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Disabled Colorado ranchers learn ways to stay in business *Arapahoe County hosts AgrAbility Workshop Feb. 10 to support disabled farmers*

Aurora, Colo. --- Arapahoe County's CSU Extension will host a free AgrAbility Workshop for disabled farmers Feb. 10 at the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds, 25690 E. Quincy Ave., Aurora.

The morning workshop, *Living with Multiple Sclerosis and Other Disabilities on the Ranch/Farm*, caters to ranchers and farmers dealing with multiple sclerosis and/or conditions, such as arthritis, back and joint pain, hearing loss, heart or breathing problems that affect their ability to maintain their career. It runs 9 a.m. – noon and includes lunch (from Noon - 1 p.m.) for those who register by Feb. 3.

"This workshop shows ranchers easy ways to maintain their mobility while working on the farm, what to look for when purchasing new equipment and tools, as well as ways to modify current equipment to prevent further injuries," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Pat Noonan. "We're here to help farmers and ranchers continue to maintain their businesses and their income, especially during these tough economic times."

The afternoon workshop, from 1 – 4 p.m., is for occupational therapists, physicians, chiropractors, home healthcare providers and others who work with disabled ranchers and will provide them with tips on how they can expand their client support through AgrAbility joint protection techniques and equipment/tool modifications.

Jefferson rancher Carol Carrington was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis while running a horse breeding operation and raising Highland Cattle. The disease prevented her from conducting various tasks needed to maintain the success of her business. Through AgrAbility and the Colorado Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Carrington received an enclosed, heated Kawasaki Mule Utility Terrain Vehicle.

"I felt like a 16-year-old kid getting my first car," said Carrington. "It goes through ditches. It's really amazing."

Eligible farmers and ranchers may receive on-site evaluations and, if applicable, receive equipment modification or assistive technology to help maintain their ability to work their farm and make a living.

Registrations received by Feb. 3 will include a free lunch. Call Bob Fetsch at 970-491-5648 or send an e-mail to fetsch@cahs.colostate.edu to reserve a seat. If fewer than five people pre-register, the workshop may be canceled.

The USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service funds the Colorado AgrAbility Project, a CSU Extension Program, which aims to keep farmers and ranchers healthy and able to continue their agricultural operations.

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