

## California AgrAbility Project

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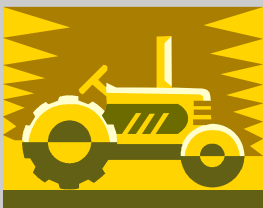
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*A partnership between the  
University of California Farm  
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## Our Toll Free Numbers!

**1-888-877-3257, ext 117  
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## Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

### Farming With A Traumatic Brain Injury

Farming after a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) can be very difficult. The symptoms can make everyday routine farm tasks hard to remember or possibly dangerous to perform. Traumatic brain injuries can often go unnoticed. For this reason TBI has been referred to as the "silent epidemic".

California AgrAbility staff helps farmers and workers with TBI to identify potential hazards and to avoid further injury. The program assists farmers and their families to continue working safely.

Symptoms can include a loss of memory, weakness,

balance and coordination difficulties, speech and language problems, difficulty with spatial acuity, loss of control of emotion and depression. If you or someone you know is experiencing these symptoms seek medical attention. All of these symptoms can make farming tasks very difficult or dangerous.

CalAgrAbility staff can help find ways to modify routines and equipment. For instance, a farmer with memory loss may use a list or a clipboard to mark off tasks as they are completed. This method can be used in

maintaining and operating equipment. A picture of the equipment, with areas highlighted or color-coded can help ensure that equipment is properly maintained and parts that need cleaning or checking are not forgotten or overlooked. Color-coding can also help with feeding livestock. Barrels and scoops for different livestock and amounts can be in different colors. For farmers with spatial difficulties, colors and markers on fences or posts can give farmers boundary indicators.

*Continued on page 2*



**National Farm Safety  
and Health Week  
September 19-25, 2004**

"The Nation's Salad Bowl," California, is so named because of its bountiful agricultural resources and diversity of crops. California produces more than 350 commodities, including an array of specialty crops. In fact, 31 million acres are carpeted by California's agricultural bounty. And, like any large industry, farming has its share of dangers and is in the top three most hazardous industries in the nation. CalAgrAbility data show there are 20,000 disabling injuries

each year on California farms and 70 deaths. Many believe there are many more unreported incidents. Injuries span the severity spectrum, i.e., repetitive motions can cause injury to shoulders, backs, arms, wrists, and hands. Back, spine, and spinal cord injuries are common as are sprains, strains, and cuts to legs, ankles and feet. And injuries to the head, skull and cranial regions often occur working around large animals and

machinery. California AgrAbility reminds everyone who works on farms about the importance of safety practices that can save lives and reduce injuries. Never start a tractor from the ground and never take riders. Install safety guards and retrofits on farm machinery. Store chemicals properly and according to regulations. Keep drinking water close by and stay hydrated on these hot summer days. Use your common safety sense.



## Events

### Upcoming Events

September 12 - 14, 2004  
"Cultivating a Sustainable  
Agricultural Workplace"  
McMenamins Edgefield,  
Troutdale, Oregon  
[http://depts.washington.edu/  
pnash/conf04/](http://depts.washington.edu/pnash/conf04/)

September 14, 2004  
9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.  
"Push/Pull & Other Material  
Handling"  
The Safety Center, Inc.  
3909 Bradshaw Road,  
Sacramento, CA 95827  
For on-line registration and  
more information, visit  
[http://www.mostsafety.com/  
ergort.html](http://www.mostsafety.com/ergort.html)  
or contact George Johnson at  
(800) 443-4206.

October 14-17, 2004  
California Association of  
Rehabilitation and  
Reemployment Professionals  
2004 Annual Conference  
"Retooling The Industry"  
Radison Miyako Hotel  
San Francisco, CA  
For on-line registration and  
more information, visit  
[www.carrp.org/visitors.asp](http://www.carrp.org/visitors.asp)  
or call (415) 922-3200.

**We're on the Web!**

*See us at:*

<http://calagrability.ucdavis.edu/>

## Farming With a TBI *cont.*

For individuals with balance or coordination difficulties, ladders are not recommended. Ladders can be economically replaced with stairs on silos or grain bins. Uneven surfaces can be evened out to make paths or walkways more accessible.

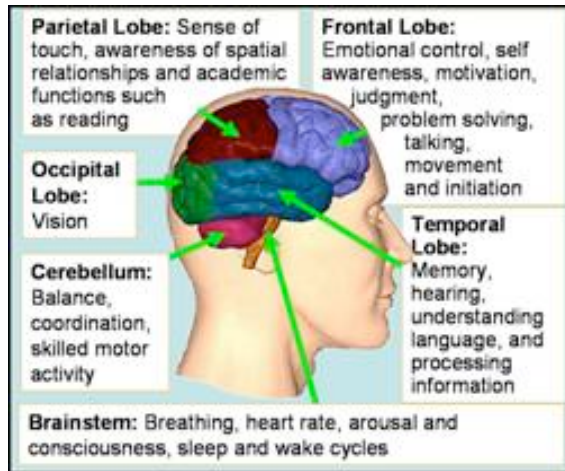
CalAgrAbility staff conducts on site farm assessments and identifies where assistance may be beneficial by suggesting alternative ways of performing farm tasks, and/or modifying equipment or systems. After assessment CalAgrAbility provides referrals for equipment modification, healthcare and rehab, peer support, and even stress management.

Sometimes there are serious concerns about safety and ability to operate agricultural equipment, or to perform farm tasks. Having a co-worker work alongside a farmer with TBI or handling the tasks or equipment will ensure a safer working environment. Excerpts and diagram below taken from the National AgrAbility July 2004 Newsletter. To read the whole article and for more information visit:

[www.agrabilityproject.org/newsletter/july\\_2004/2.cfm](http://www.agrabilityproject.org/newsletter/july_2004/2.cfm)

Common difficulties manifested by a TBI affect one or more of the following functional areas:

- Cognitive: thinking, attending, problem solving, judgment, initiating actions
- Memory: storing or retrieving information
- Perceptual: sensory and spatial relationship limitations
- Motor: weakness, balance and coordination, endurance, flexibility
- Speech and Language: understanding and/or expressing
- Emotional: lack of emotional control, self-awareness, impulsivity, depression



***Did You Know.....***



*A cow stands up and lies down about 14 times a day.*

### ***About CalAgrAbility ...***

The California AgrAbility Project began in 2002 and is part of a nationwide network of USDA-funded Farm Bill programs. CalAgrAbility's primary goal is to help farmers, agricultural workers, ranchers and their families to continue working in agriculture regardless of physical limitations, impairments and disabilities. Staff will help conduct on-site assessments and identify appropriate assistive technologies to make the job safer and easier. For more information visit our website.

**1-800-477-6129**

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