

Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

California AgrAbility Project

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*A partnership between the
University of California Farm
Safety Program (Cooperative
Extension) and Easter Seals
Superior California.*

Call Toll Free

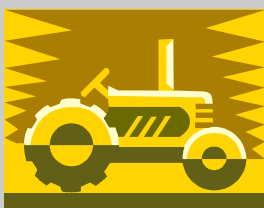
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Off the Beaten Path

Strategies for Transportation in Rural Communities

For more than 50 years, California has been the number one food and agricultural producer in the US. The State's farm output is nearly \$25 billion a year. So transportation in rural California is essential for moving goods. But most farm families will tell you that is only half of the story.

Farm communities are challenging environments for folks with transportation needs. Many CalAgrAbility consumers find that the usual methods of travel in urban areas are either unreliable or non-existent in farm communities. Isolated county roads usually do not include bus routes, sidewalks, or guard rails creating an inconvenience as well as safety concerns.

CalAgrAbility research found that nationally, 58%+ of all road deaths occur in rural areas. The rural fatality rate per 100 million travel miles is over twice that of urban areas. This could be due to rugged terrain, shortened sightlines, unforgiving roadways, speed, longer response times, and distance to medical help (California Transportation Plan 2025).

California's rural areas comprise 94% of the land



Figure 1: Claire tends her sheep on her Northern California ranch. Having transportation to run her own errands is key to her independence.

and have 46% of the road miles (US Dept. of Transportation, Highway Statistics). In addition, ag areas have a disproportionate number of residents living with disabilities. Twice as many rural Californians rely on Social Security disability benefits than non-rural ones (The Institute for America's Future, 2005).

As an example, Clair is a CalAgrAbility consumer living with multiple disabilities in rural Northern California (Figure 1). To reach the nearest town with essential services 30-40 miles away, Clair must use winding, steep Highway 49 (Figure 3). According to Clair, "The bus only runs twice a day and stops two miles from my place. We sometimes ask our neighbors for rides or to pick up things for us when they go in to town."

Events

Upcoming Events

October 17-21, 2006
24th Annual Closing the Gap Conference
Learn innovative Assistive Technologies
Minneapolis, MN
www.closingthegap.com

November 3-5, 2006
Northern California Abilities Expo
Santa Clara CA Convention Center
<http://noc.abilitiesexpo.com/aenoc/v42/index.cvn>

November 9-11, 2006
The 16th Annual Midwest Stream Farmworker Health Forum
Hotel Albuquerque
Albuquerque, New Mexico
http://www.ncfh.org/00_clt_mwfsf.php

December 4-6, 2006
California State Rural Health Association's 6th Annual Rural Health Conference
Doubletree Hotel
2001 Point West Way
Sacramento, Ca 95815
pgonzalez@csrha.org or (916) 453-0780 ext. 222.



We're on the Web!

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

Need a Lift...?

Like Clair, farmers and workers with disabilities travel long distances to get farm supplies. There are additional needs for travel to doctors, pharmacies, or just to connect with other ranchers and friends. Recognizing needs is important as mobility is the key to sustaining independence.

The ability to get into town or just go outside of the farm area reduces the chance of becoming isolated. CalAgrAbility encourages maintaining mobility and "travelability" because it reduces the likelihood of isolation, depression and diminished self-determination, and ill health (AARP, 2005).

Feelings of loneliness are found to be associated with diabetes, heart disease, ulcers, respiratory conditions, headache, low back and abdominal pains (National Advisory Council on Aging).

Recognizing these issues, some rural communities are trying innovative means to provide transportation. For instance, CalAgrAbility has helped consumers use Paratransit (Figure 2) in Sacramento County, which offers "mobility training." Mobility Training provides assistance to folks learning how to ride Regional Transit and light rail. Riders using wheelchairs or scooters learn to travel independently and to maneuver mobility aids on buses/vans.



Figure 2: Paratransit in Sacramento County (Photo: www.paratransit.org)



Figure 3: This rural stretch of Highway 49 in Nevada County is an example of how difficult rural driving can be. Note the narrow lanes, lack of sidewalk and sharp turns with little forward visibility. (Photo Courtesy of Pashnit.com)

More Events

January 26 – 28, 2007
16th Annual Western Migrant Stream Forum
Sacramento, Ca
www.nwrpca.org

February 22-24, 2007.
The Active Living Research Fourth Annual Conference
Coronado Island Marriott Resort in Coronado, CA
http://www.activelivingresearch.org/index.php/Conference/7

SPECIAL SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE! CALL 530-752-2606!

March 4-6, 2007
20th California Farm Conference
Monterey, CA
http://www.californiafarmconference.com

April 14-15, 2007
Unite For Sight's Fourth Annual International Health Conference
Stanford University School Of Medicine, CA
http://www.uniteforsight.org/2007_annual_conference.php



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Ramp it up!

CalAgrAbility finds that other communities use buses with lifts and ramps allowing wheelchair users and scooters to board with little assistance. Some have "kneeling buses" equipped with an accessibility feature that lowers the entrance of the bus to curb-side-level, so that persons in wheelchairs board smoothly. Similarly, the low-floor buses use accessible ramps for riders with wheelchairs, walkers, shopping carts and strollers (Figures 4,5,6).

The California Rural Transit Assistance program subsidizes individuals to provide transportation services to their neighbors. For instance, in Grass Valley, CA, a local who modified his van for his mother runs the Precious Cargo program. After she passed, he decided to provide rides to others in his community.



Figures 4 and 5: Ramps and lifts are used in public transit (Photo Ricon™ www.riconcorp.com)



Innovation Happens:

A Case of People Making a Difference in One County

The Transportation Reimbursement and Information Project (TRIP) is a non-profit organization serving the Riverside County area. The program financially compensates volunteers who transport folks without access to public transit or who cannot ride public buses due to their disability. TRIP encourages existing volunteers to recruit new drivers. Staff also provide counseling and peer support to the people they serve, teaching them independent living skills for the home and for getting around in their community.

Their mission is also to improve existing travel systems through advocacy and public education. This allows them to be the county's "one stop" coordinator for transportation. They are funded through government grants, foundations and charitable contributions.



Figure 6: Ford TeraTransit vans are commonly used to meet transportation needs. (Photo courtesy of A-ZBus.com)

More Information

United We Ride
<http://www.unitedweride.gov>

California Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/rtap.htm>

AARP Bulletin: State-by-State Guide to rides
http://www.aarp.org/bulletin/yourlife/state_by_state_transportation.html

Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)
<http://www.april-rural.org>

Research Information on Independent Living
<http://www.getriil.org/briefs/RuralTransportation.html>

The Assistive Technology Network
<http://www.atnet.org>

Sacramento Paratransit (916) 429-2009 (x 341, 352, or 343)
 TDD: (916) 429-2568
<http://www.paratransit.org/index.html>

We're on the Web!

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Local Resources are Available...

Most communities have transit services for people with disabilities. Below is a list of services in a few of California's agricultural areas:

- Auburn –
Dial a Ride: 530-889-2342
- Bakersfield –
Para-Transit: 661-869-6363
- Chico/Redding –
Bee Line Transit 530-342-0221
- Eureka –
Dial a Ride: 707-442-4555
- Fresno –
Handy Ride: 559-443-5650
- Grass Valley –
TeleCare: 530-272-1710
Precious Cargo: 530-701-4391
- Imperial County –
AIM Transit: 760-337-8802
- Modesto –
Dial a Ride: 209-527-4900
- Riverside –
TRIP: 951-867-3800
- Salinas –
Rides Program: 831-754-2804
- Santa Barbara –
Easy Lift: 805-681-1181
- Santa Rosa –
Para-Transit: 707-543-3925
- Stockton –
Dial a Ride: 209-946-0520
- Yolo County –
Yolo Bus Transit 530-666-2877

Take note:

Most transit services are free or give discounted rates for people with disabilities. To do this the transit service may require riders to complete an evaluation to determine if there is a need for the service. Most providers require a doctor's statement for proof of disability. Each organization operates under their own policies, which differ by city or area. **Ask about policies when you call for a ride.**

About CalAgrAbility ... 1-800-477-6129

The California AgrAbility Project'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. This is supported by the CSREES USDA under special project number 2003-41490-01584.

