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A newsletter dedicated to friends of the Indiana AgrAbility Project/Breaking New Ground Outreach Program

Keeping up with the resilient Laurie Hayn

Despite losing an arm and leg, she's hard to keep down

Laurie Hayn and her husband, Dale, started farming together when they got married in 1983. The Plymouth, Indiana, couple have a successful corn and soybean operation they farm along with Dale's brother and his wife.

On the second day of their 2018 harvest while helping in one of their fields, Laurie was unable to hear or see the combine being driven by her brother-in-law. Tragically, she was swept up into the corn head, where her left arm and leg were entangled. Emergency crews were able to extract Laurie and provide life-saving treatment.

However, her left arm had to be amputated a little below her shoulder, and she lost her left leg at the hip.

Not long after the incident, Steve Swain from Indiana AgrAbility saw a newspaper story about Laurie. He sent AgrAbility information for Laurie to Farm Bureau representatives in Marshall County.

Eventually, Laurie engaged the assistance of Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR), which in turn contacted Swain to conduct a farm assessment for her. They determined that two of the most helpful pieces of assistive technology to keep Laurie farming would be a platform lift to get her into the cab of their tractor and a utility vehicle with an enclosed cab. Indiana VR also paid for home modifications to increase the accessibility of Laurie's kitchen, bathroom, and basement stairs. Commenting on the impact of the platform lift, Swain said, "Now we can't keep her down."

Indeed, Laurie Hayn is a difficult person to "keep down."



Laurie is still active in her family's farming operation with the aid of assistive technology

In addition to her farming activities, she and her husband still travel and hike, and Laurie is an avid baker. Her resilience and positive attitude are palpable and infectious.

You can hear first-hand from Laurie and Steve Swain in the video "AgrAbility: Renewing Hope, Restoring Productivity with Laurie Hayn" available at agrability.info/hayn. She is also scheduled to share her story and encouraging spirit as the keynote speaker at the 2023 AgrAbility National Training Workshop in Spokane, WA.

Ag Assistive Technology Expo coming April 13

Anyone familiar with AgrAbility likely knows that assistive technology (AT) is crucial to our clients' success. However, not everyone has had first-hand experience with agricultural AT or with farm work or farm machinery.

To help bridge this "experience gap," Indiana AgrAbility, in cooperation with its nonprofit partner, Easterseals Crossroads, is sponsoring the Agricultural Assistive Technology Expo on April 13 at Purdue's Beck Agricultural Center. This full-day event includes hands-on experiences with AT, farm visits, demonstrations, and training about assistive



technology available for individuals involved in agriculture. Participants will be able to climb into the cabs of farm machines and experience some

of the challenges involved in operating them. LifeLyfts will also have AT there for accessing machinery.

Breakout sessions include information on worksite assessments, The Toolbox AT Database, the new AgrAbility AT Loan Library, and working with under-served populations, including veterans and migrant/seasonal farmworkers. An AgrAbility client panel will also share the importance of AT on their operations.

Participants will have the option of touring some of the Purdue agricultural facilities, such as the dairy and sheep facilities, to get a better idea of the physical tasks involved in their operation.

The Purdue Beck Agricultural Center is located at 4550 US-52, West Lafayette, IN. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m., and the event ends at 4:00 p.m. Visit agrability.info/ATexpo for more information and to register.



Laurie's disability challenges have not dampened her positive spirit

Out & About with AgrAbility

EDUCATION & AWARENESS PAST & FUTURE



The Fort Wayne Farm Show is typically one of the best-attended public awareness events for Indiana AgrAbility. Our program is also very thankful to the event organizers for a complimentary space each year! The photo above is from the January 2023 show.

Some upcoming events for Indiana AgrAbility include:

- Agricultural Assistive Technology Expo, West Lafayette, IN, April 13
- Indiana Rural Health Association Annual Conference, French Lick, IN, June 13 – 14
- Indiana FFA Convention, West Lafayette, IN, June 19 – 22
- Horse Progress Days, Shipshewana, IN, June 30 – July 1
- Indiana State Fair, Indianapolis, IN, July 28 – August 20

Indiana AgrAbility partners with The Nature Conservancy to promote conservation programs

Do you have land that frequently floods along the Wabash River? Or maybe the land used to be farmed but is no longer in production? The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and The Nature Conservancy are pleased to announce that funding is available for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which includes special emphasis on the Lower Wabash, through NRCS partnerships with the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP).

Indiana AgrAbility is collaborating with The Nature Conservancy to educate our clients, military veterans, and farmers who have historically been under-served, about NRCS programs. This project specifically targets the protection of sensitive landscapes along and near the Wabash River in southwestern Indiana, but AgrAbility will be highlighting NRCS programs to audiences throughout the state.

Landowners can now apply for conservation easements in Indiana and Illinois. These provide financial assistance to farmers who volun-



NRCS is a valuable resource for anyone in agriculture, including those with land along the Lower Wabash River

tarily take their frequently flooded lands out of agricultural use. The program benefits nature by restoring these wetland areas to bottom-land hardwood forest and by reconnecting the floodplain to the Wabash River. There is a 15-acre minimum, and at least 50% of the eligible acres must have cropping history. Areas that may be eligible for funding include Knox, Gibson and Posey Counties in Indiana and Wabash, Edwards, White, and Gallatin Counties in Illinois.

Entities and landowners interested in applying for ACEP-WREP funding should contact their local NRCS Service Center. Visit the directory at www.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/find-a-service-center.

AgrAbility thankful for Milliken

For many years, Roberta “Bobbie” Milliken has been a big part of the successful collaboration between AgrAbility and Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation in serving AgrAbility farmers. In addition, she has been a valuable member of the program’s advisory team. (You can also see her in the Laurie Hayn video noted on p. 1.)

Bobbie recently became Indiana VR’s policy and compliance manager, so she will not be working as directly with AgrAbility. The AgrAbility team says “thank you” and “congratulations” to Bobbie on her new position, and they look forward to working with the new manager of program initiatives, Ima Abbott.



Bobbie Milliken

INDIANA PREPARED is one-stop resource for emergency prep

Natural disasters can strike Indiana any time of year, but spring can be particularly problematic as tornadoes and other severe weather become more common. In addition to weather emergencies, a host of other potential disasters can affect our state’s rural residents.

Indiana Prepared, on the web at INPREPared.org, an initiative of Purdue Extension, is a comprehensive resource for rural emergency preparedness. The “Disaster Info” section contains key information on how to prepare for some of Indiana’s most common threats, such as thunderstorms, floods, tornadoes, extreme heat, and winter storms.

In addition, users will find a wealth of other information:

- The News section contains updates on state and national issues. Recent topics include changes to animal medication access, tractor operation during cold weather, and winter home heating.
- PREPclips are short informational videos about rural disaster preparation topics, including weather, emergency planning, grain bin safety, and more.



Spring might be “tornado season” in Indiana, but severe weather can strike any time (photo by Justin1569 at English Wikipedia)

- PREPnotes are short (about 1 page) fact sheets about a wide variety of emergency and rural disaster preparation topics.

• Educator/trainer resources include lesson outlines, notes, and PowerPoint presentations on rural emergency preparedness topics.

• There are also links to weather advisories, a drought monitor, Indiana road conditions, and other organizations like FEMA and NOAA.

In addition to the website, Indiana Prepared’s Facebook page facebook.com/INPREPared, is particularly active during times of inclement weather.

Veterans’ workshop coming

National AgrAbility and Indiana AgrAbility are planning a regional workshop focused on veterans in agriculture June 6 – 8 at the Hilton Garden Inn near the airport in Indianapolis. Participants will engage in classroom instruction, networking, and on-farm experiences.

For more information, check back to www.agrability.org/training-events/in-person and click on the **Regional Events** link. You can also contact AgrAbility’s veteran outreach coordinator, Joe Ricker – ricker2@purdue.edu – for information about this event or any other issues related to veterans in agriculture.



TOOLBOX Spotlight

TOOLS TO MAKE LIFE EASIER



Heat Induction Tool for Seized Parts

This battery-powered device emits electromagnetic energy to release ferrous metals from rust, corrosion, thread-lock compounds, fertilizer, dirt, and more. Because there’s no open flame, one can reportedly heat metallic objects near plastic components or combustible materials without having to remove or otherwise protect them. The tool comes with three coils (7/8” pre-formed, 23” U-form, and 41” bearing buddy), LED light, usage indicator, fault-override delay, ergonomic grip, carrying case, and operator manual.

For more information on this and more helpful tools, visit

THE TOOLBOX

Assistive Technology Database www.agrability.org/toolbox