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Farm Rescue volunteers just want to help farm families



Farm & Ranch Guide

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SCRANTON, N.D. – Farm Rescue volunteers continue come and help farmers seed, hay and harvest their crops because they “just want to help their neighbors” – but sometimes that that means traveling hundreds of miles to be of assistance to their “neighbors.”

In fact, John Andrews, a retired policeman, and his wife, Carol, are first-time Farm Rescue volunteers who drove for two days from Waukesha, Wis., to help seed spring crops for the Buckmeier family in Scranton, N.D.

“We heard about Farm Rescue on the Paul Harvey radio show,” John Andrews said, as he finished looking over the John Deere planter donated by RDO Equipment. “My wife is a farmer’s daughter. We talked about it and wanted to help these farm families, so we decided to volunteer.”

While John helped seed crops, Carol shopped for groceries and cooked for the volunteers. When a tire blew on the planter, Carol drove 60 miles north to Dickinson to get another tire.

“It feels great to help others who really need it,” Andrews said.

He added they had never been in North Dakota before, so for the Andrews it is quite a few firsts: first time in North Dakota, first time volunteering for Farm Rescue, and for John, first time farming.

“It has been great. I really enjoy the people here and it has been fun driving the tractor. It has all

the latest technologies in it," he said.

Fellow volunteer Gary Deckert from Bismarck, N.D., said helping farmers through Farm Rescue for the last four years has been "very rewarding."

"Farming is these folks' livelihood and to see their land sitting there idle, not being planted, is heart-breaking. I love getting in the tractor and helping them continue their livelihood and I really enjoy helping farm families," said Deckert.

Deckert grew up on a farm near Arena, N.D., so he knows how important it is to keep the farm running for the farmers Farm Rescue helps. He was a truck driver and retired a few years ago, then heard Farm Rescue needed CDL drivers.

"That is when I volunteered, because you never want to fully retire. And I plan to keep helping farm families as long as I can," he said. "It is really gratifying to help other farmers, and they do so appreciate us."

Deckert drove straight to Redfield, S.D., where he picked up the John Deere system from the RDO dealership.

"This is a JD 1890 triple-axle flotation tractor, meant to go over soft fields without getting stuck," he said.

Deckert said there was all the latest technology installed in the tractor that ran on GPS to "track your direction." He pointed to the colored monitors that showed yield, protein level, amount of seed in the cart, changed color to show which field had been planted, and more. The planting system from RDO was a JD 9560 R air drill and seed cart.

He said they seeded 269 acres of wheat the evening of April 17 for the family, and 300 acres of canola the next day. Before Farm Rescue left, volunteers had seeded 1,000 acres for the Buckmeier family.

Another volunteer, Bill Weaver from Pennsylvania, was helping the farm family in another field. He is semi-retired, and works as a mechanic, so he is very helpful around the farm, Deckert said.

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