work? \_\_\_\_\_

(a) As a member? \_\_\_\_\_ How many years? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) As a Junior Leader? \_\_\_\_\_ How many years? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

(c) As an Adult Leader? \_\_\_\_\_ How many years? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

List 4-H projects taken as a member and approximate number of years in each project: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been active in other youth activities? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your participation in such work \_\_\_\_\_

### OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### Jobs While in School

% College expenses earned		How earned		
Significant work experience Names and Addresses of Employers	Description of Work	Immediate Supervisor	Hours Per Week	Dates Employed From To

#### Full-time Employment

PRESENT OR MOST RECENT EMPLOYER:

My present employer may \_\_\_\_\_ may not \_\_\_\_\_ be contacted.

Name of employer \_\_\_\_\_ Kind of Business  
or Profession \_\_\_\_\_

Address and Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Position title \_\_\_\_\_ Held from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Type of work \_\_\_\_\_ Salary (per year) \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(start) (final)

Name and title of immediate superior \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for leaving \_\_\_\_\_

NEXT PREVIOUS EMPLOYER:

Name of employer \_\_\_\_\_ Kind of Business  
or Profession \_\_\_\_\_

Address and Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Position title \_\_\_\_\_ Held from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Type of work \_\_\_\_\_ Salary (per year) \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(start) (final)

Name and title of immediate superior \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for leaving \_\_\_\_\_

(Continue employment record on separate sheet if necessary and attach)

**EDUCATIONAL RECORD**

Attach or send separately transcript of college records.

Name and Address of High School, College or University attended	Dates Attended		Grade Pt. Ave.	Grade Basis	Degree Earned		Semester Credit Hours
	From	To			Title	Date	
				A =			
				A =			
				A =			
				A =			
				A =			
				A =			
				A =			

What was your major? \_\_\_\_\_ Minor? \_\_\_\_\_

**GRADUATE RECORD**

Masters, Doctoral, Post Doctoral

Name and Address of University Attended	Dates Attended		Degree Earned		Major
	From	To	Title	Date	

Name and Address of Faculty Advisor(s)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Other Educational Experience: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Identify other educational achievements such as publications authored, scientific papers published, articles published, etc.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(Continue on separate sheet and attach if necessary)

Scholastic honors received (high school and college) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List professional and/or social fraternities, sororities, societies, clubs, or organizations of which you are a member:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

For the above, indicate the offices or positions of leadership you held or are currently holding:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List the civic, church and community service activities in which you have been associated:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**References**

Names of three people, not relatives or former employers, who have known you at least two years, and who you feel would be able to assess your personal and/or professional qualifications for the position under consideration:

_____ (Name)	_____ (Address)
_____ (Business and Position)	_____ (Telephone)
*****	
_____ (Name)	_____ (Address)
_____ (Business and Position)	_____ (Telephone)
*****	
_____ (Name)	_____ (Address)
_____ (Business and Position)	_____ (Telephone)
*****	

**Attach or send separately transcript(s) of college record(s).**

Please feel free to supplement this application with any additional information that you believe would be helpful to us in evaluating your qualifications.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date) (Signature)

This application should be submitted to: Personnel Department, Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, Agricultural Administration Building, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907.

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service to provide equal opportunity in employment for all persons and to prohibit discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or handicap.

# Interview Tips

- Review your resume before the interview and **KNOW** the details you have included. Take extra copies with you.
- Practice interviewing and review possible questions.
- Be prepared. Learn as much as possible about the business and the individual that will be conducting the interview.
- Go to the interview alone and be on time.
- Begin with a firm handshake. If you are unable to shake hands, speak and nod.
- Do not smoke or chew gum.
- Pay special attention to appearance:
  - Attire should be neat, clean, and appropriate for the type of job.
  - Shoes should be well kept and polished.
  - Fingernails should be clean and properly cut.
  - Hair should be well groomed and clean.
- Listen carefully to the questions being asked so you can give your best response.
- Do not monopolize the conversation.
- Try to avoid answering questions with yes or no. Use your answers to provide information that will support you as the candidate for the job.
- Know before the interview how you will handle questions regarding your disability and any necessary accommodation.
- Practice using questions to your advantage. This is your opportunity to convey information about yourself and at the same time learn more about the position.
- Be positive.
- Ask questions.
- Explain why you want to work for the business and why you want the specific job you are interviewing for.
- Learn what happens next.
- Express thanks in person and with a follow-up letter for the opportunity to interview.
- Interview Basics \*
  - *Confidence* - comes from preparation.
  - *Listen* - it shows you are interested.
  - *Attitude* - have a positive one.
  - *Smile* - no one wants to hire a grump.
  - *Prompt* - don't be late.
  - *Enthusiasm* - show it!
  - *Dress* for success.

\* Adapted from Paraplegia News, October 1992.

## VII. Conducting the Job Search

### A. Introduction

An important first step in conducting the job search is identifying "how people get jobs." Note these important statistics.

- 90% of jobs are NOT listed in the want ads or with employment agents.
- 63% of blue and white collar jobs are obtained through friends and relationships.
- 75% of professional and managerial jobs are obtained through professional contacts (PVA, 1989).

Reassure the person you are assisting that they are not "alone" in the job search. In fact according to a 1987 Gallup Poll many people are going through a career change. Note these facts:

- In 1987 nearly 11 million workers said they needed help in selecting, changing or obtaining a job.
- 28 million workers changed jobs between 1987 and 1990.
- 20% of the workforce expected to change jobs by choice, while 4.5% expected to seek other employment because of business closings (1987 Gallup Poll-Commissioned by the National Career Development Association).

There are many resources available to you as you assist the farmer with a disability in making decisions regarding off-farm employment. Listed at the end of this manual (Chapter XI) are materials and organizations that can provide information or assistance. It is important to use "people" resources as you go through this process. The network you have established with other rural professionals will be important and should become more valuable as your experience with rural employment increases.

There are also many organizations that provide services to individuals seeking employment. Some of these are government agencies (federal, state and local) and some are private. Colleges and universities provide employment services, and exploring these may prove very productive. You are encouraged to add resources to this binder that are specific to your geographic location and situation.

## **B. Where to Look for Work**

Getting started can be hard, but knowing where to look for employment can be one of the most challenging and confusing parts of the job search. There are many sources of information available — some may be more useful than others. The individual situation, as well as the type of job or career must be considered. Utilizing multiple sources increases the potential of finding potential jobs.

### **1. The Yellow Pages**

This simple directory is a source for the addresses and phone numbers of local businesses. This is a good place to start your research.

### **2. Networking**

Networking involves utilizing contacts made in both formal and informal situations to assist in your job search. It takes time, but as one contact or idea leads to another, you may find yourself gathering useful job information. Friends, relatives and members of organizations (church, farm organizations, etc.) can be helpful if you let them know what you are looking for.

### **3. Newspapers**

The want ads list job openings, but generally are not the best way to find employment. Reading your local paper can tell you about new companies coming to town, the expansion of existing businesses and trends leading to an increase in available jobs. This information can be very valuable in the job search.

### **4. Other Publications**

Reading trade magazines or professional journals will keep you up-to-date on new information, and many list employment opportunities. These vary with your specific area of interest. Again, read for helpful information as well as want ads.

### **5. Employment Agencies**

Your local state, county and city employment centers are often good places to look for free help. These agencies (both private and public) are discussed on the following pages.

## **C. Placement Agencies**

It should be obvious that searching the want ads and walking the streets to find a job opening will not suffice in today's competitive employment market. When it comes time to seek employment, it's best to use as many resources as possible to ensure the widest coverage of available jobs. Not all of the options listed below may be available to everyone, but using more than one agency or organization is strongly recommended.

For descriptive purposes, placement agencies can be divided into four categories:

### **1. Federal/State Employment and Training Assistance Programs**

Programs such as Job Service, Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA), and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services are available to eligible clients. These and other services are geared for target populations such as persons with disabilities, summer employment for youth, low-income families and rural/farm populations with disabilities. If you are seeking help and do not qualify for services under one agency, perhaps you may qualify with another. These services are not welfare programs; their mission is employ people, not shelter them.

- a. Job Service** (each state may use a different title) is a state agency that assists the general public in locating employment with private companies or government agencies. Job Service assists individuals by establishing job banks of openings by contacting and working directly with employers, referring qualified candidates to fill those job orders, and providing basic skills testing and job search skills training. The process can vary, but usually consists of completing an application, taking an orientation class and being interviewed by a counselor. Weekly or monthly follow-up visits, requiring the individual to look through listings of job openings in broad categories. Job Services can be found under many different titles in different areas, but is usually listed in the phone book under "State Government Employment Services". Advantages and disadvantages of this service are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Job Service

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful for covering large geographic areas for job listings</li> <li>• Utilizes the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit</li> <li>• Knowledgeable of state and federal hiring practices</li> <li>• Has quick intake process</li> <li>• Knowledgeable of new employers moving into area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normally are understaffed and don't have much time to offer individuals</li> <li>• Knowledge of disability employment issues may be limited, depending on the experience of the staff</li> <li>• System is competitive (other clients are getting the same notices as you)</li> </ul>

- b. **The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)**, often implemented as a separate division of Job Service, is charged with identifying employers willing to train individuals. Participating employers hire and train the client for a permanent job, and are reimbursed for a percent of the wages by the state agency for a certain time period (usually less than 3 months, but can be as long as 9). In some states JTPA is implemented under Private Industry Councils (PIC's). These are comprised of representatives from private industry and local social services along with city, state and federal government officials. These representatives oversee a facility that combines some of the services of JTPA and Job Service but operates on a more individualized scale. See Table 4 for a list of advantages and disadvantages of JTPA.

Table 4. JTPA

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because of their experience in placing a diverse group of clients, the agency may have greater knowledge of disability employment issues.</li> <li>• They can offer an employer the full range of incentives to hire an eligible individual.</li> <li>• They can get you "in the door" and arrange the type of training that could make you a valuable employee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding sources are year-to-year, and are usually stretched quite thin. Clients may be placed on a waiting list.</li> <li>• Employer contacts in rural areas may not be established. They may not understand the training demands of rural and agricultural-related jobs.</li> </ul>

- c. **State Vocational Rehabilitation Services** are available to persons with disabilities that are unemployed or under employed. Offices are found in regional population centers, and counselors may serve counties in rural areas. To be certified eligible, you must first supply recent medical diagnostics and extensive background information on employment and income.

The counselor can help you with:

- Vocational evaluation/testing
- Career guidance
- Medical management (prescriptions, prosthetics and mobility aids, cataract surgery, home modifications for independent living, etc.)
- Education (GED through college)
- Re-training (on-the-job, tech school)
- Placement assistance (direct employer contacts, job search skills training, referrals to placement agencies, expenses for interviewing, special tools and work clothes)

Post-employment services can include:

- Providing employer incentives (tax credits and on-the-job training subsidies)
- Covering job-associated costs on a temporary, start-up basis (re-location and transportation costs, attendant care or other independent living costs)

The advantages and disadvantages of vocational rehabilitation services are listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Vocational Rehabilitation Services

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive and individualized assistance</li> <li>• Funding available for certain medical, educational and employment-related expenses</li> <li>• Counselors are extensively trained and knowledgeable of disability and employment issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intake process can be long and complicated</li> <li>• Funding is often in short supply, delaying or altering the choice of employment</li> <li>• Services tend to be urban-oriented, and counselors may not be fully aware of rural employment issues or knowledgeable of agriculture in general</li> </ul>

## **2. Private Non-Profit Organizations**

These groups are usually separate, incorporated organizations funded by private foundations, public donations, state and federal grants or any combination thereof. Staffed by rehabilitation administrators, professionals and volunteers, they are overseen by a board of directors and, quite often, an advisory council consisting of area consumers and concerned citizens. These agencies can be as diverse as the people they serve. Some agencies work with all disability groups, but usually do so under specific governmental grants. This means they can only accept referrals through the agency they have contracted with (state vocational rehabilitation services, state department of aging, etc.). Others operate independently through special private grants and donations. Many are restricted to assisting only those people with specific disabilities listed by their funding sources (National Federation of the Blind, Epilepsy Foundation of America, Horticulture Hiring the Disabled, etc.).

By focusing on specific disability groups for employment services, these programs may offer a variety of specialized services. These can include:

- Vocational evaluation and counseling
- One-to-one vocational training (via sheltered workshop employment, supported employment or on-the-job competitive placement)
- Job search skills
- Job retention skills
- Resume writing
- Direct placement assistance and follow-up

Placement assistance, specialized services and employer incentives may include:

- Tax incentives for a portion of salaries paid
- Partial funding for initial on-the-job training
- Percentage tax credits for modifications made to equipment and buildings to accommodate a worker with special needs

Some well-funded programs offer housing options for their clientele such as:

- Group homes
- Specially equipped accessible apartments
- Home-based assistance (traveling attendant care or counseling on independent living skills)

A list of the advantages and disadvantages are included in Table 6.

Table 6. Private Non-Profit Organizations

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many of these agencies have skilled people with cross-over training in disability issues, along with knowledge of job markets and employment practices in your area.</li><li>• Individualized and comprehensive job placement assistance.</li><li>• Personnel with specialized knowledge of job accommodations and appropriate assistive technology (or, with close connections to a rehabilitation engineering service provider).</li><li>• Strong local contacts with employers, personnel departments, business leaders and organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, etc.).</li><li>• By using these contacts, they can provide good "inside" leads (specific information on particular businesses) and usually open the door for clients by making the initial employer contact.</li><li>• Provide close support for the individual by assisting with transportation and other employment-related arrangements, as necessary.</li><li>• Follow-up with the employer (and co-workers), sometimes acting as a mediator in sensitive areas of employee/ employer relationships.</li><li>• Continued support and assistance if placement unsuccessful.</li><li>• Usually no-cost to the individual (agency funded through other sources).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Placement specialist may not have specific experience in agricultural occupations (this depends on their experience, location and area of operation).</li><li>• Since these agencies rely on referrals from other resources (state V.R., other social service agencies), intake process may be slow and involve meeting eligibility requirements of other agencies.</li><li>• Sometimes limited by their size and area of operation (this could reduce the client's potential job market).</li><li>• Sometimes limited in services due to funding restrictions, regulations and policies.</li></ul>

### 3. Private For-Profit Organizations

- **Large-scale corporate employment services** utilize many placement people to search through job banks and locate employees to fill either temporary or permanent jobs for employers on contract with the service (Adia, Kelly, Olsten, Manpower, Protemps, etc.).
- **Smaller, one-owner agencies** work specific employment and/or geographical areas, and usually have a very limited staff (executive recruiters, engineering, etc.).
- **Specialty franchise services** are locally owned and operated, but rely on the franchiser for advertising, connections and training (Nurse-Finders, Management Recruiters, etc.).

The way in which these agencies are paid can vary by law from state to state. In some instances the applicant pays either through a percentage of the starting salary or as a fee paid up-front. Other states require the agency to bill the employer, not the client. Only after the worker starts the job can a set fee be collected. See Table 7 for the advantages and disadvantages of private-for-profit organizations.

Table 7. Private For-Profit Organizations

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many of these agencies have skilled people with good knowledge of employment practices in your area.</li><li>• Many agencies have local contacts, and connections to major employers around the country.</li><li>• These agencies can provide good leads and entry-level positions in the more competitive job markets.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May lack awareness of disability issues and knowledge of the ADA as it relates to employment.</li><li>• May have a tendency to place higher priority on retaining the employer contact than working as an advocate for the applicant.</li><li>• A client is one of many, and cannot expect the same individual services as those available through non-profit agencies.</li><li>• If the agency feels any necessary disability accommodations are too challenging or too difficult to sell to potential employers, they may reject the application for services. Worse yet, they may consider the client as "not qualified" for certain jobs because of the disability.</li></ul>

#### 4. For-Profit Private Rehabilitation Hospitals

These hospital-based vocational programs are often implemented by social workers on staff and conducted during or after the physical/occupational therapy visits. If you are involved with any medical rehabilitation program, it's best to check out all of the options available. Usually the services include:

- Career counseling and work evaluation
- Links to other placement agencies
- "Case management" functions supplied by the social workers, including assistance in locating funding sources for certain adaptive aids or accommodations

Table 8 lists the advantages and disadvantages.

Table 8. For-Profit Rehabilitation Hospitals

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workers are skilled in occupational rehabilitation issues</li><li>• In most cases, extensive work evaluations can be performed</li><li>• Knowledgeable of local disability resources</li><li>• Can usually make appropriate referrals to local placement agencies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Usually less specialized in employment/placement contacts</li><li>• Occupational information limited to common job situations; not often knowledgeable of rural and agriculturally-related jobs</li></ul>

#### 5. For-Profit Private Rehabilitation Companies

In some states, private rehabilitation companies compete to handle worker compensation cases. These include cases in which the person injured on the job seeks state workers compensation insurance to pay for rehabilitation and re-employment needs. This is a very different situation than the previously mentioned private rehabilitation hospitals. In this situation:

- The company is hired by the workers compensation insurance carrier on behalf of the claimant's employer.
- The rehabilitation counselor works for the companies involved and not for the injured worker.

- The claimant usually has the choice of accepting or rejecting the company chosen, or using state vocational rehabilitation services.

Table 9 summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of For-Profit Private Rehabilitation Companies.

Table 9. For-Profit Private Rehabilitation Companies

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the system works properly, the claimant enjoys nearly the same services that are available through regular state vocational rehabilitation departments.</li> <li>• Clients may even get more individual attention (the counselors usually have much smaller caseloads than their state government counterparts).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An adversarial relationship can develop between the private rehabilitation company and the client.</li> <li>• The insurance company usually wants to return the person back to work as soon as possible, regardless of the wants or needs of the claimant.</li> <li>• They may be out to discredit the disability status of the claimant to avoid the responsibility of paying the costs associated with rehabilitation.</li> </ul>

#### **D. Working with Placement Agencies**

- 1. Communication is vital** in all situations involving employers, job placement counselors and other rehabilitation professionals. If others don't know all the facts about your client's particular employment needs they cannot act accordingly. Make sure both you and the prospective employee know and understand your responsibilities and roles in the process, particularly when paying for employment services. As always, the client should not sign any contract until he fully understands and agrees with the terms.
- 2. Coordinate employment services when possible.** It may be possible to coordinate incentives and utilize features of several programs in one employment situation. For example, the temporary work experience program of a non-profit facility, and the tax credit and training program from the local job service might both be used with an employer found through a private employment service.
- 3. Present all of the client's medical data to those agencies requesting it,** no matter how minor it may seem. Sometimes the inter-relationship of functional limitations can affect which jobs are appropriate and which are not.

4. **Be sure the client identifies his abilities and interests**, and that you understand his long-term career goals versus the short-term jobs he is willing to accept. Pursuing a job he will be unhappy with, or unwilling to follow through on, will simply delay the process and postpone successful efforts by everyone involved.
5. **Dig for details regarding the client's work experience** and past job duties on the farm. Don't assume every employment counselor will know or understand the range of skills required for farming, ranching or any job involving agriculture. Always mention involvement in off-farm community activities and associations, especially leadership roles in business organizations.
6. **Help your client tailor his resume and "approach" to individual employers.** When looking for agribusiness related work, stress farm management skills in agribusiness terms. When looking for non-agricultural jobs, describe skills and experiences in strictly business terms and describe the prospective employee as an independent, small business owner.
7. **Be flexible and open to new ideas for employment options.** Many things may seem unrelated to agriculture or past work experiences until thoroughly investigated. New vocations and careers may open many opportunities and offer advantages to your client you were unaware of. Don't rule out certain jobs until thoroughly researching all appropriate accommodations (new technology, techniques, etc.).
8. **Encourage the prospective employee to be punctual for appointments and present himself in a professional manner.** Actions with the counselors and placement people are one of the few indicators they have concerning reliability and employability. When they feel the client is serious about being employed, they can present the applicants your abilities to employers with confidence.
9. **Help the client follow-up on personal contacts and other job search assignments.** Most counselors and placement people will give the client assignments on leads or other tasks that require a lot of the door-to-door follow-through. If he doesn't understand why he is the one doing it (and not them), or even why he is doing it, explain. Working together, you can cover the most ground, which can be especially important in rural areas.

- 10. Encourage your client to ask for assistance when it's needed.** The agency may be able to help arrange transportation or other aspects of keeping appointments. Some are willing to pay for mileage, bus fare and child care costs to and from appointments and job interviews.
- 11. Encourage the prospective employee to dress appropriately for meetings for interviews and to seek assistance if needed.** If the client doesn't have proper interview attire, ask the counselor about the agency purchasing it. "Appropriate" does not necessarily mean wearing a suit and tie at all times, but rather being neat and dressing for the situation.
- 12. Encourage the (prospective) employee to seek legal counsel for worker's compensation claim situations.** A lawyer that specializes in representing claimants can advise the client if his rights are being recognized by all parties involved.
- 13. Resolve conflicts through one-on-one negotiations.** If at any time, you feel your client has been discriminated against, first encourage him to approach the party in question, (whether it's an employer, an agency, or an individual). You may save an employment situation or a professional relationship. Treat all parties involved with respect and equality. Many people are unaware of the ADA and it's implications for employment. Public education and awareness of disability issues will take time and patience. Once people are aware of what is expected under the law, they usually comply.
- 14. If all else fails, encourage the client to seek legal counsel.** The ADA will do nothing to help if it's not enforced. County legal services are available in most areas to assist people who cannot afford private counsel. Make sure the client understands all the consequences of legal actions, and encourage him to explore all negotiation possibilities before starting the process.

# Working with Placement Agencies

## *The Client - Counselor Relationship*

- Communicate with employers, job placement counselors and rehabilitation professionals.**

Know what is expected of you if you are paying for employment services. As always, do not sign a contract until you fully understand and agree with the terms.

- Coordinate employment services when possible.**

It may be possible to coordinate incentives and utilize features of several programs in one employment situation. For example, the temporary work experience program of a non-profit facility, and the tax credit and training program from the local job service might both be used with an employer found through a private employment service.

- Present all medical data to agencies requesting it.**

Sometimes the inter-relationships of different physical disabilities and medical conditions can affect your abilities to perform certain jobs, and may determine which jobs are appropriate and which are not.

- Be honest regarding your abilities and interests.**

Be clear regarding your long-term career goals versus jobs you are willing to accept on a short-term basis. Pursuing a position you do not intend to follow through with will simply delay the placement process and postpone successful placement in the job most suitable for you.

- Explain in detail everything about your work experience and your duties on the farm.**

Don't assume every employment counselor understands the range of skills required for farming, ranching or any agricultural job. Always mention your involvement in off-farm community activities and associations, especially leadership roles in business organizations.

## *Assistance in the Job Search*

- Tailor your resume and "approach" to the individual employer.**

When looking for agribusiness-related work, stress your farm management skills in agribusiness terms. When looking for non-agricultural jobs, consider yourself an independent, small business owner and describe your skills and experiences in non-agricultural terms.

- Be flexible and open to new ideas for employment options.**

Don't exclude certain jobs until you have checked into all the appropriate accommodations (new technology, new techniques, etc.) for performing a task that you are currently unable to do. New vocations and careers may offer many opportunities you were unaware of.

**Be punctual for appointments and present yourself in a professional manner.**

Your actions with the counselors and placement people are one of the indicators they have concerning your reliability and employability. When they feel you are serious about being employed, they can present you and your abilities to employers with confidence.

**Follow-up on job search tasks assigned by the rehabilitation counselor.**

By working together you can cover the most ground, which can be especially important in rural areas. Make sure you understand your role and why the task is important.

**If you need assistance ask for it.**

Ask the agency about how they can help you keep your appointments. Some are willing to arrange transportation or pay for mileage, bus fare and child care costs to and from appointments and job interviews.

**Dress appropriately for meetings and interviews.**

Appropriate attire does not necessarily mean wearing a suit and tie. You should be neat and dress for the specific job situation. If your clothes won't work for an interview situation, ask your counselor about having the agency purchasing them for you.

### ***Conflict Resolution Tips***

**Seek legal counsel for worker's compensation claim situations.**

Seek counsel from someone that specializes in representing worker's compensation claimants. Your lawyer can advise you if your rights are being recognized by all parties involved.

**Try to resolve problems through one-on-one negotiations.**

Conflicts are usually a matter of misunderstanding. Many people are unaware of the ADA and it's implications for employment. If at any time, you feel you've been discriminated against, first approach the employer, agency, or individual. Once people are aware of what is expected under the law, they will usually comply. Treat all parties involved with respect and equality -- it will help preserve valuable professional relationships and improve your prospects for employment.

**If all else fails, do not refrain from seeking legal counsel.**

The ADA will do nothing to help you if it's not enforced. County legal services are available in most areas to assist people who cannot afford private counsel. Make sure you understand all the consequences of legal action, and explore all negotiation possibilities before pursuing legal action.

## **VIII. Counseling and Support Services**

### **A. Introduction**

The initial effects of a disability almost always create anxiety and stress for the entire family. For the most part, returning to normalcy depends on the family's ability to cope with the crisis. Acceptance of the disability, endurance and willingness to seek out rehabilitation and/or professional assistance are all vital to coping successfully with a disability (Shapiro, 1990).

Understanding what types of professional and support services are available is important in making appropriate referrals. Although you cannot be "all things to all people" it will be important that you demonstrate some "people helping skills" when someone comes to you for help. Remember these points when meeting a new client:

- Be patient as you seek to understand the problems the individual or family is facing.
- Show warmth, concern, empathy and understanding.
- Offer the gift of listening, sharing the persons struggle and helping the person get help.
- Ask yourself — "Can I help this person — if not should I refer them to another organization or agency" (Worthington, 1982).

### **B. Ability to Return to Work**

Many factors must be considered when attempting to assess a person's ability to overcome a disability in the workplace. These factors are not fully indicative of what a person can or cannot do, but can serve as indicators of areas on which to concentrate rehabilitation. The following factors affect the potential or ability to return to work.

#### **1. Age**

Rehabilitation counselors generally consider someone 55 years or older to be an "older worker" who has minimal potential for retraining. This, however, is only a guideline, not a law. While age may reflect decreased physical ability, it may also reflect a lifetime of experience, wisdom, and knowledge to perform a task.

## **2. Education**

Education is considered to contribute to one's ability to perform skilled or semi-skilled jobs. A person with a 6th grade education or less supposedly has minimal opportunity for rehabilitation or specific retraining. However, while education may be important, it should not be considered as the only indicator of success.

## **3. Work History**

Indeed, in reference to farmers with disabilities, a farmer's work history and experience holds the key to rehabilitation. Experience has a direct relationship to transferable skills. Throughout their wide range of work experience farmers acquire many skills, including construction, mechanics, welding, marketing, financial budgeting, management, and crop and livestock production. These skills may be modified to adapt to a present work environment, or enhanced for prospective alternative enterprises.

## **4. Motivation**

It's important that a person has desire to maximize his or her abilities! A lack of motivation may hinder the rehabilitation process. Efforts must be taken to ensure that the person with a disability is the agent, not the product, of the rehabilitation process. By making the client the agent, the client takes personal responsibility for program implementation.

In summary, while age, education, work history, experience and motivation are important to the rehabilitation process, other factors affect a person's ability to adjust to an injury or disability. These factors may include: medical diagnosis, functional limitations, prognosis, residual capacities, duration of disease, tolerance of disease, religious orientation, work ethic, length of time since injury, economics, labor market, employer biases, family support, etc. Any or all of these factors may come into play when evaluating the ability of a physically disabled person to return to work.

## **C. Rehabilitation Counseling**

Vocational counseling involves helping people utilize their work skills, social skills, education, attitudes and adaptability to maximize their ability to perform specific work tasks. The field of rehabilitation counseling is more diverse and complex than ever before.

Rehabilitation service for example is available to the older person, the child with a learning disability, the factory worker with a cocaine addiction, the inmate in prison, the person with a psychiatric disorder, the nurse with back pain, the person with a head injury and the farmer with a SCI or arm amputation. Rehabilitation counseling services may include transition services, disability management, employee assistance, personal counseling, worksite modifications and independent living services.

Rehabilitation services may be non-profit, public, for-profit or private. The type of rehabilitation services required or preferred may be determined by the type of disability, monies available and insurance coverage.

The rehabilitation counseling process usually begins with an initial interview to provide the opportunity for both the client and counselor to ask questions about what is expected of the other. Vocational interests testing, psychological testing and work samples may be requested. The client should realize that these measurements give the rehabilitation counselor information upon which to base decisions, and to provide alternative methods of overcoming obstacles related to returning to full-time employment.

### ***Case Study\****

The following case history is an example of how rehabilitation counseling might work.

George, 48, farms 650 acres of soybeans and sugarcane in Acadia Parish, Louisiana. Over a 10-year period, George has experienced degenerative arthritis. He is able to perform farmwork, but with tremendous difficulty and pain. His wife suggested that he visit a vocational rehabilitation counselor. The rehabilitation counselor visited George at his home and worked with George for a day in the fields. The first step taken by the rehabilitation counselor was to arrange a medical examination. The doctor recommended medications and specific exercises to address the effects of arthritis. After a few weeks of medication and exercise, the swelling and stiffness had decreased. The rehabilitation counselor arranged for a social service agency to pay for the medications, and created a work schedule with George that allowed time for rest breaks and made his time in the fields more productive.

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\* This case study does not describe a specific farmer served by rehabilitation services, but rather an account of many persons.

The rehabilitation counselor also recognized opportunities for the use of labor-saving devices. For example, working with sugarcane often requires George to stoop over plants to observe root strength, stalk support, and the presence of any insects or weeds. This made George's back ache and his knees and shoulders swell. The rehabilitation counselor recommended George use a garden scoot, a four-legged chair with wheels which stands about two feet tall. George is now able to inspect his plants, without the pain caused by stooping over. The garden scoot was purchased for under \$60.

Another device purchased was an EZ Eye nonelectrical bin level indicator. These have been placed on George's bins to indicate the level of solid or liquid materials in the bins, eliminating the need for climbing up and looking into the bin. The cost was less than \$60.

For many years George has had difficulty handling tools. He no longer had the strength to grip and turn the handles on tools. His tools were modified by encasing the handles in foam tubing (traditionally found on plumbing pipes) and wrapping the modified handles with electrical tape. Total cost was less than \$1. The most expensive modification made was the purchase of an all terrain vehicle (about \$650). This allowed George to transport himself across his fields without the need for extensive walking over rough terrain. George eventually had to sell a portion of his land to pay off the bills accumulated while he was unable to work because of his arthritis. This presented a personal hardship for the family. The rehabilitation counselor was also able to counsel George and his family during this time.

#### **D. Support Group Activity — Neighbor to Neighbor**

Support groups, peer support and community support are all vital to regaining a normal lifestyle, seeking-off farm employment or making the decisions to stay on the farm. There are a number of support groups across the United States organized by the type of disability.

Breaking New Ground at Purdue University has established a nation wide network of farmers/ranchers with disabilities that are willing to visit with a newly injured farmer. This group of farmers (Barnbuilders) has made a tremendous impact on many individual lives. Being able to talk with someone with a similar disability, discussing common problems, and learning how they overcame certain obstacles can make a great impact and provides support to the recently injured individual. Neighbor to Neighbor is a Support Group Activity that is a "prepackaged" program to assist the professional in organizing farm family support groups.

Neighbor to Neighbor was developed by Roger T. Williams of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It's a "do-it-yourself" guide for organizing farm family support groups. Topics include: stress management, communication skills, grief and loss, personal finances, and seeking off-farm employment. "If You Want to Seek an Off-Farm Job" is included at the end of this chapter as an example of the material covered in the Neighbor to Neighbor Guide.

To obtain a complete guide of all 10 sections send \$2.00 (covers guide and postage) to:

Roger T. Williams, Professor  
Health and Human Issues Department  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
610 Langdon Street, Room 315  
Madison, WI 53703-1195  
1-800-442-4617

# Neighbor to Neighbor Group Activity

Seeking off-farm employment - Looking at Life/Career Options

## ***Suggested Agenda:***

**Social Time (Suggested time: 15 - 60 min.):** A potluck meal or refreshments.

**Opening Circle (Suggested time: 15 min.):**

Ask each person to respond to the phrase "One thing I've always dreamed of doing is \_\_\_\_" Allow time for individual comments and for group members to respond to any of the statements made.

**Looking at Options (Suggested time: 45 min.):**

See "Life and Career Options for Farm Family Members"

Read the article which outlines several keys to finding satisfying work -- it also emphasizes the need for understanding yourself and understanding the world of work. Once you've read the article, use the attached sheets to identify ...

- Your lifelong dreams, hopes and goals
- The major accomplishments in your life
- An exhaustive list of your skills and talents
- The groups of skills that you enjoy using
- Your image of the ideal job for you

**Discussion and Sharing (Suggested time: 60 min.):**

Share what came out of the exercise with group members. Allow yourself to feel good about your skills and accomplishments; allow others to affirm your skills and talents. Share your dreams, hopes, goals and your image of the ideal job. Is your image of the ideal job similar to others or is it very different?

Discuss the six ideas listed in the section titled "Understanding the World of Work." Do these ideas make sense to you? Can you think of people who have looked for new jobs and utilized some or all of the ideas?

If some members of your group are actively involved in looking for work, discuss how the group can be supportive. Can group members keep their eyes and ears open and share jobs that they are aware of? Can they recommend job-seekers for certain jobs and introduce them to those in a position to do the hiring? Can group members lend support to persons who want to start a news business?

## ***Additional Resources:***

Three resources may be helpful to persons seeking new work:

### **1. Vocational Technical Schools**

Most schools in the Vocational, Technical and Adult Education system (some are referred to as vocational schools; some as technical institutes or technical colleges) have job counseling programs and courses in job hunting skills. They also have training programs in a wide variety of technical fields and, in some case, offer on-the-job training programs. Call the vocational-technical school closest to you.

### **2. Community-Based Education Counselors**

The University of Wisconsin has Community-Based Education Counselors in several locations around Wisconsin. These counselors are aware of a range of educational programs for persons who would like additional education or training. Call (608) 262-8096 or 262-8654 to find the Community-Based Educational Counselor closest to you.

### **3. Small Business Development Centers**

The Small Business Development Center within University of Wisconsin-Extension provides support and one-on-one consultation to persons wishing to start a new business. Call (608) 263-7766 to find the person in the best position to help you get started with a new business.

\* *Neighbor to Neighbor* is a ten-part family support group guide developed by Roger T. Williams of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The entire set of *Neighbor to Neighbor* materials, including this session (#9), is available from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, 610 Langdon Street, Room 315, Madison, WI 53703-1195. 1-800-442-4617.

# Life and Career Options for Farm Family

By  
Roger T. Williams

There are two hurdles that farmers and farm family members often face when they think about seeking an off-farm job. Surprisingly, neither of the hurdles is outside themselves. Both are internal; they are the beliefs farmers and farm family members have about themselves, about their skills, and about their ties to the community.

The first belief goes something like this: "But I'm just a farmer. What else could I do?" When farmers or their family members say this to themselves and others, they can become immobilized by their own negative self-talk. In reality, there are few people who possess the range of skills held by persons with farm backgrounds. Among other things, they are: crop specialists, herdsmen, chemists, veterinarians, servicemen, bookkeepers, carpenters, welders, installers, handymen, managers of people, managers of information and things, teachers, consultants, researchers, planners, evaluators, problem-solvers, and risk-takers. Farmers often belittle themselves. When they do this, they fail to recognize the wealth of skills and talents that could be mobilized for other work.

The second belief can also serve to immobilize farm family members. It goes like this: "My roots are in this community. This is where my life began and this is where it will be lived out." Many farm families have lived their entire lives in the same community, and the thought of moving elsewhere can be scary or difficult to image. Because of these feelings and beliefs, some families may not even consider looking for work outside the community. Yet, if the community is small or holds few job opportunities, it may be essential to look for work in other areas.

Thus, two of the keys to finding some kind of "life outside farming" are 1) don't belittle yourself or down-play the skills and talents you have, and 2) don't limit your options to those available in the immediate community.

There are several other keys to finding work that is satisfying. Some involve *understanding yourself* -- your hopes and dreams, your accomplishments, your skills, and what you really enjoy doing. Others involve *understanding the world of work* -- who gets jobs, how and why they get them, and where to look for them. A few of the keys are outlined below.

## ***Understanding Yourself :***

1. **Get in touch with your lifelong dreams, hopes and goals.** It is our dreams and our hopes that can energize us and give us the motivation to get on with life. You've probably dreamed many a dream as your tractor droned on and on during spring plowing or fall harvesting. Allow these dreams to float back through your mind now -- what is it that you've always wanted to do?
2. **Jot down all of the major accomplishments in your life.** When things aren't going well, it's easier to identify personal or work-related failures than it is to identify successes. Yet, this is not a time for negative thinking. Reflect back over your youth and your adult years -- jot down your major accomplishments and successes. Which of these accomplishments do you feel good about?

3. **Make an exhaustive listing of all your skills and talents.** Tracking down your "transferable skills -- those which can be used in other work settings is essential for finding satisfying work. Set aside all of those beliefs about being humble -- this is your chance to identify each and every skill or talent you've developed over the years! Include personal skills (listening, nurturing, volunteer skills, use of humor) as well as work-related skills. Reflect back on the list of accomplishments you just made. What skills were used in achieving your goals in life?
4. **Identify the groups of skills that you've developed and enjoy using.** Use the sheet on form 10.5 entitled "Knowing Your Skills" to summarize your most important skill groups. What are your long suits -- which are the skill areas where you are strongest? These are likely to be your "transferable skills"-- the skills which can easily be applied in other jobs or work settings.
5. **Let your mind free-wheel and imagine the ideal job for you.** Close your eyes and reflect back on your dreams, your accomplishments, and your skills. What would you view as the ideal job? At this point, don't be concerned about whether the job actually exists -- just let your mind settle on a job (or jobs) which would utilize your talents and which mesh with one or more of your dreams.

### ***Understanding the World of Work***

1. **Recognize that the vast majority of jobs are hidden.** When people look for jobs, they typically look through the want ads in a newspaper or seek out the help of an employment agency. Yet, only about 20% of the jobs ever become listed in want ads or with employment agencies. The vast majority of jobs -- about 80% -- are filled through word of mouth. Someone mentions that his or her organization has a job (or jobs) available and the word soon gets around. Thus, the most important strategy is to keep your eyes and ears open and to make sure everyone you know is aware that you are looking for a job.
2. **The best jobs go to the best job hunters -- not necessarily to the best qualified persons.** Hunting for jobs is a skill in itself. It requires the ability to uncover jobs that are hidden, the ability to demonstrate you are able to handle those jobs, and the persistence to do what's necessary to land one of those jobs. Here's where it's important to understand what your skills are and how they can be applied in a different work setting. Be assertive, have confidence in your abilities, and make the case that you are the person best able to do the job.
3. **Certain qualities are important in any job.** There are some qualities that employers look for in almost all employees. These include: energetic, friendly, hard-working, honest, quick learner, careful, on time, dependable, efficient worker, and willing to go the extra mile. You probably exhibit many of these qualities in your life. Make sure you highlight these qualities -- don't hide your light under a basket!

4. **Employers are more likely to hire people they know.** A simple fact of life is that it's people who hire other people for jobs. And those people feel more comfortable hiring people they know or hiring a person who is known by someone else in the company or organization. Thus, it's important to get to know the person who does the hiring or some other person in the organization. If there is someone who will say "I know a person who would be great for this job!" your chances of getting the job are improved nearly 100%.
  
5. **You need to know what you want to do and where you want to do it** If you know this, you will be miles ahead of the vast majority of job seekers. Spend some of your time figuring out exactly what you would like to do and where you would like to do it. Then, spend the rest of your time seeking out that job and the people who can help you get the job. Use your cultivating skills for cultivating relationships that can help you land the job you want.
  
6. **Remember, some jobs may need to be created.** It's quite likely that the best job for you doesn't lie out there in the job market -- it may need to be created. This is where you are at a definite advantage. You already have skills as an independent business person. Why not use these skills to create a new business operating out of your home or in your community? What are the needs in your community? Can your skills and dreams be tapped by forming a business which would address these needs? If you need help, advice is available from the Small Business Development Center within University of Wisconsin-Extension.

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# Understanding Yourself

1. Close your eyes, relax, and allow some of your lifelong dreams to float through your mind. Now, jot them down in the space below.
2. Reflect back on your life your youth and your adult years. What are your major accomplishments and successes? Which do you feel really good about?
3. Make an exhaustive listing of all your talents and skills. Reflect back on your accomplishments what skills were used in achieving your goals? personal skills? work related skills? volunteer skills?
4. On the following sheet, check off skills you've developed over the years. Now summarize your most important skill groups below. Which are your strongest skill groups?
5. Let your mind free-wheel and imagine the ideal job for you. Which job(s) would utilize your talents and mesh with one or more of your dreams?

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# Knowing Your Skills

## *Helping Skills*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Caring for others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being sensitive
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listening and understanding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Counseling and guiding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Working with others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Motivating others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Host or hostessing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Developing potential

## *Management Skills*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Delegating
- \_\_\_\_\_ Organizing and coordinating others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Planning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Designing things
- \_\_\_\_\_ Setting up procedures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supervising
- \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluating
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hiring

## *Instructing Skills*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Explaining
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Advising
- \_\_\_\_\_ Leading discussion
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encouraging
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helping others to help themselves
- \_\_\_\_\_ Using humor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Making radio and TV presentations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Performing

## *Communicating Skills*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing reports, letters, memos
- \_\_\_\_\_ One-on-one conversation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Public speaking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Editing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reading
- \_\_\_\_\_ Creative writing

## *Mechanical Skills*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Physical coordination
- \_\_\_\_\_ Growing things
- \_\_\_\_\_ Animal care
- \_\_\_\_\_ Traveling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stamina
- \_\_\_\_\_ Outdoor work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Working/cleaning/tending
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cooking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Crafts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Designing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Operating machinery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Using tools
- \_\_\_\_\_ Repairing/fixing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assembling/installing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Building/construction
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lifting, balancing, moving
- \_\_\_\_\_ Precision work

## *Creative Skills*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Imagining
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inventing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Experimenting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Predicting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Designing new things
- \_\_\_\_\_ Expressive, verbal, written skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Creating music/art/photography
- \_\_\_\_\_ Visualizing colors/shapes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing poetry/plays/stories
- \_\_\_\_\_ Playing musical instruments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Drawing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Singing

### ***Problem Solving Skills***

- \_\_\_\_\_ Gathering information
- \_\_\_\_\_ Researching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finding the root of the problem
- \_\_\_\_\_ Problem solving
- \_\_\_\_\_ Testing ideas
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewing

### ***Leadership Skills***

- \_\_\_\_\_ Self-directing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Managing time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Persisting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confronting problems
- \_\_\_\_\_ Solving problems
- \_\_\_\_\_ Taking risks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Making hard decisions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inspiring others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Influencing others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Selling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bargaining
- \_\_\_\_\_ Public speaking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Promoting an idea/product

### ***Observing Skills***

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sensing/feeling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listening/awareness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Observing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Learning quickly
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assessing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Using logic

### ***Numerical Skills***

- \_\_\_\_\_ Bookkeeping
- \_\_\_\_\_ Managing budgets
- \_\_\_\_\_ Counting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Working with numbers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Financial planning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cost analysis
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keeping deadlines
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keeping records/filing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attention to details
- \_\_\_\_\_ Making decisions

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\*\**Knowing Your Skills* was adapted from material developed by Deborah Anstett, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

# Farm Family Stress: A Checklist

## *Signs of Farm Stress:*

The last few years have been difficult for farm families and many are experiencing financial and emotional stress as a result. There are several signs or symptoms when a farm family may be in need of help. These are signs that can be observed by friends, extended family members, neighbors, milk haulers, veterinarians, clergy persons, school personnel, or health and human service workers. These signs include:

**Change in routines.**

The farmer or farm family stops attending church, drops out of 4-H, Homemakers or other groups, or no longer stops in at the local coffee shop or feed mill.

**Increase in illness.**

Farmers or farm family members may experience more upper respiratory illnesses (colds, flu) or other chronic conditions (aches, pains, persistent cough).

**Appearance of farmstead declines.**

The farm family no longer takes pride in the way farm buildings and grounds appear or no longer has the time to do maintenance work.

**Care of livestock declines.**

Cattle may not be cared for in the usual way; they may lose condition, appear gaunt or show signs of neglect or physical abuse.

**Increase in farm accidents.**

The risk of farm accidents increases due to fatigue or loss of ability to concentrate; children may be at risk if there isn't adequate child care.

**Children show signs of stress.**

Farm children may act out, decline in academic performance or be increasingly absent from school; they may also show signs of physical abuse or neglect.

## *Signs of Chronic, Prolonged Stress:*

When farm families are under stress for long periods of time -- chronic, prolonged stress -- they may experience a number of signs and symptoms. Watch for the following effects in farm families you see on a day to day basis:

<i>Physical</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Behavioral</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Headaches	<input type="checkbox"/> Sadness	<input type="checkbox"/> Irritability
<input type="checkbox"/> Ulcers	<input type="checkbox"/> Depression	<input type="checkbox"/> Backbiting
<input type="checkbox"/> Backaches	<input type="checkbox"/> Bitterness	<input type="checkbox"/> Acting Out
<input type="checkbox"/> Eating Irregularities	<input type="checkbox"/> Anger	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal
<input type="checkbox"/> Sleep Disturbances	<input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/> Passive-Aggressiveness
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequent Sickness	<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> Alcoholism
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhaustion	<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of Humor	<input type="checkbox"/> Violence

### ***Cognitive***

- Memory Loss
- Lack of Concentration
- Inability to Make Decisions

### ***Self-Esteem***

- "I'm a failure."
- "I blew it."
- "Why can't I \_\_\_\_\_?"

### ***Signs of Depression or Suicidal Intent:***

The greater number of signs or symptoms a farm family member is experiencing, the greater your concern should be. In addition, if farm family members are exhibiting the following signs of depression or suicidal intent, it is important that they get linked up with help as soon as possible. All cries for help should be taken seriously.

#### ***Signs of Depression***

- Appearance:* Sad face, slow movements, unkempt look
- Unhappy feelings:* Feeling sad, hopeless, discouraged, listless
- Negative thoughts:* "I'm a failure," "I'm no good," "No one cares"
- Reduced activity:* "Doing anything is just too much of an effort"
- People problems:* "I don't want anyone to see me," "I feel so lonely"
- Physical problems:* Sleeping problems, decreased sexual interest, headaches
- Guilt and low self esteem:* "It's all my fault," "I should be punished"

#### ***Signs of Suicidal Intent***

- Anxiety or depression:* Severe, intense feeling of anxiety or depression
- Withdrawal or isolation:* Withdrawn, alone, lack of friends and support
- Helpless and hopeless:* Sense of complete powerlessness, a hopeless feeling
- Alcohol abuse:* There is often a link between alcoholism and suicide
- Previous suicidal attempts:* May be previous attempts of low to high lethality
- Suicidal plan:* Frequent or constant thoughts with a specific plan in mind
- Cries for help:* Making a will, giving possessions away, making statements such as "I'm calling it quits" or "Maybe my family would be better off without me"

### ***How to Refer a Person for Help:***

1. Be aware of the agencies and resources available in your community -- what services they offer and what their limitations are.
2. Listen for signs and symptoms that the person or family needs help which you can't provide, i.e., financial, legal or personal counseling.
3. Assess what agency or community resource would be most appropriate to address the person's (or family's) problem.
4. Discuss the referral with the person of family ("It sounds/looks like you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_. I think \_\_\_\_\_ could help you deal with your situation").

5. Explore the individual's or family's willingness to initiate contact with the community resource ("How do you feel about seeking help from this person/agency?")
6. Where the person or family is unwilling to take the initiative or where there is some danger if action is not taken, you should take the initiative:
  - a. Call the agency and ask to speak to the intake worker (if there is one)
  - b. Identify yourself and your relationship with the person or family
  - c. State what you think the person's family's needs are (needs immediate protection from suicidal acts, needs an appointment for counseling, needs financial or legal advice)
  - d. Provide the agency with background information (name, address and phone; age and sex; nature of current problem or crisis; any past history you're aware of; further information as called for)
  - e. Ask the agency what follow-up action they will take:
    - When will they act on the referral?
    - Who will be the person for you to contact later if necessary?
    - What will be the cost of the service (flat fee/sliding scale)?
    - Do you need to do anything else to complete the referral?
  - f. Make sure the person or family and the referral agency connect and get together. Make one or more follow-up contacts with the agency if called for by the situation.

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\* *Neighbor to Neighbor* is a ten-part family support group guide developed by Roger T. Williams of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The entire set of *Neighbor to Neighbor* materials, including this session (#9), is available from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, 610 Langdon Street, Madison, WI 53703-1195. 1-800-442-4617.

## IX. The Law — The Americans with Disabilities Act

### A. Overview

The recently enacted Americans with Disabilities Act states, "no covered entity shall discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability because of the disability of such individual in regards to job application procedures, the hiring, advancement, or discharge of employee, employee compensation, job training, and other items, conditions and privileges of employment (Americans with Disabilities Act, Title I).

The ADA is a positive step for equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The fact remains, however, that inaccessible worksites the attitudes of employers are still barriers to the employment of people with disabilities (Sheldon, 1992). A *Business Week* special edition, "Willing and Able," states, "Virtually every study of the issue has given people with disabilities high marks for their work attitudes, attendance and productivity...A national leader in hiring people with disabilities, DuPont has been systematically measuring the job performance of employees with disabilities since 1958...overall, managers rated 97% of disabled workers "average or above average" in terms of job safety; 86% "average or above" in attendance; and fully 90% "average or above" in overall job performance" ( Business Week, October 28, 1991).

### B. Definitions

A few definitions may be helpful before proceeding.

- **Qualified individual** — a person with a disability who, "with or without reasonable accommodations" can perform the "essential functions" of the job that he/she holds or desires.
- **Reasonable accommodation** — an adaption to a program, facility, or work place that allows an individual with a disability to participate. Accommodations may also include changes in policies, practices or services and the use of auxiliary aids.
- **Disability** — an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities; has a record of such impairment and is regarded as having such an impairment (Fisher, T.F., 1992)\*.

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\*See Title I for complete definitions.

## **C. ADA Highlights**

The following page summarizes some of the general concepts of the ADA, who needs to comply and a summary of the requirements of the law. Handouts including **ADA-Tips for Employers, Implications for Job Applications, and a Self-Assessment Compliance Checklist** are all included at the end of the chapter.

### **1. Employment and the ADA**

- Employers may not discriminate against an individual with a disability in hiring or promoting if the person is otherwise qualified for the job.
- Employers can ask about one's ability to perform a job, but cannot inquire if someone has a disability or subject a person to tests that tend to screen out people with disabilities.
- Employers must provide "reasonable accommodation" to individuals with disabilities. This includes job restructuring and modifying equipment.
- Employers are not required to provide accommodations that impose an "undue hardship" to business operations.

### **2. Who needs to comply**

- All employers with 25 or more employees must comply, effective 7/26/92.
- All employers with 15-24 employees must comply, effective 7/26/94.

### **3. State and local government**

- State and local government may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities.
- All government facilities, services, and communications must be accessible consistent with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### **4. Public accommodations**

- Private entities such as restaurants, hotels, and retail stores may not discriminate against individuals with disabilities, effective January 26, 1992.
- Auxiliary aids and services must be provided to individuals with vision or hearing impairments or other individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would result.
- Physical barriers in existing facilities must be removed, if removal is readily achievable. If not, alternative methods of providing the services must be offered, if they are readily achievable.
- All new construction and alterations of facilities must be accessible.

# ADA - Tips for Employers

## THE DO's

- DO conduct a structural survey of your facility both interior and exterior.
- DO review and revise as needed company policies and procedures.
- DO review your contracts and agreements for compliance.
- DO diversify advertisement for open positions.
- DO review and revise application forms and procedures.
- DO train/sensitize staff especially interviewers and supervisors.
- DO interview applicants that qualify for an interview.
- DO identify a person or team of persons in your organization to address ADA issues for new and current employees.
- DO identify resources in your community to assist as needed.
- DO talk to your employees with disabilities about what is needed.
- DO maintain medical records separately and confidentially.
- DO provide essential functions of the position to medical staff when conducting post-employment medical exams.
- DO develop a plan to address accessibility to the public.
- DO seek legal advice when needed.

## THE DON'Ts

- DON'T be afraid of the law.
- DON'T wait for litigation to move you into action.
- DON'T assume that you know what an applicant with a disability is capable of doing or not doing.
- DON'T assume that you know what accommodation (if any) is needed.
- DON'T go fishing-asking questions of the applicant/employee that are not related to his/her ability to perform the essential functions of the position.
- DON'T miss your opportunity.

## THE PROCESS

- STEP 1: Eliminate barriers which impede upon an individual with a disability's ability to apply for a position.
- STEP 2: Develop current job descriptions that are a result of a job analysis and includes the essential functions of the job.
- STEP 3: Review and revise pre-employment testing.
- STEP 4: Perfect interviewing.
- STEP 5: Make hiring decisions. Consult with legal counsel.
- STEP 6: ***Remember, providing reasonable accommodation is an ongoing process!***

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\* Adapted from ADA Training Network.

# ADA - Implications for Job Applications

A review of job application forms should be a priority before the ADA's effective date to eliminate any questions related to disability.

## ***Questions that may not be asked on application forms or in job interviews:***

1. Have you ever had or been treated for any of the following conditions or diseases? (Followed by a checklist of various conditions and diseases.)
2. Please list any conditions or diseases for which you have been treated in the past 3 years.
3. Have you ever been hospitalized? If so, for what condition?
4. Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist? If so, for what condition?
5. Have you ever been treated for any mental condition?
6. Is there any health-related reason you may not be able to perform the job for which you are applying?
7. Have you had a major illness in the last 5 years?
8. How many days were you absent from work because of illness last year?

Pre-employment questions about illness may not be asked, because they may reveal the existence of a disability. However, an employer may provide information on attendance requirements and ask if an applicant will be able to meet these requirements.

9. Do you have any physical defects which may prevent you from performing certain kinds of work? If yes, describe such defects and specific work limitations.
10. Do you have any disabilities or impairments which may affect your performance in the position for which you are applying?

This question should not be asked even if the applicant is requested in a follow-up question to identify accommodations that would enable job performance. Inquiries should not focus on an applicant's disabilities. The applicant may be asked about ability to perform specific job functions, with or without a reasonable accommodation. [See *Information That May be Requested* on the following page.]

11. Are you taking any prescribed drugs?

Questions about use of prescription drugs are not permitted before a conditional job offer, because the answers to such questions might reveal the existence of certain disabilities which require prescribed medication.

12. Have you ever been treated for drug addiction or alcoholism?

Information may not be requested about treatment for drug or alcohol addiction, because the ADA protects people addicted to drugs who have been successfully rehabilitated, or who are undergoing rehabilitation, from discrimination based on drug addiction.

13. Have you ever filed for workers' compensation insurance?

An employer may not ask about an applicant's workers' compensation history at the pre-offer stage, but may obtain such information after making a conditional job offer. Such questions are prohibited because they are likely to reveal the existence of a disability.

Information about an applicant's ability to perform job tasks, with or without accommodation, can be obtained through the application form and job interview, as explained below. Other required information may be obtained through medical inquiries or examinations conducted after a conditional offer of employment.

***Information that may be requested on applications and in interviews:***

An employer may ask questions to determine whether an applicant can perform specific job functions. The questions should focus on the applicant's ability to perform the job, not on a disability.

***For example:***

An employer could attach a job description to the application form with information about specific job functions, or the employer may describe the functions. This enables the employer to ask whether the applicant can perform these functions. It will also give an applicant with a disability information needed to request any accommodation required to perform a task.

The applicant could be asked:

- Are you able to perform these tasks with or without an accommodation?

If the applicant indicates that she/he can perform the tasks with an accommodation, she/he may be asked:

- How would you perform the tasks, and with what accommodation(s)?

The employer, however, must keep in mind that a qualified individual with a disability cannot be refused a position because of the person's need for an accommodation be required by the ADA. An employer may inform applicants on an application form that they may request any needed accommodation to participate in the application process, such as:

- accommodation for a test,
- a job interview, or
- a job demonstration.

The employer may wish to provide information on the application form and in the employment office about specific aspects of the job application process, so that applicants may request necessary accommodations. The employer is not required to provide such information, but without it, the applicant may have no advance notice of the need to request an accommodation.

Since the individual with a disability has the responsibility to request an accommodation and the employer has the responsibility to provide the accommodation (unless it would cause an undue hardship), providing advance information on various application procedures may help avoid last minute problems in making necessary accommodations. This information can be communicated orally or by audio tape for people who are visually impaired.

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\*Adapted from Job Application and ADA Facts: The Technical Assistance manual -- EEOC.

# ADA - Self Assessment Compliance Checklist

## *Recruitment Practices*

Yes No

1. All positions (not just entry level) are open to qualified applicants with disabilities.
2. Job openings are posted in accessible formats.

## *Pre-selection Criteria*

3. Interview areas are readily accessible without barriers.
4. Testing administered does not discriminate against applicants with sensory or speaking impairments.
5. All tests and selection criteria for a position are related to the position and consistent with the business necessity.
6. Selection criteria directly relate to the job description.
7. Applicants are not asked if they have a disability, nor questioned about the nature or extent of any disability. (They can be asked about their ability to perform specific essential job functions.)
8. Association or relationship with a person with a disability is never a criteria for selecting, or not selecting, an applicant.
9. Safety-related concerns are specific only to essential job functions.
10. No pre-employment medical examinations are required as part of the selection process unless they are required of all new employees.
11. Eligibility criteria unnecessary for the provision of a service, privilege, advantage, or accommodation are not used.

## *Medical Information Disclosure*

12. Medical information is maintained on separate forms and in separate medical files.
13. Medical history and information is treated confidentially.
14. Medical information is shared confidentially with managers and supervisors only if it pertains to work activity restrictions.
15. Medical information is shared confidentially with first aid and emergency treatment personnel.
16. Medical information is shared with governmental personnel for the purpose of investigating ADA compliance.

## *Administrative Policy and Procedure*

17. Applicants and employees are informed of the employer's obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- |  | <i>Yes</i>               | <i>No</i>                |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18. A notice of rights under the ADA is posted in accessible formats in a prominent place.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. No standards, methods of administration, or criteria are used which discriminate on the basis of disability by the facility or its contractors.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Association or relationship with a person with a disability is not the cause of denial of goods, services, privileges, advantages, accommodations, or opportunities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. No criteria not also applied to others will serve to limit the participation of an individual with a disability.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Transfers to open positions for which a disabled employee is qualified are considered.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

***Workplace Accommodations***

- |   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 23. Reasonable accommodations are made in initial and subsequent positions unless they impose an undue business hardship.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Existing facilities used by all employees are accessible and easily usable by individuals with disabilities.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. When necessary, jobs are redesigned to eliminate minor, unnecessary tasks.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. When necessary, tasks are reassigned to other positions.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. Part-time and modified work schedules are considered.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. Readers, interpreters and attendants are provided when such accommodations do not pose an undue hardship.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. Adaptive aids and assistive technology applications are used when they do not impose undue financial hardships.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. Readily achievable methods are used to remove architectural barriers.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. Readily achievable methods are used to remove communication barriers.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. When barrier removal is not readily achievable in existing facilities, alternative means are employed.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33. When major structural renovations are made to existing space, the altered path of travel, and modified rest rooms, telephones, and drinking fountains are accessible and usable to individuals with disabilities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34. New buildings constructed after January 26, 1993 are readily accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35. Any vehicle purchased by the facility after August 26, 1990 which carries more than seven passengers (including the driver) provides level entry or a wheelchair lift with securement devices.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

\* Adapted by Judi Rasmuson from Data Incorporated.

## **X. Assistive Technology for Employers/Employees**

### **A. Introduction**

"I can't *afford* to hire persons with disabilities. I mean, I'd like to, but there just isn't any money to purchase all the expensive things they would need."

This perception is common, yet there is no good reason to fear hiring a person with a disability because of the perceived costs of purchasing assistive technology. This chapter will define what assistive technology is, discuss the costs of providing it, explain how accommodation solutions are typically identified and provide examples of assistive technology solutions.

People with and without disabilities use and benefit from assistive technology. In either case, technology allows people to accomplish what they would not otherwise be able to do. We could not fly without airplanes; and someone with quadriplegia couldn't travel down a hallway without a wheelchair. Telephones allow us to speak to people half-way around the world, while a TT (text telephone) enables a person who is deaf or hearing-impaired to communicate using the telephone. A tractor and plow enables a farmer to till 40 acres in a single day and, if that farmer has paraplegia, a lift will allow him or her to get onto the tractor. Assistive technology, in other words, is neither something new nor something that is unique to individuals with disabilities.

In the same respect, assistive technology is not always expensive, state-of-the-art, high-tech electronics. Many modifications can be made to improve or allow job performance that don't require huge amounts of money. This relieves some employers' apprehensions of spending too much money on one employee. Employees' do not necessarily need or expect to obtain expensive, high-tech equipment for the job.

To further illustrate this point, examine the results of a study. According to the Job Accommodation Network, a recent survey indicates that of all accommodations made in the workplace for persons with disabilities, 88% cost the company less than \$1,000; 19% cost between \$50 and \$500 and then 19% cost less than \$50; and almost one-third (31%) of the accommodations were made at no cost to the company. With nearly 9 out of every 10 accommodations costing less than \$1,000 and 1 out of 3 costing nothing, the vast majority of accommodations do not require the company to go paying for them. Further-

more, on average, a company received nine dollars in benefits (such as increased worker productivity or elimination of training costs) for every dollar spent on making an accommodation.

## **B. The Worksite Accommodation Process**

Typically, the process begins with a thorough analysis of the duties and responsibilities of an employee/applicant for a particular job. Following an assessment of an individual's functional strengths and limitations, a determination is made as to what job tasks will require accommodation through the use of assistive technology. Ideas are then generated for potential solutions.

The best solutions to worksite accessibility barriers generally result from a team consisting of the employee, employer, rehabilitation engineers, and/or other appropriate professionals such as computer access specialists. In some situations, a solution may be found with input only from employee and employer. However, a solution should never be dictated by either the employer or employee without a chance for input from the other. An investment of time and/or money can be wasted under such circumstances.

## **C. Job Accommodation Network**

When attempting to generate ideas for worksite accommodations or assistive technology the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) may be helpful. JAN is an international information network and consulting resource designed to enable qualified workers with disabilities to be hired or retained. It brings together many sources of information about practical methods and available equipment that have proven effective for a wide range of accommodations. As a service of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, JAN is available via a toll-free number (given below) at no charge. The only requirement is a commitment to provide information to JAN about accommodations that you make following the phone call.

**Job Accommodation Network — all lines toll-free and Voice/TDD**

800-JAN-7234 (U.S. except WV)

800-JAN-4698 (WV only)

800-JAN-2262 (Canada)

A major insurance company listed the following accommodations in a JAN brochure:

- Providing a special chair to alleviate back pain for a district sales agent affected by vertebra surgery (\$400).
- Renting a headset phone to allow an insurance agent with cerebral palsy to write while talking (about \$6 per month).
- Supplying a telephone amplifier for a computer programmer with a hearing impairment (\$56).

These practical, straight forward solutions are relatively inexpensive, yet they greatly enhance each employee's ability to perform job duties. These are good examples of effective assistive technology solutions.

# A Sampling of Available Assistive Technology

To further increase your awareness of assistive technology, the following list describes a sampling of assistive technologies currently available and in use by individuals with disabilities.

## ***For Computers:***

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Screen reader:      | Reads aloud text displayed on computer monitor.                         |
| Key-guard:          | Keys pressed through key-guard prevent accidental multiple key presses. |
| Speech recognition: | Computer accepts commands by voice rather than keyboard input.          |

## ***For the Office:***

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Desk wood-blocks:        | Raises desk for individuals using a wheelchair.                       |
| Add-on amplifier:        | A battery-powered amplifier for hearing telephone conversations.      |
| File carousel:           | Permits independent access to file folders.                           |
| Text telephone:          | Permits typewritten communication over standard telephone lines.      |
| Headset:                 | Allows telephone use without hands.                                   |
| Swing-clear hinge:       | Permits door to swing out of doorway to help wheelchair pass through. |
| Print reader:            | Reads printed text aloud after text is scanned.                       |
| Large-button telephones: | Easier to use by persons without fine motor control.                  |

## ***For the Agribusiness:***

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Automatic hitching device: | Allows hitching/unhitching of equipment without operator leaving vehicle.  |
| Portable wheelchair ramps: | Provides temporary wheelchair access to otherwise inaccessible facilities. |
| Air filtration helmet:     | Removes airborne particles that may irritate sensitive lungs.              |
| Grain level indicator:     | Allows monitoring of grain from ground, eliminating need to climb bins.    |

## ***Tools:***

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Audible carpenter's level: | A level that informs the user when an object is level by producing a sound.  |
| Tactually marked tools:    | Tape measure, combination square, framing square and steel ruler.            |
| Pistol-grip grease gun:    | Allows use of grease gun by persons with function in just one arm.           |
| Lon-lever lug wrench:      | Permits loosening or tightening of nuts with less stress on back and wrists. |
| Hooked grain shovel:       | Allows cleaning of corners of truck grain box without operator climbing in.  |

## ***Suggestions to Employers and Employees:***

- Utilize the expertise of the employee.
- Involve the employee or applicant in decisions about assistive technology.
- Think low-tech first. Consider high-tech solutions only after other options are exhausted.
- Most worksite modifications cost less than \$1,000.
- Don't assume you know what assistive modification is best for the individual to use.

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