

## FARM RESCUE HELPING OUT JAVA FAMILY

Easter Sunday consisted of more than just church, ham, and colored eggs this year for the Hirsch family. This year on Easter Sunday Farm Rescue showed up to assist with planting the crops. Mike Hirsch was involved in a farm accident this winter in which he lost much of his right hand while working on a feed wagon. This required several days in the hospital, multiple surgeries, and additional recovery at home that continues. In addition to this, Mike's father, Roger Hirsch, has had complications with a prior hernia surgery and recently required another extensive surgery. Farm Rescue started seeding approximately 600 acres of wheat for Mike and Roger Hirsch on Sunday. They pulled in with a new John Deere 4-wheel drive tractor and 60-ft John Deere air seeder furnished by RDO Equipment.

Farm Rescue was founded by Bill Gross, a North Dakota native. Bill came up with the idea for Farm Rescue while flying back and forth across the nation as a pilot for UPS Airlines. Bill noticed the changing demographics of rural America with fewer farms, less children per family, and fewer neighbors. This is when Bill decided that when he retired, he would become a "Good Samaritan" and buy a tractor and go around and help farm families plant their crops in times of hardship. As it turns out, Bill decided to start sooner than that and launched Farm Rescue in 2005.

Farm Rescue now provides planting and harvesting assistance to families that experience major injury, illness, or natural disaster. More than 155 farm families have received assistance since 2006 in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana. This year alone Farm Rescue expects to help around 50 families between planting and harvesting. There is a core set of approximately 20 volunteers that help out plus 8 or 9 retired farmers who help out as needed in their local areas. It also takes many sponsors and generous donations to make all this happen. This year, RDO equipment is supplying two tractor and air seeder setups, another tractor and corn planter, and usually provide two combines in the fall. There are also many local sponsors that donate generously to Farm Rescue. Just to name a few with local connections... Walmart, CHS, Dakota Bank, North Central Farms Elevator, Pizza Ranch, Farm Credit Services, and Wheat Growers. Anyone who would like information on making donations or volunteering for Farm Rescue should visit their web site for more information, [www.farmrescue.org](http://www.farmrescue.org).

Two volunteers with Farm Rescue were on hand to do the planting for the Hirsch family. This was expected to take about 2-1/2 days. Dave Sette, Grafton, WI, is a 5<sup>th</sup> year volunteer with Farm Rescue. He will spend approximately 3 weeks traveling around the area putting in the crops for families that have been met by misfortune recently and need a little extra helping hand. Dave is a heavy equipment operator and truck driver for the Public Works Department in Grafton. Dave's employer is very understanding of his desire take leave from his regular job to go volunteer his assistance to those in need and is always very flexible with him. This year with the dry conditions planting season has come early, thus requiring Dave to take his leave earlier than usual. Daniel Pullum, Decatur, IL, is a first time volunteer with Farm Rescue. Daniel has experience with smaller farm machinery and also worked for Caterpillar Equipment. Daniel credits his background for his ability to come run the equipment for Farm Rescue, although admits that this is much larger than anything he has experience with.

Farm Rescue will also be back later this spring to plant another approximately 600 acres of soybeans for Mike and Roger. This was decided after Farm Rescue found out that not only did Mike have a hardship this year with his injury but Roger's health is also complicating their farming situation. The generosity shown by friends, neighbors, family, and now complete strangers has been overwhelming but very much

appreciated by Mike. “What an amazing organization, to have volunteers take time out of their own lives to put a total stranger’s crops in. Words cannot express my gratitude to Farm Rescue for what they have done for my dad and I.”