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# AgrAbility Safety Considerations During Farm/Ranch On-Site Visits Unconferencing Session

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

4:10-4:55 pm PT

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AANTW Safety Considerations 3.2223 CLeathers (Rev. 2.2823)



**To “AgrAbility Safety Considerations  
During Farm/Ranch On-Site Visits:  
Unconferencing Session”**

# Agenda

- Brief Introductory Comments
- Firearms Feedback
- Unwanted Sexual Advances Feedback
- Aggressive or Agitated Clients Feedback
- Discuss or Role Play?

## Brief Introductory Comments—Bob & Candy

- Thanks to those of you who participated in our one-hour discussion on November 29, 2022.
- We acknowledge and appreciate all our AgrAbility colleagues from across the country who contributed to the creation of our Fact Sheet: Laura Cherry Akgerman (OH), Rebecca Brightwell (GA), Richard Brzozowski (ME), James Craig (CO) Paul Jones (IN), Jeffrey Mason (ID), Donald W. McMoran (WA), Rhonda Miller (UT), Chad Reznicek (CO), James Sanchez (CO), Brie Weisman (ME), Carla Wilhite (CO), and Aaron Yoder (NE).
- Candy & I have written and re-written our draft Fact Sheet. It now includes 12 safety considerations before making your visit plus 12 safety considerations during your on-site visit.
- Please email me your improvements at [robert.fetsch@colostate.edu](mailto:robert.fetsch@colostate.edu).

## Firearms Feedback

**Firearms.** Like with dogs, you might request that firearms be contained prior to your on-site farm or ranch visit. It is recommended that each provider consider exploring personal safety around firearms being present during a site visit. For example, should firearms be locked away or simply be put out of sight? Everyone has a distinct perspective, and how this topic is approached with clients can affect the relationship you have with them. Position yourself so you can see the firearm at all times and so you are between it and the client. Be aware of any mental/behavioral health issues regarding high stress, anxiety, fear, paranoia, depression, anger, or suicidal thinking. You might say, “Can we move over here to talk further?”

# Unwanted Sexual Advances Feedback

**Unwanted Sexual Advances.** Ahead of time take a basic safety or self-defense course to defend yourself if necessary. Role play with AgrAbility team members how to deflect sexual advances. Practice being assertive. When entering a building, always make sure the rancher or farmer enters the doorway before you. Make sure you position yourself between the client and the doorway. Back away. Move closer to the doorway so you can escape if necessary. Some things you might say are: “I am uncomfortable with what you are saying and doing. If you continue, I will not be able to provide you with what you want and need to continue farming or ranching.” Call your supervisor or AgrAbility team member immediately. Document what happened. Work with your program administrators on how to proceed with service delivery with this client to assure your safety and comfort level.

# Aggressive or Agitated Clients Feedback

**Aggressive or Agitated Clients.** If at any time during your on-site visit, the hair on the back of your neck rises and you feel unsafe, do not challenge your client. Do not argue. You might say: “I respect you and your values. I will not engage in political or health care discussion. I am here to assist you in continuing to farm or ranch.” You might consider carrying a cooler of ice-cold water bottles. You might offer your agitated client a bottle of cool water to defuse the situation and to re-direct their attention. It gives them something else to manipulate. But if you still feel unsafe, get in your car, leave immediately, and drive to a safe place. Call your AgrAbility team member or supervisor. Document your experience. Decide together whether or not you will continue with the client.

## Discuss or Role Play?

- We could either discuss further any of the 24 items in our handout. Or we could have fun practicing and learning how to respond in these three difficult situations.
- Could we have a quick show of hands?
  - *How many of us want to discuss further?*
  - *How many of us want to role play and practice?*



## (If We Decide to Discuss...)

- *Is there another safety consideration that you want us to talk about?*
- *Perhaps...*
  - *“Duty to Report Feedback,”*
  - *“Alcohol and Other Drug Paraphernalia,”*
  - *Or a different topic?*



## **(If We Decide to Role Play...)**

- Let's form triads or groups of 3 people.
- Would you please stand up and find two other people here whom you do not know very well and form a triad.



## **If We Decide to Role Play...**

- Would each triad discuss and come to consensus on which one of the three items to practice—
  - Firearms
  - Unwanted Sexual Advances
  - Aggressive or Agitated Clients



## **If We Decide to Role Play...**

- In each triad I ask that the three of you each choose which role you will play—
  - Farmer/Rancher
  - AgrAbility Team Member
  - Coach



## **If We Decide to Role Play...**

- Now would you take about 5-10 minutes for you to role play, practice, and try out your best approaches in the situation?
- Coaches, your job is to assist the AgrAbility Team Member and the Farmer/Rancher to handle the situation as best you can.
- Candy and I will roam around and assist any triad that gets stuck.

## Let's Discuss....

- *What was your experience?*
- *What worked best?*
- *What didn't work?*
- *What did you learn?*
- *What improvements would you recommend to our AgrAbility Safety Considerations?*

## Next Steps

- Collaborate with Laura Cherry Akgerman (OH) and Maine's Fact Sheet Writing Group to create a F.S. for all SRAPs to consider using.
- Email your improvements to me at [robert.fetsch@colostate.edu](mailto:robert.fetsch@colostate.edu)



# **Questions?** **& Answers**





**Thank you  
very much!**

## Duty to Report Feedback

**Duty to Report.** If you see or suspect abuse or neglect of people or animals, ask your AgrAbility team what is your duty to report and to whom? When? Check with your land grant university legal office. Find out what your duty is to report suspected abuse, neglect, methamphetamine production, etc.

## **Alcohol and Other Drug Paraphernalia Feedback**

**Alcohol and Other Drug Paraphernalia.** If you encounter drug paraphernalia visible in the client's home, respectfully request, "Could we move outside?" Advise the client that such items must be removed before a second visit will be scheduled. If someone is intoxicated or otherwise visibly impaired, consider rescheduling the appointment. You might say, "Because of the importance of what we need to discuss today, I respectfully request that any bongos or substances be put away and that we go outside to talk further."



### What Can We Do?

- UNH police training
- Training for new staff.
- In depth zoom or phone conversation before
- Beware of riding in vehicles (dangerous driving; riding in the bucket of a tractor)
- If it's late at night make sure everyone is in their cars before leaving.
- Set time limit and topic limit for first visit.
- Testing
- Google someone ahead of time to see if there are any red flags
- What should our standard "policy" be for riding in farm vehicles?
- Checklist for good visit preparation.
- have a first aid kit in vehicle
- Efficiency-building guidelines if joint visits are planned
- Try to keep calendars up to date and let someone know where you are going
- If it sounds like a threat, assume it is, get out of the situation.
- Carry pepper spray? Learn basic self-defense techniques.
- Learn about "warning signs"... I'm personally pretty trusting and sometimes give people the benefit of the doubt, even when I shouldn't.
- Let somebody know where you are going and establish a time when you will be back
- Standard protocol - let office or someone know your plans
- Men visiting women - bring a woman with you (avoid accusations)
- Refuse to go into homes until you know the person well.
- Should we eat food at new people's homes?
- Be aware if there are any rams, bulls, or boars aggressive mama critters in the field if you're going in an area with livestock. Don't trust that they are safe.
- Try to park so you don't get blocked in and can leave quickly if need be
- Learn what safe gun handling is. Many farmers have guns in their vehicles for various reasons. Are they being safe with them?

### What Do We Already Do?

- Inform admin staff of whereabouts
- Bring a forester
- Dogs - stay in truck and beep the horn
- Joint visits offer several benefits
- Pre-visit meetings (zoom/phone)