

MISSOURI ARTHRITIS REHABILITATION RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER (MARRTC) and MISSOURI AGRABILITY PROJECT (MAP) Assisting Farmers with Arthritis

Arthritis and related musculoskeletal conditions are the leading cause of disability in the United States today. In fact, arthritis is a major cause of work disability and is also the most common reason given by adults between the ages 40 and 75 for limitations in their physical activities and restrictions in their activities of daily life. In

reality, arthritis is a potentially disabling condition for anyone with these diseases, but the impact of arthritis on people living in rural communities is often even more severe. The rural, agricultural environment presents major physical challenges for persons with arthritis, both at home and on the job.

The MARRTC/Missouri AgrAbility Farmers with Arthritis Project work closely together to meet the needs of persons with arthritis-related disabilities in rural/agricultural communities.

PROBLEMS



Pain when mounting his Farmall 300 due to position of the seat and steps.



Pain and knee and back fatigue resulting from poor positioning in the seat of the IHC 766.



Pain in knees, back, shoulders, and neck due to repetitive twisting and reaching motion necessary for PTO shut-off on the IHC 766 while seated.

SOLUTIONS

The MARRTC/AgrAbility staff offer:

- education and assistance to help identify ways to accommodate arthritis on the farm,
- analysis of work tasks,
- specific ideas for safe, affordable modifications or solutions.

Services

Assistance includes:

- assessing work site,
- suggesting equipment modifications,
- analyzing work tasks,
- providing guidance on how to restructure work tasks,
- identifying ways to prevent secondary injury, and
- on-going follow up.

Indirect services include:

- providing arthritis related information,
- continuing on-going relationship with farmer and farm family, and
- promoting arthritis awareness to the general public.



The Wetherell family standing in beside the modified IHC 766.



Flock of sheep in grazing on the Wetherell farm.



William operating the IHC 766 after it was modified as per the MARRTC staff suggestions.

SUCCESS STORY

William Wetherell assists part time on the family livestock and grain operation. He contacted the MARRTC Farmers with Arthritis Project because he was having problems with pain and fatigue due to his osteoarthritis. MARRTC staff suggested options for mounting the tractor; installed a metal grate on steps and platform of the tractor to provide better traction; fabricated a longer handle for the PTO lever to reach the right-side of the tractor seat; and demonstrated proper body mechanics for shoveling. As a result of assistance from MARRTC, William has been able to significantly reduce the discomfort levels he previously experienced using his Farmall 300 and IHC 766 tractors. "I was surprised that simple modifications combined with small changes in daily routines and habits could result in so much improvement in comfort for me while I am operating these tractors."