



“Development of Community Support Strategies for Manitoba Farmers Who Live with Disabilities and Their Families”

PROJECT INFORMATION

Vision and Purpose

The primary purpose of this project was to develop a practical resource kit that could be used and further developed by farmers with disabilities and organizations. Through research, networking, and resource development, the project worked to support greater participation of farmers with disabilities in the workforce and in their communities, greater coordination between service providers, and empowerment of farmers with disabilities. Both products and processes contributed to lessons that will be used by other initiatives of CCDS, WCB, governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, and Advisory Group initiatives

Objectives

The objectives of this project were:

- To identify barriers and facilitators in return to work for farmers with disabilities;
- To identify the community supports (formal and informal) available and needed by farmers who experience a disability,
- To identify the family supports needed for farmers who experience a disability; and
- To develop a pilot community support strategy resource kit.

Timeline December 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007

Funding Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba

Implementation Plan

The project will be completed in August 2007. It will have produced the following outcomes, activities and documents:

- *Networking:* An advisory group, comprised of community stakeholders, was developed to support and provide input/feedback on all stages of the project. The group included farmers, farm family members, service providers, and members of other community organizations.
- *Literature Review:* A literature review identified twenty papers pertaining to impacts, challenges, facilitators, and barriers for farmers with disabilities. A number of studies focused on rural vocational rehabilitation and return to work. Several addressed self-identity and disability, agricultural safety, farmers and mental health and older farmers with disabilities.

- *Environmental Scan:* The environmental scan created a baseline of available services and resources in Manitoba that may be most useful to farmers and their families affected by challenges of injury, long-term illness, disability or aging. These include: health and rehabilitation, safety promotion, financial, housing, farm management, farmers' associations, community services, and disability services, among others.
- *Data Collection:* Interviews and a focus group were held with 16 farmers and farm family members. Five of the interviews conducted in farm homes included both husband and wife. The farmers ranged in age from 47 to 75 years old. Two focus groups were held with a total of 21 service providers. All participants were from three communities in South Central Manitoba. Participants offered suggestions of useful strategies and resources.
- *Pilot Resource Kit:* The project's prime deliverable was a resource kit titled: *Healthy Farmers, Healthy Communities Resource Kit: Facing Challenges of Injury, Illness, Disability and Aging*. An analysis of transcripts, literature, the scan, and Advisory Group input contributed to the resource kit. The key objectives of the kit were:
 - To offer disabled farmers and their families information about practices and services that help in daily life and the return to work;
 - To help service providers better understand the needs of farm families and better coordinate services to them; and
 - To build awareness among other community members of their role in making farm life safe and healthy.
- *Website:* The website is a resource for farmers, their family members, service providers, and other community partners who participate in promoting farm health and safety. It provides information on the project and its stakeholders, links to an electronic copy of the resource kit, and other key resources that support safe and healthy adjustment to living and working with a disability. The site is hosted by Manitoba Farmers With Disabilities, and adds to their resource base. (Web address: www.fwdmanitoba.com/ccds_abo.htm)
- *Final Report:* A full report on the project was prepared. It includes a detailed description of methods and research findings. The report was shared widely with community stakeholders.

Project Team

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