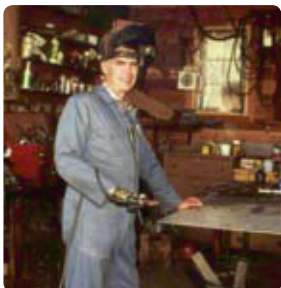
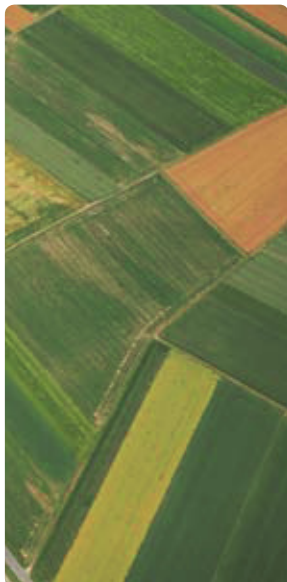




# THE HEALTHY FARMERS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

## RESOURCE KIT:

FACING CHALLENGES OF INJURY, ILLNESS, DISABILITY AND AGING



## HEALTHY FARMERS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES RESOURCE KIT: FACING CHALLENGES OF INJURY, ILLNESS, DISABILITY AND AGING

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This pilot resource kit is based on a research project conducted by the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies in partnership with the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Manitoba. Several community stakeholders, including farmers and farm family members, contributed at every stage of the project and to the development of the kit.



This project is supported by a grant from the Community Initiatives and Research Project of the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba.

### CD-ROM CONTENTS:

- ▶ An electronic copy (PDF) of the kit. (Adobe Reader included)
- ▶ An audio and visual presentation of the kit.

Additional copies of this kit and a report on the research findings can be obtained in print and in other formats from:

### CANADIAN CENTRE ON DISABILITY STUDIES

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Tel: (204) 287-8411  
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Email: [ccds@disabilitystudies.ca](mailto:ccds@disabilitystudies.ca)

The kit and the research findings are also available on CCDS's web site: <http://www.disabilitystudies.ca>

# The Healthy Farmers, Healthy Communities Resource Kit: Facing Challenges of Injury, Illness, Disability and Aging

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# Healthy Farmers, Healthy Communities Resource Kit



## Tear-Off Feedback Form

### Request for feedback:

This resource kit is a work in progress. With your suggestions, a more complete and effective resource will be developed. Please fill out this form and return it to the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS).

You may either mail the tear-off form (fold it to create an addressed envelope), or fax it to CCDS (**Fax: 204-284-5343**). If you prefer, visit the website of Manitoba Farmers With Disabilities to complete the form online ([www.fwdmanitoba.com](http://www.fwdmanitoba.com)).

### 1. What is your work or role? (Please mark all that apply)

- Farmer (with a disability, injury, or long-term illness)
- Farmer's spouse or family member
- Healthcare professional
- Other service provider
- Other. What is your job, role or situation? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. How is the information in the kit useful for you, your family, or your clients?



### 3. What other resources, strategies, or helpful hints should be added to the resource kit?

### 4. Is there anyone within your organization or community who should receive the kit?

### 5. What other comments or suggestions would you like to give?

Thank you for your feedback!



Canadian Centre on Disability Studies  
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# Introduction

The ***Healthy Farmers, Healthy Communities Resource Kit*** provides information for farmers, service providers, organizations and communities to help farmers and their families prepare for, cope with, or prevent challenges of injury, long-term illness, disability or aging.

## Goals of the kit

1. To offer information on good practices, services and resources that can help farmers continue to work and live a healthy life;
2. To help service providers and planners to better understand the needs of farm families and better coordinate services to them; and
3. To build awareness among other community members of their role in making farm life safe and healthy.

## Why do we need this kit?

We know that farmers face high risks for injury, certain illnesses and disability. The challenges of living and working with a disability are different for farmers than for other workers.

To make matters worse, there may be fewer services available in rural areas. Often, help from family and neighbours is not enough.

This kit contains information from farmers who face disability issues, and from service providers who help farmers. Their experiences show what help is available in farm communities and how to get it.

The kit shares information and lessons learned, so that farmers and their many partners in the community can work smarter, not harder.

## Who can use this kit?

This kit can help farmers, their families, members of service agencies, program planners, community organizations, church and support groups, local businesses, and others who support the health and success of farmers.

## This kit contains:

- ▶ **Healthy Farming Myths & Facts** – Rethinking our views on health, safety, and farming with a disability.
- ▶ **Life Changes & Challenges on the Farm** – Building awareness for challenges faced by farmers with an injury, long-term illness, or disability.
- ▶ **Suggestions for Healthy Farming** – Learn good practices to prepare for, cope with, or prevent disability on the farm.
- ▶ **‘Road Map’ to Services & Resources** – Find who and what helps farmers and their families deal with an injury, illness, disability or challenges of aging.
- ▶ **Project Background** – More information on the project and research behind this kit.

## Using the kit

We encourage you to use the kit in ways that fit your needs. This information can be used with your family, community, clients or organization.

Please quote the author and source of the information as:

The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies. (2007). *Healthy Farmers, Healthy Communities Resource Kit: Facing Challenges of Injury, Illness, Disability and Aging*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS).

## Who developed the kit?

The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) produced this kit together with faculty of the University of Manitoba's Occupational Therapy Department. Their work was supported by an Advisory Group made up of:

- farm operators and rural residents,
- members of community and consumer organizations, and
- professionals with experience in helping farmers.

For more information about key people and organizations involved please see the Project Background and the inside of the back cover.



## Limitations of the kit

The kit's information is limited because it is based on research carried out in one region, with a small group, over a short period of time.

It does not provide a complete list of resources and strategies. Organizations listed may not be the only organizations to provide the services described.

As feedback on the 'pilot' kit is gathered, it will become more complete and useful.

## Thanks

Thanks to the farm families and rural service providers from South Central Manitoba who took part in this project. Their information, ideas and words helped to build this resource kit.

Thanks also go to members of the Advisory Group who helped guide every stage of work toward this goal. Special thanks go to Manitoba Farmers with Disabilities who devoted much time and effort to finding research participants.

Thanks to Rob Sarginson and Stephanie Purvis, with Literacy Partners of Manitoba, for helping to edit and organize information to better meet the needs of our audiences.

The Public Health Agency of Canada, Division of Aging and Seniors, Manitoba Farmers With Disabilities, and the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project are gratefully acknowledged for having given their permission to reprint several photos that appear in the kit.

Finally, thanks go to the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba for helping to fund this kit.



# Healthy Farming Myths and Facts

These myths and facts are based on information from farmers, published articles and advice from professionals who work in community health, occupational therapy, and research on disability issues.

In order to change how we farm with challenges, like a disability, we first need to change what we *think* about farming with a disability or about farm health and safety. This information can encourage you to think and act differently.

## What does being “healthy” mean?

**Myth** We are healthy if we suffer no harm from illness, injury or disability.

**Fact** We can’t be totally free from harm. Health is a *balance* between good and harmful influences. When we learn about risks to health and healthy choices, we can ‘tip the balance’ toward health and prevent harm.

**Myth** Health is simply physical well-being. Health is personal.

**Fact** Health is also made up of our

- emotional well-being,
- mental well-being,
- spiritual well-being,
- financial well-being, and
- social life and relationships within the family and within the community.

## What do we know about farm health and safety risks?

**Facts** Farming is a very physical job. There are many uncertainties and stresses. This puts farmers at risk for many health problems.

Common risks to farmers include:

- loss of an arm or a leg,
- back injuries, back pain,
- hearing loss,
- mental health challenges,
- lung and heart disease,
- arthritis, and/or
- skin cancer.

Compared to other industries, farmers begin working at younger ages, and work to older ages.

Young and old farmers are at greatest risk for on the job injuries.

## Who is responsible for the health of farmers?

**Myth** Farming has always been risky. Health and safety standards don't apply to farming.

**Fact** **Some farming practices can be changed to lessen the risk of injury. All workers deserve the protection of health and safety standards.**

**Myth** Farmers can best deal with risks the same way they always have, by helping each other.

**Fact** **Farm communities are getting smaller and aging, which may mean there are fewer volunteers to help in hard times.**

**Myth** Health is only the responsibility of doctors, hospitals, and our public health care system.

**Facts** **Services may be harder to navigate today than in the past.**

**More alternative therapies and care in the home are now available. The more you learn, the more you gain from available services.**

**Health and safety are the shared responsibility of all farm community members—farmers, government, service providers, and others.**

**Farmers with past injuries or illness can be a good source of ideas on improving health and safety.**

**"Accidents" don't just happen!**

**"In the vast majority of incidents, where people are seriously injured or die, the event was predictable and preventable."**

*(Farm Family's Safety and Health Guide)*



## What role do women have in farm community health?

**Myth** Farming with an injury, illness or disability is mostly a men's issue. After all, most farmers are men.

**Facts** **Both farming men and women have important roles in creating healthy farm communities.**

**Injuries and illness of farm family members often mean added work for women. Women are usually the caregivers. They also fill in for a family member who is unable to work.**

**Women often make up for a lack of government services by doing more.**

## **Can disabled farmers continue farming?**

**Myth** Farming with a disability is too hard. You have to leave the farm.

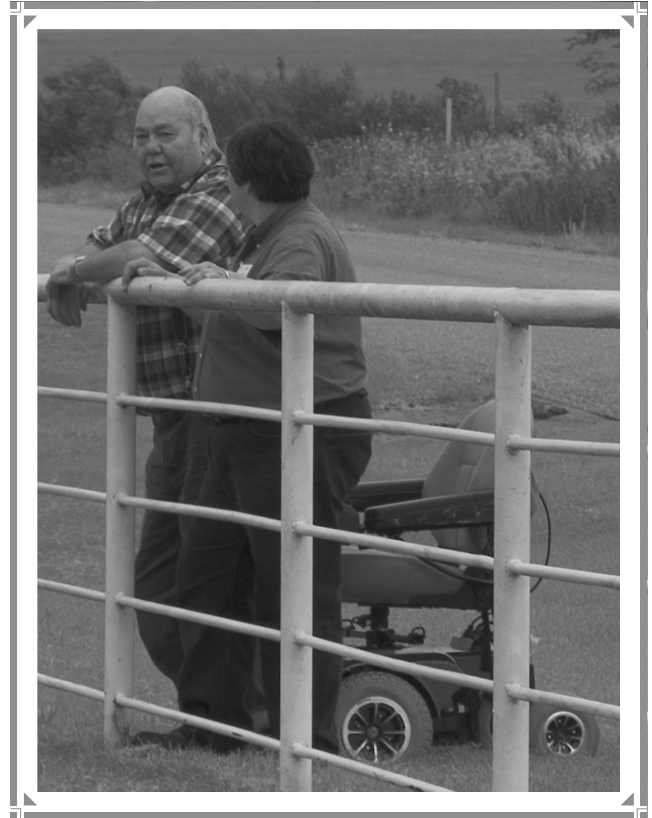
**Fact** Many injured, ill or disabled farmers *can* and *do* return to farming. Often they need to change the way they work in order to continue farming.

**The farming way of life may encourage farmers to return to work because it helps build personal strengths, such as:**

- positive attitudes,
- humour,
- religious faith,
- commitments to volunteering and community life,
- a strong work ethic and deep commitment to farming, and
- good problem solving and management skills.

**Myth** Workers in other industries and those who live in cities are more likely to be able to work with a disability.

**Fact** Generally, for those with less serious disabilities, farmers are actually *more likely* to return to their work than are disabled people in cities. But for those with more serious disabilities, farmers may face more challenges than workers in the city.



**Myth** It's healthier for farmers with disabilities *not* to return to work.

**Fact** Farmers with a disability may have a higher risk for injury. They need to pay more attention to risks and take safety measures.

**Farmers often recover more fully when they do return to work. Those who don't or can't work may be at risk for depression.**

**Myth** A farmer who can't farm is like a duck that can't swim. He's sunk!

**Fact** A duck that can't swim, can still float, walk and fly.

**A farmer with a disability still has many valuable abilities to enjoy and share with others in the community.**



# Life Changes and Challenges on the Farm

Life changes, like aging, illness, injury and disability, are normal. They can add challenges to daily life and work. Examples of such challenges from farmers' lives are presented in this section.

When farmers, service providers and other community members consider these possible challenges, they can improve how they plan for and deal with change.

Other sections in this kit suggest services, resources, and ways to deal with the challenges.

## **Challenges to physical well-being and active living:**

- ▶ Prosthetics, such as an artificial hand, may not be well suited to farm work. Some farmers feel that these items make farm work more dangerous.
- ▶ The period after getting out of hospital is often a great challenge to farmers and their family members.
  - Rehabilitation therapies and other services for injured or ill workers may not exist in a nearby town.
  - The need to drive to other communities for care places increased pressure and cost on friends or family.
  - The size of farmyards and farm buildings makes it hard for those who are ill or injured to get around.
  - Hospital stays tend to be shorter than in the past. More care is delivered by caregivers in the home.
- ▶ Farmers with a physical disability or an injury may be at risk for re-injury.
- ▶ It can be difficult to access services because buildings in rural areas are often not set up for people with physical disabilities. Some people and organizations lack awareness of correct construction and appropriate ways to use accessible features, like ramps or special parking stalls.
- ▶ There is a lack of accessible housing in rural areas.

## **Challenges to mental and emotional well-being:**

- ▶ Farmers who have a serious health problem or an accident often experience depression.
- ▶ Farmers may blame themselves for their accident.
- ▶ Emergency mental health services and long-term counselling may be hard to find in the local area.
- ▶ Many people believe they need to deal with mental health challenges on their own. The

farming way of life encourages people to help themselves. This can be a source of strength. It can also lead to people not asking for help that could benefit them.

- ▶ Farmers want confidential mental health services, but this can be challenging in a small community. Confidentiality may be threatened when a person goes to a local service centre in a community where many people are known to each other and their activities are easily observed.
- ▶ A health crisis can draw families together. It can also add strain to family relationships. Family members may have to take on new roles, new duties and added care.

### **Challenges to financial well-being:**

- ▶ Farmers face many financial challenges. These may be made worse by costs resulting from illness or disability. Some costs may include:
  - modifying equipment so the farmer can use it,
  - medical devices to help the farmer work in spite of an injury,
  - remodelling the home to make it more accessible,
  - hiring help, and
  - gas and hotel costs when the farmer has to go to the city for treatment or services.
- ▶ Farmers may have a high gross income, but a very low net income after expenses. However, gross income is often used to assess the need for financial support. This may mean farmers do not qualify for support.

For help with challenges, see the suggestions on page 11 and the resource listing on page 23.

### **Farm Injuries Cost**

“A serious injury can take the principal operator out of production for a period of time, and that loss can take several years to recover from financially. The losses in production can be in the tens of thousands of dollars, and this doesn’t include the cost to the health care system and the economy.”  
*(Farm Family’s Safety and Health Guide)*

### **Health and social service challenges:**

- ▶ Lack of coordination may lead to delays, fewer referrals, gaps or duplication of service:
  - between urban and rural service providers, and
  - among service providers within the same area.
- ▶ The quality of care and rehabilitation may suffer because of:
  - a lack of specialized medical equipment,
  - a lack of medical specialists,
  - a lack of male homecare workers,
  - long waits for treatment, or
  - lengthy travel time to appointments for services and treatment.

### **Challenges returning to farm work:**

- ▶ Farming is not just a job. It is a way of life and part of the family history. Some farmers feel they have been learning to farm their whole life and they don’t know anything else. These factors encourage farmers to return to farming when they develop a disability. They also make it hard when farmers need or want to change jobs.

- ▶ Some service providers discourage farmers with disabilities from returning to farm work. They may not intend to do so, but their statements can greatly affect their clients. It is common for people to expect less from a person with a disability than what they are actually capable of doing.
- ▶ Services such as vocational rehabilitation, that help people return to work, are often too far from the farm. They may not do enough to help farmers stay on the farm.
- ▶ A shortage of skilled farm labourers makes it hard for farmers to hire help when they need more workers after their injury or illness.
- ▶ Farmer may have trouble using or accessing farm structures, equipment, vehicles, homes or retail/service centres.

### **Different challenges for women and men:**

- ▶ Women and men have different challenges and deal with these in different ways. Their needs for services and supports also differ.
- ▶ Men often delay seeking help and keep their feelings to themselves. This can lead to more serious health and mental health problems.
- ▶ Women are most often the caregivers for family members. Caregivers have a heavy workload, especially in rural areas. Farm caregivers do more than give care to their ill or injured family members. They also fill in to do farm work, spend a lot more time driving for errands and appointments, and do their own household work, farm work or paid work in town.
- ▶ It is emotionally difficult to leave the farm. When women have done more household or administrative work, leaving the farm may not change the kind of work they do. When men work directly with land or livestock, leaving

the farm can completely change their work. Such change can trigger stress, especially when a person has not prepared himself/herself for change.



### **Challenges for farm children, youth and seniors:**

- ▶ Children are exposed to hazards on farms because it is their home as well as a place of work. Where there are no physical barriers placed between children's play areas and work sites, their safety and health are at risk.
- ▶ Farm youth may do work that is not well suited to their age and level of experience. This may put their health and safety at risk.
- ▶ Older farmers face challenges that come with aging that may be greater on the farm, such as:
  - poorer balance, vision and stamina may increase the risk for injuries,
  - isolation from other people limits support,
  - distance from emergency services may delay help in a crisis, or
  - physical disabilities interfere with daily life.
- ▶ Senior farmers may be concerned about who will inherit the farm or how to plan for sale of the farm when they retire. Farmers with a disability may face this concern sooner than they had planned for.





# Suggestions for Healthy Farming

Farmers who have had to cope with challenges to their health and ability often have good advice to give to others facing the same problems. In this section, their experiences are combined with those of rural service providers to provide suggestions for good practices or strategies. These suggestions could help you prepare for, cope with or prevent challenges when you experience a change in your health or abilities.

## Thinking Ahead; Preparing for Risks

### Do you carry insurance?

---

"I had no accident insurance. I got life insurance, but that does not help you."

Lots of guys that were around our area got insurance after that [the farmer's accident], for that kind of stuff. That opened their eyes. What if this would happen to me?"

---

As experience has taught these farmers, it is important to have more than life insurance. **Life insurance** is useful only if you die. Carry **accident insurance** to cover your costs if you have an accident. **Disability insurance** is also very useful.

Insurance can cover:

- medical expenses due to your illness, accident or disability,
- some of your lost wages while you cannot work,
- your transportation and living costs when you have to travel for treatment,
- costs of job rehabilitation or retraining.

Be aware that if you become disabled, you may no longer qualify for accident insurance. Ask your insurance agent in advance.

When you apply for an operating loan, ask if they offer insurance on the loan for both death and disability. Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is one example of an insurer that provides this option.

If you are a self-employed farmer, you can choose to make Canada Pension Plan payments to ensure that you are eligible for CPP Disability coverage. Your spouse may do the same as long as he/she meets certain requirements. Your spouse must be your business partner. She/he must declare an earned income and make CPP contributions.

One farmer offered some advice on this partnership:

---

"I made her my partner and I paid her a monthly salary, which she used to buy groceries. That was her income. It was never high enough that she had to pay income tax, but she paid into CPP."

---

Contact the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) for information about CPP Disability applications.

### Learn about farm health risks and safety measures

Learn about risks to health and safety on the farm and precautions that can protect you, your family, and other workers.



# SAFE FARMS

**S** SPOT THE HAZARD  
**A** ASSESS THE RISK  
**F** FIND A SAFER WAY  
**E** EVERYDAY

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI), the Workplace Health and Safety Division, and Public Safety Canada provide many practical resources on farm safety and health, including:

- Farm Family's Guide to Safety and Health
- Farm Family's Safety Checklist
- Farm Family Walkabout Guide
- Creating Safe Play Areas on Farms
- Farm Family Walkabout
- Making Farming Safe for Senior Farmers

---

### Steps to Safer Farms

There are three basic steps to a safer farm for you and your family:

#### Step 1

Understand the different skills and abilities of the people on your farm.

#### Step 2

Assess the hazards on the farm with the people who may be exposed to them.

#### Step 3

Ensure everyone is aware of the hazards and can do their jobs safely.

This includes:

- equipment
- materials
- environment

*(Farm Family Walkabout Guide)*

---

### Age, Ability and Farm Safety

Ask yourself: Does the farm worker's level of ability fit the task to do the job safely?

- Young adults may lack the experience, skill, or physical coordination to carry out a task safely.
- New hired labourers should be trained or supervised.
- Experienced farmer's abilities change with age, which can affect their ability to perform a task safely.
- You also need to be aware of your own limitations.

### Plan for emergencies

Family members are often the first response to an emergency on the farm. The better prepared they are, the less likely they are to panic or get hurt.

Prepare an emergency plan and review it with everyone who might have to deal with an emergency.

The *Farm Family's Guide to Safety and Health* includes many ideas for emergency plans.

The following advice might help you with your plans:

- ▶ Make a list of emergencies that might occur. Write a plan for each type of possible emergency.
- ▶ Find and post emergency information and contact numbers at work sites.
- ▶ Keep emergency supplies stocked and available at each work site.

- ▶ Plan how you will communicate with others in an emergency. Keep in regular contact with anyone who works alone.
- ▶ Plan how to evacuate an injured person, especially those who work in remote locations.
- ▶ Attach your farm section number to your phone/s and farm machinery. It will be handy to give to the 911 operator and help drivers find the scene of the accident.
- ▶ Phone 911 first, then call other family, friends, or neighbours.
- ▶ Program a speed dial number for a nearby family member to call in an emergency. Write the number down near the home phone.
- ▶ Take an emergency first aid course. Several organizations in Manitoba provide this training (e.g. St. John's Ambulance). Your regional health authority can refer you to a local agency.
- ▶ Keep in mind that family and friends who take the place of an ambulance may also risk an accident or a law suit.

See the “Roadmap”  
to Services and  
Resources section for  
information on how to  
contact an organization or  
program mentioned here.

## Coping with Emotions

### Personal outlook is a start

Injuries, long-term illness and disability affect your emotions. Farmers who have lived with these challenges insist that your personal outlook is a basic starting point that can help you cope.

They suggest you approach daily challenges with:

- a positive attitude, focusing on what you *can* do,
- determination, “stubbornness” and patience when progress is slow,
- a sense of humour, even in hard times,
- spiritual faith, when that is your way of life,
- an understanding of your own limitations, and
- an awareness of when to ask for help.

---

"You can either sit in a corner and die, or else you can try to move forward."

"Nurses were wondering why I joked about my accident, why I could do that. Well, some mornings that kept me sane, you know. And probably ignoring the problem a bit too. I mean, you're not thinking about it all the time."

---

Your love of farming can do a lot to keep you going, despite the odds.

---

"You got to have ambition and you got to have an interest in what you're doing. If you have those two things, you're off to a great start. Then everything around you will work much better."

---

Life changes most often bring good with the bad. Even those farmers who had serious injuries said that many good things happened to them after their accident, and sometimes even *because* of it.

## Accept help from family & friends

Support from family, friends and neighbours is strong in rural areas. This support is important to your mental health.

---

"We had only one day in the whole four months [while in hospital] that he didn't have a visitor. One day!"

---

Don't let yourself get isolated. It's more important than ever to stay connected. Go to local events, church, or the coffee shop. Visit and invite visitors to your home.

---

"I think there's a lot of information exchange, that the coffee shop is not all gossip. There's a lot of news there, there's a lot of good information there, just from people getting together."

"Like I say, I don't need the coffee, but I need the friendship."

---

Each individual may prefer different kinds of help. Some people are more open to talking about their emotions than others. Some farmers prefer to get together with others to talk about practical things. Just being with other people can help you cope emotionally.



## Care for the care-giver

Farmers often carry heavy workloads when their spouse or child is injured or develops poor health. As a caregiver, you need to recognize your own limits. You must look after your own needs. When you are mentally, physically and emotionally caring for yourself, then you can care well for others.

A care-giver must plan time for "self-care". Many of the same supports listed here for an injured spouse may be helpful for a caregiver as well. A caregiver can also get respite services. You may also find support groups for caregivers to be useful.

---

(Interviewer to caregiver)

"How would you describe your role?"

(Caregiver to spouse/farmer)

"I don't know. What would you call me?"

(Spouse/farmer)

"A necessity!"

---

## Connect with community and church

Neighbours and friends have always been the 'lifeline' of the farming community. Some people are well connected to this lifeline; others are not. Keep in contact with others. Be aware of people who are alone and at risk.

Many people find that the church and their faith help them in difficult times. Let your pastor, priest or other church members know what help is needed. You'll return the favour, when others ask for help.

---

"They were praying all over and that's why he's sitting there. ... I feel I have strength from up above to handle this."

"I got a call from a school where my niece lives, and she said--our whole school is praying for you. Well, that hits you!"

---

## Farmers who help farmers

Talk to other farmers. Many have been through similar challenges. They can give useful advice and support.

Manitoba Farmers with Disabilities (MFWD) can help find someone with a similar disability for you to talk with. This organization has members in all regions of the province. They offer practical information and suggestions. They have also gathered many success stories of people farming with a disability and publish a newsletter.

---

"There is a bank of information that is accessible there (FWDM). That's very important, I think. What we've done is to learn from other people as well, you know, so it's kind of a two way street."

---

In rural areas, there is a strong tradition of people giving back to the community. Helping others may also help you heal faster.

Farmers who have had an accident, long-term illness or disability often enjoy getting more involved in the community. Some give talks to schoolchildren about safety. Others talk to other farmers about ways to cope with disability.

## Get professional help

You can get confidential help to deal with personal, family, financial, and other issues, such as stress.

- ▶ Call the **Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line (MFRSL): 1-866-367-3276**. These professional counsellors with farming backgrounds will help you.
- ▶ A **booklet** called "Difficult Times: Stress on the Farm" helps you build skills for coping with stress. Contact the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line (MFRSL) or Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) for copies, or visit their websites.

- ▶ **Disability or disease organizations** know about the kinds of issues you face. Many offer counseling, help with skills that you need, and other information. Learning from them can help you understand and prepare for changes in life and work. See the resource list in this kit, or contact the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) for a complete list of disability organizations.

Website addresses are listed in the Roadmap to Services and Resources listing on page 23.



## Navigating Health Services

### Let community organizations be your guide

There are many organizations in the province that support people with certain disabilities or illnesses. They often help you find the community or government services that you need. They can help:

- coordinate other supports you may need (e.g. homecare, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and audiological therapy),
- provide referrals,
- supply informational materials,
- assess your individual needs, and
- connect you with support groups.

Although most of these organizations are located in Winnipeg, some have offices in various regions of the province. Many have staff who travel to deliver service. They also use the telephone or Internet to provide services.

Many resources are now available on websites. Some service providers are even webcasting events, workshops and group meetings. There are also support groups that connect by teleconference. These methods can help to reduce travel costs and inconvenience.

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“I went to the Multiple Sclerosis Society, just to learn more about the disease. And they send you every pamphlet in the book, you know. We got lots and lots of stuff, and still do. That was good.”

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Visiting family members in a city hospital can be costly. Most hospitals have low-cost residences where families of patients can stay (e.g. Lennox Bell for the Health Sciences Centre).

### **Participate in your own recovery**

Recovery can take a lot of time, effort and patience. If you follow your recovery plan carefully, you can speed your recovery and reduce the number of trips to the city.

It also helps to work closely with rehab therapists. Talk to them about the kinds of tasks you do in your work. Adjust your exercises to fit your needs.

You can also involve your spouse or another supportive family member in your therapy.

Expect quality care from your doctor. If you feel you are not getting enough information on your treatment or referrals to specialists, ask them questions. Look for help from other organizations, such as those that serve people with disabilities or certain illnesses.

## Do as much as you can with what you’ve got!”

### **Tips for Improving Daily Life**

#### **What you can and can’t do on your own**

There are many lessons to learn when a disability begins to affect your day to day life.

Farmers who have lost abilities due to aging, injury or illness advise that it is important to know your own limits. They say: “Ask for help when you need it!”

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“I don’t like asking people for help, but if I do there’s no problem. Do you know what I mean?”

“You have to listen to your body, or it’s going to stop on you.”

“Well, you have to stay within your means. If you know you have a mad animal there, you don’t go in there by yourself. You have to have respect for the situation. Sometimes, if I could do something myself, but I don’t trust it, I would rather call one of my workers. So you have to have a bit of judgment knowing where the lines are.”

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On the other hand, it is healthy to remain as independent as possible. Farmers say: “Do as much as you can with what you’ve got!”

You can benefit physically and emotionally by always trying to do a bit more for yourself. Rehabilitation and healing are slow. Patience and persistence pay off.

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“She wouldn’t give me the flipper for the TV, so I practiced a whole month to get it off the table myself.”

“Acknowledgement of personal limitations coupled with the recognition and control of hazards associated with each task performed will protect everyone in the agricultural workplace.”

(Source: G. Blahey, *Making Farming Safe for Senior Farmers*, 2002.)

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### **Get skills and support to help yourself**

You may feel that you lose independence when you develop a disability or age. Often you can regain independence when you learn new skills and listen to how others solve problems.

**Self-help groups** offer good advice that can help you with daily tasks. They offer practical information as well as social and emotional support.

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“I thought that [attending a support group] was a good thing to do because things pop up, like some things you never thought about. But there are so many different ideas, you know.”

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**The Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC)** offers a variety of supports that can help you to:

- develop skills for independent living,
- make contact with the services you want,
- make contact with other people who have similar challenges,
- fight for the services you need.

**Home Care** can help you with daily physical needs. They can also advise or train a family member on how to care for you. Home Care can also direct caregivers to **support groups**, and set up **respite care**. Your doctor, physiotherapist or

occupational therapist can connect you with this service. Contact your local regional health authority to find out if you are eligible for this program.

### **Special equipment for daily life**

Special equipment is available to help you with many daily activities. This equipment can help you get around your home and community, play sports, or drive your car. Find the equipment you need, with help from these resources:

- ▶ Your **occupational therapist** will know where you can get equipment and how to cut costs. Some devices are cheaper in hardware stores than in medical supply stores. Research, compare, then shop.
- ▶ **The Society of Manitobans with Disabilities** lends items such as wheelchairs.
- ▶ **Organizations for specific disabilities** may rent or sell special devices. They also have catalogues of useful equipment.
- ▶ **Medical equipment suppliers** can give you information about devices or helpful strategies. Find a list of local suppliers in your telephone directory or contact your local regional health authority.
- ▶ The **Internet** or the **public library** can give you information to compare different designs and costs. You can do your own search using some of these terms:
  - Aids to Daily Living
  - Assistive Technology
  - Home Health Equipment
  - Rehabilitation Products
  - Driving Aids
  - Lift/Transfer Systems
  - Prosthetic (artificial limb) Devices

## **Change your home to fit your needs**

You may need to make some changes to your home, workspaces, and landscaping. These changes can improve your quality of life.

Home Assessments:

- ▶ Rehabilitation therapists can visit your home to assess the need for changes.
- ▶ Some organizations, such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (**CNIB**), also offer home assessments.

Some features that can help you function in and around home include:

- no steps or curb between an entrance and the driveway or road,
- ramps instead of steps,
- hand rails,
- wider doorways (e.g. 32 inches accommodates a wheelchair),
- an accessible bathroom and bedroom on the main floor,
- fewer walls/divisions for more wide spaces, and
- lower shelving/storage spaces.

These features may also help other family members or visitors to your home who have injuries, are aging, or have small children. Some renovations can be expensive, but may increase the resale value of your home.

If you need to build a new home, you may be eligible for a GST rebate that applies to a wide variety of costs.

Disability organizations often have information about grants, rebates, and tax deductions.



## **Challenge barriers to access in the community**

Please let businesses or institutions know about problems you have using their facilities. Problems with parking, entering, or using their washroom should be mentioned to them.

You raise awareness and improve service for yourself and others when you speak up. And why not?

Government is obligated to make public buildings and structures accessible.

For businesses, better access means more customers for their goods and services. Your suggestions help improve their service.

## **Driving**

After an injury, you may need a driver's test to see if you are able to safely continue driving. The test is arranged through the Driver Assessment and Management Program (DAMP).

To apply for the program, you or your doctor must contact the Driver Vehicle and Licensing (DVL) Medical Records Department for the necessary forms.

Your doctor must fill the forms out and return them to DVL. They may ask you to fulfill other requirements.



Once those have been met, they will refer you to the occupational therapy department at the Health Sciences Centre. The department will call you to schedule an appointment for your test.

Farmers say, “Don’t give up if you fail a driving test!”

If you can solve the problem that prevented you from passing the test, you can return for a retest. Sometimes it pays to challenge the system.

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“It took about a month and a half, two months, to get my license back. Well, I was pretty persistent. I’m a pain in the neck if I want something”

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## **Farming Smarter, Not Harder**

### **Change your tools/equipment**

There are many assistive devices, tools and equipment that can help you to continue your work on the farm. There are also resources to help modify these to fit your specific needs.

**Rehabilitation Engineering** at Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre adapts almost any device, equipment, or vehicle that can be brought in to their shop. Farmers can also get advice from engineers on how to do their own modifications.

All Manitobans can access the department directly or by referral from their rehabilitation agency, therapist, or doctor. Clients pay for services, though some services may be covered by an insurance program.

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“I had some braces made up for me, and I could get on and off the swather at that time. I guess I used that for three or four years and was able to swath most of the crop, not all of it. So that worked for me. At that time I had a half ton and the vehicle I had was a car. It was adapted with hand controls. They do that at the rehab engineering.”

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Many farmers have relied on their own abilities to remodel and re-invent what they need.

Manitoba Farmers with Disabilities of Manitoba (MFWD) is preparing a catalogue of modifications to farm equipment. They gather information from farmers who have successfully modified hand tools and equipment. Their members can also share simple tips for how to solve problems and use tools differently.

The US based AgrAbility program provides a lot of information on their website about useful assistive devices and changes you can make to your farm, tools and equipment.

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“You learn how to do things differently. You make things up. You use tools differently. I sure use them different than I did before, which you have to.”

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There are also new technologies that people with disabilities can make use of. Organizations that serve people with specific disabilities often have information on devices that help their clients. You may also find your own creative ways to put new technologies to work for you on the farm (e.g. Global Positioning Systems).

## Change how you farm

There are a number of changes you can make that can enable you to continue farming after an injury, illness or disability.

- ▶ Consider a change to the crops you grow. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) have staff who specialize in providing advice on such changes.

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“Never give up. Try something different.”

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- ▶ Consider modifying the physical layout of the farmyard. This may help you continue working effectively.
- ▶ Consider scaling back your operation. Once you adapt to your new circumstances, you may find you are able to expand your operation.
- ▶ Consider hiring help to do the physical work. This will allow you to continue with those tasks you can do, or to focus on managing the farm. Although finding suitable help can be a challenge, it is worth the effort as it can make the difference between leaving and staying on the farm.

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“Take it one day at a time. Don’t make any hasty decisions to quit farming right today, but get good help.”

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“That fall, I couldn’t have any of the equipment modified, so that I could do any of the work. So I had to hire extra help that fall to get the crop off. And it worked fine. We got the crop off and everything-- everything fell into place.”

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## The Hardest Question - To Farm or Not to Farm

### Should you keep farming, or not?

You are the only one who knows what decision is best for you. Much depends on your mental and physical health, attitude, your energy level, and what supports and resources you have.

Others may make assumptions on what you can or can’t do. The decision is yours. Thankfully, advisors are available to give you information that can help you make your decision.

Before you decide, consider all of your options. What might they mean to you and your family? Get financial advice.

If you decide to apply for CPP disability insurance, you will be assessed for what work you can perform. Do not quit, if your application is turned down. Farmers report that repeated applications to CPP may be necessary before you are successful.

Farmers often face challenges in finding work other than farming. They often feel they lack experience and training in other areas. However, farmers have many important skills. They have management and problem solving skills. They also have the ability to be creative entrepreneurs.

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“You got to use what you got.”

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If you’re not sure what work you can now do, get a skills assessment. **Employment Manitoba Centres and the Canadian Agricultural Skills Services Program** offer this service. Both also offer a wide variety of training opportunities.

New capabilities may help you to continue farming, stay on the farm while doing other work, or find work off the farm.

Many farmers experience depression when they are temporarily or permanently unable to work. It is not a good idea to make the decision to leave farming while you are feeling depressed.

Depression can affect your thoughts about the decision. Get help from a doctor or counsellor before deciding on your future.

If you decide to leave the farm for other work, you may have to move to town or the city. Many farmers comment that they have trouble meeting people and acquiring new friends. It often takes a lot of work on their part. However, making new friends can also be an exciting and positive experience.

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“We could not afford to feel sorry for ourselves. We had to make new friends.”

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Whether you wish to keep the farm in your family or sell to someone outside the family, you can get help with your plans. **Manitoba Agriculture’s ‘Go Team’** staff can help with succession and transition planning.

The best advice on making a decision comes from another farmer:

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“You’ve got to make up your mind and don’t look back. It doesn’t matter if you’re going to a job or if you’re going to take on farming. You just have to make up your mind that you’re going to do it and it’s going to make it a lot easier.”

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For those who decide to leave the farm, farmers who have done the same will tell you:

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“There is life after farming”.

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“Well you know, you’ve got things to live for, look forward to. I guess your attitude helps a lot.”

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# “Roadmap” to Services and Resources

This list includes many services and resources that may be helpful for farmers with disabilities and their families. It is not a complete list nor a referral list.

Resources are listed in alphabetical order. The topics printed in bold text may help you to quickly find the kind of resource you need.



Website addresses may have changed since publication. If so, please contact the organization directly or use an Internet browser to find the new website.

Please contact the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies with any additions or corrections to this list.

Agency/Organization	Resource Description	Contact Information and Website
AgrAbility	<b>Recovery assistance (on-line):</b> A lot of practical information and supportive suggestions, e.g. to adapt farm equipment, tips on home modifications.	Web: <a href="http://www.agrabilityproject.org">www.agrabilityproject.org</a>
Alzheimer Society	<b>Alzheimer's disease:</b> Information, supports, and new knowledge about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.	Toll-Free: 1.800.378.6699 Web: <a href="http://www.alzheimer.mb.ca">www.alzheimer.mb.ca</a>
Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba (ADAM)	<b>Mental health-anxiety:</b> Cognitive behavioral groups, ongoing support groups, information and referral service, education and public awareness.	Tel: 204.822.3999 Web: <a href="http://www.adam.mb.ca">www.adam.mb.ca</a>
Arthritis Society, Manitoba	<b>Arthritis information:</b> Referral, information on forms of arthritis, treatment and coping skills, links to support group or Arthritis Self Management Program.	Toll-Free: 1.800.321.1433 Web: <a href="http://www.arthritis.ca">www.arthritis.ca</a>
Canada Revenue Agency	<b>Financial information:</b> Information on tax deductions, credits and exemptions that may apply to persons with disabilities.	Web: <a href="http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/individuals/segments/disabilities/menu-e.html">www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/individuals/segments/disabilities/menu-e.html</a>
Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA)	<b>Networking &amp; funding:</b> National coordination and networking on farm safety. Funds injury/fatality prevention projects. Conducts injury/fatality surveillance.	Tel: 204.452.2272 Web: <a href="http://www.casa-acsa.ca">www.casa-acsa.ca</a>
Canadian Agricultural Skills Service (CASS)	<b>Funding:</b> Funds training to improve farm practices, off-farm employment, and increase income.	Toll-Free: 1.866.668.2277 Web Manitoba site: <a href="http://www.pcfdc.mb.ca/site/projects/cass.htm">www.pcfdc.mb.ca/site/projects/cass.htm</a> ; Web National site: <a href="http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/goc/cass.shtml">www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/goc/cass.shtml</a>
Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation	<b>Heart health:</b> Information on heart disease and stroke, testing, treatment, tips for prevention, local events, and CPR training.	Tel: 204.949.2000 Web: <a href="http://www.heartandstroke.ca">www.heartandstroke.ca</a>

Agency/Organization	Resource Description	Contact Information and Website
Canadian Mental Health Association Manitoba Division	<b>Mental health information and support:</b> Peer support, community education and advocacy	Tel: 204.239.6590 Web: <a href="http://www.manitoba.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=284-683-760-1115&amp;pre=view">www.manitoba.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=284-683-760-1115&amp;pre=view</a>
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)	<b>Recover assistance - blindness:</b> Vocational counselling, employment preparation, task analysis, help finding and keeping a job, other services that support independent living.	Toll-Free: 1.800.552.4893; TTY Deaf Access Line: 204.775.9802 Web: <a href="http://www.cnib.ca/community/manitoba/services/index.htm">www.cnib.ca/community/manitoba/services/index.htm</a>
Canadian Paraplegic Association	<b>Recovery assistance-spine injury:</b> Provides vocational rehabilitation, peer support, counseling, information, supports for independent living, help finding accommodation, employment and recreation for people with spinal chord injuries.	Tel: 204.786.4753 Web: <a href="http://www.cpamanitoba.ca">www.cpamanitoba.ca</a>
Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD), Human Resources and Social Development Canada	<b>Recovery and income assistance:</b> Vocational Rehabilitation Program.	Toll-Free: 1.800.277.9914 Web: <a href="http://www.sdc.gc.ca">www.sdc.gc.ca</a> (Follow the Policy and Programs link to find CPP information)
Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)	<b>Self-employment assistance:</b> Self-employment benefit. Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program.	See website for regional offices. Web: <a href="http://www.wd.gc.ca/pos/cfdc/xindex_e.asp">www.wd.gc.ca/pos/cfdc/xindex_e.asp</a>
CONTACT Community Information	<b>Services information (on-line/print):</b> Complete listing of community resources in Manitoba. Produced by Volunteer Manitoba.	Toll Free: 1.866.COM.INFO (266.4636) Web: <a href="http://cms00asa1.winnipeg.ca/crc/crc">cms00asa1.winnipeg.ca/crc/crc</a>
Employment and Income Assistance (EIA)	<b>Financial assistance:</b> Income Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Program provides financial and employment assistance for adults with a disability and who are receiving EIA benefits.	Toll-free: 1.888.310.0568 After-hours emergency: 1.866.559.6778 Web: <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eiafacts/iapd.html">www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eiafacts/iapd.html</a>
Farm Credit Canada	<b>Financial assistance:</b> AgrAssurance program insures loans for disability and death; level of loan forgiveness adjusted to degree of impairment.	Toll-Free: 1.800.387.3232 Web: <a href="http://www.fcc-fac.ca">www.fcc-fac.ca</a>

Agency/Organization	Resource Description	Contact Information and Website
Farm Machinery Board	<b>Financial information:</b> Warranty and repossession protection on farm machinery and equipment purchased or leased in Manitoba	Tel: 204.945.3856 Web: <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/programs">www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/programs</a> (Follow links to Boards, Commissions and Legislation)
Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC)	<b>Recovery assistance:</b> Information and referral, peer support, independent living skills, self advocacy, disability awareness, leisure and recreation, community living, employment, attendant supports, multi-media communications, online learning and training, CPP disability information, lawyer referral, and transitional supports. <b>On-line services:</b> Technology based learning network offers live and archived access to information and learning opportunities via web conferencing.	Toll-Free: 1.800.663.3043 Web: <a href="http://www.ilrc.mb.ca">www.ilrc.mb.ca</a>
Injured and Disabled Workers Centre (IDWC)	<b>Financial assistance:</b> Helps people with problems related to disability benefits and insurance.	Toll-Free: 1.800.550.2968 Web: <a href="http://www.injuredworkers.mb.ca">www.injuredworkers.mb.ca</a>
Lung Association of Manitoba	<b>Lung disease information:</b> Information on lung/respiratory diseases, stop smoking programs, practical tips on improving air quality in your home.	Toll-Free: 1.888.262.5864 Web: <a href="http://www.mb.lung.ca">www.mb.lung.ca</a>
Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC)	<b>Financial information:</b> Financial risk management, loan guarantees, loans for a rural business.	Web: <a href="http://www.masc.mb.ca">www.masc.mb.ca</a>
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI), Farm Safety	<b>Farm safety:</b> Information on safety and risk management on the farm. Includes articles, a searchable resource database, and special resources for kids.	Web: <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/farmsafety">www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/farmsafety</a>



Agency/Organization	Resource Description	Contact Information and Website
Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI), Growing Opportunity Teams (GO Teams)	<b>Farm Management Assistance:</b> Support agricultural production, farm safety, community development, networking and support.	Web: <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/contact/agoffices.htm">www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/contact/agoffices.htm</a> Contact local office 1.800.282.8069 for the provincial directory. Check for other local addresses.
Manitoba Department of Education and Training	<b>Employment/Training:</b> Employment counselling, skills assessments, referrals, job search assistance, and information on training options.	Web: <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/employment">www.gov.mb.ca/employment</a>
Manitoba Family Services and Housing	<b>Recovery assistance:</b> Vocational Rehabilitation: counselling, assessments, job search, training, job placements. Funds: disability-related education expenses, sign language interpretation, special equipment, changes to buildings or vehicles. Many other services for personal with disability.	Web: <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/pwd/voc_rehab.html">www.gov.mb.ca/fs/pwd/voc_rehab.html</a>
Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line (MFRSL)	<b>Mental health &amp; stress:</b> Offers confidential support, counseling, information and referrals to farm families on a wide variety of financial, personal, relationship, addiction and mental health concerns related to farm and rural stress. <b>Rural services list (on-line):</b> The Rural Database: A listing of programs and services for rural Manitobans is linked to the MFRSL website.	Toll-Free: 1.866.367.3276 (1.866.FOR-FARM) Web: <a href="http://www.ruralstress.ca">www.ruralstress.ca</a>
Manitoba Farm Mediation Board	<b>Financial information:</b> Mediation between farmers and creditors, help planning farm finance/management changes. Financial support in the form of financial guarantees.	Toll-Free: 1.800.282.8069 Web: <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/programs">www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/programs</a> (Follow links to Boards, Commissions and Legislation)

Agency/Organization	Resource Description	Contact Information and Website
Manitoba Farmers with Disabilities (MFDW)	<b>Recovery assistance:</b> Peer support, on-line newsletter, library resources, farm safety information, information on tool/equipment modification.	Office hours tel: 204.436.3181 After hours tel: 204.436.2554
Manitoba Government Inquiry & Government of Manitoba Phonebook (on-line)	<b>Government services (phone):</b> Information and referral service to government of Manitoba programs and services. Bilingual. <b>Government services (on-line):</b> Directory of Government Organizations. Search by community.	Toll Free: 1.866.MANITOBA (1-866.626.4862)  Web: web2.gov.mb.ca/contact
Manitoba Seniors' Guide	<b>Seniors' services list (on-line):</b> resource guide to government programs for seniors.	Web: www.gov.mb.ca/shas/pdf/seniors_guide_07.pdf
Manitoba Schizophrenia Society	<b>Schizophrenia information and support:</b> Consultation and support groups, public education and awareness	Tel: 204.362.3027 Web: www.mss.mb.ca
Manitoba Women's Institute	<b>Community &amp; women's support:</b> Community initiatives/action, support women's personal development, rural development, family agriculture.	Tel: 204.945.8976 Web: www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/organizations/wi/
Mood Disorder Association of Manitoba	<b>Mental health:</b> Peer support, information and advocacy	Toll-Free: 1.800.263.1460 Web: www.depression.mb.ca

Agency/Organization	Resource Description	Contact Information and Website
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada	<b>Multiple Sclerosis information and support:</b> Support, information, referral, education, advocacy and some funding for persons with Multiple Sclerosis and their families.	Toll-Free: 1.800.268.7582 Web: www.msociety.ca; www.msociety.ca/manitoba; www.msforkids.com; www.msforteens.com; www.msforparents.com
Osteoporosis Canada, Manitoba Chapter	<b>Osteoporosis information and support:</b> Information on osteoporosis, disease prevention, testing, treatment, programs, resources and reference materials, links to support and self-help groups	Toll Free English: 1.800.463.6842 Toll Free French: 1.800.977.1778 Tel: 204.772.3498 Web: www.osteoporosis.ca
Parkinson Society of Manitoba	<b>Parkinson's disease information and support:</b> Source of alternative therapy, counselling, education, exercise, research and advocacy.	Toll free: 1.866.999.5558 Web: www.parkinson.ca
Persons with Disabilities OnLine	<b>Recovery information (on-line):</b> Information on accessibility, assistive technology, health & safety, housing, income tax benefits, learning and skills development, recreation and more.	Web: www.pwd-online.ca
Public Safety Canada	<b>Farm safety:</b> A list and links to all farm safety publications and fact sheets, produced in Canada.	Web: www.safecanada.ca Follow links to Workplace Safety, then Farm Safety
Regional Health Authority	<b>Recovery assistance:</b> Health Care. Examples: Rehabilitation therapies; Home care; mental health services; Addictions treatment; Etc.	Web: www.rham.mb.ca Find contact information for each regional office.

Agency/Organization	Resource Description	Contact Information and Website
Rehabilitation Centre for Children	<b>Children's recovery assistance:</b> Rehabilitation services for children with physical or developmental disabilities. Provide direct service, education, and do research. Provide prosthetics and adaptive equipment.	Tel: 204.452.4311 Web: www.rccinc.ca
Rehabilitation Engineering, Health Sciences Centre	Helps clients who are physically challenged due to aging, injury or diseases to achieve the highest possible level of independence through the use of orthotic, electronic, mechanical, and assistive technology devices. Includes two divisions: Orthotic Division and Electronic and Mechanical Assistive Technologies Division (EMAT).	Reception: 204.787.2202 Electronics Section: 204.787.2367 Mechanical Section: 204.787.2370 Orthotic Devices: 204.787.2202 Web: www.hsc.mb.ca/re/
Resource Centre for Manitobans who are Deaf/Blind	<b>Deaf/Blind assistance:</b> Teach independent living skills, provide information on Deaf-Blind issues and support services, networking, public education.	TTY: (204) 284.2531; Voice 1.800.855.0511 Web: www.rcmdb.mb.ca
Seniors Information Line	<b>Seniors' services referral (phone):</b> Information about seniors' programs and services.	Toll Free: 1.800.665.6565 Web: www.gov.mb.ca/shas/
Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, Central Region	<b>Disability assistance:</b> Vocational rehabilitation. Employment Preparation Centre. Assessments done. Service for both employees & employers. Parking permits wheelchair loan, travel accommodation.	Toll Free: 1.866.282.8041 TTY: 1.800.225.9108 Web: www.smd.mb.ca/ Offices in several regions.
Workers Compensation Board Manitoba	<b>Recovery assistance:</b> Vocational rehabilitation is included in policy benefits package	Toll-Free: 1.800.362.3340 Web: www.wcb.mb.ca/workers/vocational_rehabilitation.html
WORKink Manitoba	<b>Employment information (on-line):</b> Employment resource centre for job seekers with disabilities.	Web: www.workink.com
Workplace Safety and Health Division, Manitoba Labour	<b>Farm Safety:</b> Several resources, including the "Farm Family Walkabout Guide", safety check lists, and fact sheets.	Toll-free: 1.800.282.8069 Web: www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/agriculture.html

# Project Background

## Aims & Objectives

This project began in 2006 with meetings among the staff of organizations and agencies that serve farmers and people with disabilities. This group aimed to learn about the needs of farm families affected by disability, identify helpful services and supports, and build a resource kit to serve the farm community.

The objectives for the kit are to:

1. To offer disabled farmers and their families information about practices and services that help in daily life and the return to work;
2. To help service providers better understand the needs of farm families and better coordinate services to them;
3. To build awareness among other community members of their role in making farm life safe and healthy.



## Partners:

- ▶ The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) brought together many people and organizations for an action-oriented research project that could improve supports for farmers with disabilities.
- ▶ Faculty from the University of Manitoba's Department of Occupational Therapy partnered with CCDS to improve knowledge on the best ways to help farmers return to farming.
- ▶ Several organizations that serve persons with disability or farmers formed an Advisory Group, which provided input on every stage of the project. (See the inside back cover for a list of members.)
- ▶ The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) funded the project to promote injury prevention, build awareness of insurance and disability programs, increase voluntary access to programs, and to support the agriculture community, particularly the family farm.

## Activities

Background information was gathered from:

- advisory group members (including farmers and service providers),
- published articles on related topics, and
- websites or other public information on services for farmers and disabled people.

Project staff conducted a focus group and interviews with 16 farmers and farm family members affected by injury, long-term illness or disability. Five of the interviews conducted in

farm homes included both husband and wife. The farmers ranged in age from 47 - 75 years old. Staff also held focus groups with 21 rural service providers. All participants were from South Central Manitoba. Both groups provided first-hand information about services, resources, good practices, and challenges.

The data from these sources were organized into the following categories:

- challenges for farmers and farm families;
- barriers and gaps in services;
- available services, supports and resources;
- good practices suggested by farmers or service providers; and
- suggestions for how to design and distribute the resource kit.

Staff produced a **pilot resource kit** using the data.

## Feedback

Staff and researchers pilot tested the **Healthy Farmers, Healthy Communities Resource Kit** with:

- farmers and their family members in the South Central region,
- service providers in this region,
- advisory group members, and
- research team members.

The pilot resource kit was printed and distributed, to gather more feedback from other Manitobans.

This feedback will help to improve resources for farm families.

## Outcomes

Key project outcomes and products include:

- the **Healthy Farmers, Healthy Communities Resource Kit**,
- a full report on the project, including a literature review and environmental scan, and
- a stronger network of organizations that serve farmers and persons with disabilities.

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