



# FARM RESCUE TO THE RESCUE

## Volunteers make a difference for family farms facing crises

By Danielle Abbas, Farm Rescue Marketing Communications Coordinator

**WHEN DARYL DE GROOT** had his first knee replacement, his doctor told him his new knee would need to be replaced within ten years. Daryl's knee barely lasted five years, and three weeks after receiving his second new knee, he was hit with a staph infection.

Doctors put Daryl on antibiotics, but once the antibiotic treatment had been completed, the staph returned and further complicated his recovery. His neighbors were more than willing to help plant his crops, but when the rain kept coming down, time started running out. That was when a friend, who also had connections with an area radio station, informed Daryl and Marla about Farm Rescue. Armed with this knowledge, the De Groots applied for assistance. A few days later, they received a phone call informing them they had been approved.

For the De Groots and other farm families, Farm Rescue has been a virtual lifesaver. A nonprofit organization, Farm Rescue helps family farmers that have experienced a major injury, illness or natural disaster by assisting with planting or



# Volunteers make a difference for family farms facing crises

*continued from page 4*

harvesting up to 1,000 acres. While Farm Rescue does not provide any financial assistance to farmers, the manpower the program provides makes a huge impact. Knowing their crops will get in or out of the ground gives farmers peace of mind and allows them to focus on recovery from whatever crisis they are facing.

Farmers can apply for assistance themselves, but if they are hesitant to ask for assistance, family, friends or community members can anonymously refer them. The labor is done by a team of volunteers and with sponsored equipment from RDO Equipment Company. The volunteer manpower comes from all over America and utilizes many different skill sets.

Farm Rescue started as the dream of North Dakota-raised UPS pilot Bill Gross, who had a bird's eye view of the changing demographics of the farming community. In 2005, after a friend suggested he make his dream to help farmers a reality, Bill launched Farm Rescue with one tractor and a handful of volunteers. "Forty or fifty years ago, neighbors could do all of the work if something happened," said Bill. "Now we are seeing fewer family farms, and fewer children on each farm. It has simply become harder for neighbors to help one another due to the economic pressures upon their own business operation."

Today, Farm Rescue has expanded to operate in North Dakota, South Dakota, eastern Montana,

Minnesota and Iowa. The program has assisted over 230 families in five states and keeps a staff of five busy. "Farm Rescue is a structured avenue for farm families to turn to for assistance during a time of crisis," said Bill. "We are here to help."

If you or someone you know could benefit from Farm Rescue assistance, or if you would like information on how to get involved, please visit [www.farmrescue.org](http://www.farmrescue.org) or call 701-252-2017.

***Scan with your smartphone to locate assistance and volunteer applications at [farmrescue.org](http://farmrescue.org).***

