

Farm Rescue accepting applications for another season

By DALE HILDEBRANT, Farm & Ranch Guide
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Farm Rescue founder Bill Gross (left) visits with the 100th farm family his organization has helped during last fall's soybean harvest on the Dustin and Lucinda Lien farm near Ypsilanti, N.D

JAMESTOWN, N.D. - Farm Rescue is currently accepting applications from farm families that are in need of crop planting assistance this spring, according to Pam Musland, the non-profit organization's director of operations.

The organization's funding is limited so it is important that farmers apply early to receive top consideration for assistance this spring, she added.

The selection of the assisted families is based on a number of factors including the extent of need, farm size, farm viability and geographic location. In addition, applications postmarked by March 31 will receive priority consideration for assistance.

“Last year, Farm Rescue assisted its 100th farm family, which was an important milestone for our young organization,” Musland said. “Overall, we were able to plant and harvest crops from 34 farm families in the region.

“This year we are planning on doing more planting cases than harvest assistance. Last year we planted for 22 farmers and planting was an obstacle for us like it was for everyone, so we are hoping to plant more than 22 cases this coming year.”

Each family may receive up to 1,000 acres planted free of charge. Again this spring Farm Rescue, which was founded by Bill Gross in 2006, will be operating two planting units. The North Dakota based unit will cover all of the state plus eastern Montana, while the unit headquartered in South Dakota will cover that state plus western Minnesota.

In the past the group has assisted farmers with a wide variety of physical hardships ranging from open heart surgery, cancer treatments and severed limbs, to natural disasters like overland flooding and tornado destruction.

“Our mission is to help farmers through an unexpected crisis in their lives,” Musland said. “Our work wouldn't be possible without a terrific volunteer labor force and the many individuals and businesses that support Farm Rescue.”

The list of sponsors has grown to more than 100, she noted, with a few new major additions that include Croplan as a new \$10,000 sponsor and ADM's increased sponsorship to the \$10,000 level. The Leona and Harry Helmsley Trust has also come on board as a sponsor.

The volunteer base has also grown for the 2010 season.

“We have a new volunteer coming from New York, some guys from Florida, another from Oklahoma and still another from Kansas,” Musland said. “These people, whether they are driving or flying, are paying their own way to get here and then we will provide the transportation and lodging once they arrive. It's really amazing.”

A new fund raiser will be unveiled late this spring and will be called “Rolling with Farm Rescue - Cruise for a Cause.” The contest will begin on June 1 and the winner will become the owner of a new Harley Davidson motorcycle. Musland said more details on this special contest will be available on the Farm Rescue Web site as they are put into place.

More information on their assistance program and an application form are also available on that site, which is www.farmrescue.org, or you can call 701-252-2017.