

[Helping farmers in need](#)

Bismarck Tribune - 05/24/2013

Farm Rescue continues to step up for farmers and ranchers in the region. This month volunteers and equipment zeroed in on two farm operations in the Washburn area where they saved the day by getting crops in the ground. Injuries in handling livestock had put planting at risk on farms belonging to Glenda Scholl and Chad Berg. That's the idea behind Farm Rescue.

Sometimes injuries or illness can mean a farmer is unable to plant or harvest his or her fields, which could create a dire economic situation for the farm operator. By applying to Farm Rescue, volunteers work that farmer's fields using donated equipment.

Farm Rescue is well organized, moving from one part of the region to another, with the aid of GPS, cellphones, maps and local assistance — it's a logistical challenge that requires excellent timing. Historically, neighbors of a farmer who could not get in the fields would converge and do that work. The situation on the land is different today, with larger farms and many farmers making ends meet with non-farm jobs.

Farm Rescue began operations in 2006. Last year, the nonprofit helped its 200th farmer. The volunteers in their distinctive blue shirts have planted and harvested a lot of bushels of wheat. At Washburn, Farm Rescue planted fields for Glenda Scholl, which normally would have been taken care of by Alan Scholl, who was trampled by a cow midway through calving, and for Berg who had the same thing happen to him this spring. With the dry, late spring, the window for Farm Rescue to help farmers has been squeezed. So, Farm Rescue founder Bill Gross and the other volunteers have their hands full.

Gross also has formed a second organization, the Farm Rescue Foundation, that raises funds to provide specialized equipment that can be used to help injured or disabled farmers get their work done. In addition, the foundation can also provide elbow grease for a farmer in need. A recent Associated Press story told of an injured farmer from North Dakota getting equipment that allowed him to unload grain without having to climb out of his truck. It's very practical help. It doesn't pay doctor bills or therapy, just specialized equipment and donated labor.

Not a government program, Farm Rescue is a safety net of people helping people, just as neighbors come to the aid of neighbors in a crisis.