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Farm Rescue to the rescue



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Farm Rescue planted all the corn and soybeans at Daryl and Marla De Groot's dairy farm this spring after Daryl underwent emergency knee surgery in March. The De Groots milk 200 head and farm 500 acres near Hull, Iowa.

Charitable organization assists De Groot after undergoing knee surgery

BY JERRY NELSON

Staff writer

HULL, Iowa – Daryl De Groot's knee problems began 30 years ago when a cow fell on his leg.

"It sort of messed up my knee," said De Groot who, with his wife, Marla, milks 200 head and farms 500 acres. "The doctors scoped it several times over the years, but it never really got much better."



Bill Gross
Founder of Farm Rescue

In 2005, De Groot had his right knee replaced. The artificial joint soon became askew, so De Groot had another new knee installed in February of 2012. Shortly afterwards, his new knee developed a staph infection.

Aggressive use of antibiotics seemed to clear the infection. But this past March, the staph infection returned with a vengeance.

De Groot was taken to Mayo Clinic in Rochester where doctors removed his artificial knee and put a cast on his leg. De Groot would remain in the cast and without a knee for the next two months. Doing chores or performing field operations were totally out of the question.

"Our neighbors were wonderful about coming over to do chores and we are very grateful for their help," said De Groot. "We eventually hired more workers so our neighbors didn't have to come over so much. We didn't want to feel like we were imposing on them. We realize that they have their own things to take care of."

When this spring's planting time approached, a friend of the De Groots suggested that they contact Farm Rescue.

"I had never heard of Farm Rescue," said De Groot. "But I'm glad that I called them."

This past May, a new John Deere tractor and 24 row planter came to the De Groot farm and planted all of their corn and soybeans in a day and a half.

The equipment was on loan from RDO Equipment and was operated by volunteers from Farm Rescue.

Farm Rescue is a charitable organization that was started in 2006 by Bill Gross, a full-time 747 captain for UPS Airlines.

"I grew up on a cattle farm near Cleveland, N.D.," said Gross. "When I was in high school, I could already see the trend of fewer and larger farms and kids leaving the farm for job opportunities elsewhere."

After high school, Gross took pilot training and eventually landed his current position. Having been raised in a Christian household, Gross felt compelled to give back to the world. He went on mission trips to such places as Romania and Croatia where he helped build homes and worked at orphanages. But the farm life continued to tug at his heart.

"One night, we were flying over the Pacific at 40,000 feet when one of my crew members asked what I was going to do when I retired," said Gross. "I told them I was going to buy a John Deere tractor and be a random Good Samaritan farmer. Someone asked, 'Why wait until you retire?'"

That simple "why wait?" caused Gross to look at things differently. Over the next seven years, as he crisscrossed the globe in gigantic cargo jets, Gross pondered that question. Everything crystallized one evening when Gross discussed his idea with a former college roommate who is now an Army chaplain.

"He pointed out that I shouldn't wait because we never know what tomorrow will bring," said Gross. "He also said that instead of being random, I should do something that's organized in some way. As I drove from his home, I thought, 'That's it. My mission field will be in the fields of farm families.'" And so the idea of Farm Rescue was born.

Gross faced some intimidating hurdles. How would he structure the organization? Where would he get funding? How would he find volunteers? Is there even a need for Farm Rescue?

"I knew there would be others like me who have farm backgrounds and would be willing to volunteer to help with planting or harvesting," said Gross. "And I thought that surely businesses would sponsor such an organization. It would be good PR and good

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- JD X530 w/60" Mower
- '11 JD X324 48" Mower
- '10 JD 350C Crawler w/dozer blade, 1900 hrs.
- '10 MF GC2400 w/ 60" Mower, 250 hrs.
- '06 MF 5470 CAH, MFWD, w/MF 950 ldr., 900 hrs.
- '07 MF 471 w/ldr, 1900 hrs. MF TD30
- JD X530 Mower w/54" deck
- '11-JD X324 48" deck, all wheel steer, 143 hrs.
- JD 350C Crawler, dozer blade, 1967 hrs.

SKID LOADERS & EQUIPMENT

- '11 Bobcat T-630, cab/heat, 592 hrs. Bobcat 863, 2000 hrs.
- Gehl 4640, 3800 hrs.
- Bobcat S100 w/cab, heat, 3800 hrs.
- Case 85XT cab/heat, 4000 hrs.
- '08 Bobcat 5600 toolcat
- JD 332 CAH 2 spd, 1100 hrs.
- Clark Clipper forklift, 2000 hrs.
- '11 Gehl 5640E cab/heat 700 hrs.
- '09 Bobcat T190 CAH, 2500 hrs.
- '00 Bobcat 743, 3500 hrs.
- '00 Bobcat 763, 3300 hrs.
- '11 Bobcat 205 2spd acs, 600 hrs.
- '12 Bobcat 205 CAH 2spd 2300 hrs
- '10 Bobcat 205, cab/heat 2spd, 1500 hrs.
- '10 Bobcat 205 cab/heat 2300 hrs.
- '05 Case 450 25spd, 1200 hrs.
- '11 Gehl 4240 400 hrs.
- '12 Gehl V-270 CAH 25spd, 108 hrs.
- '07 Case 420Ct, 900 hrs.
- Hester forklift
- Gehl 3725, 6700 hrs.
- Bobcat S175, cab/heat, 3900 hrs.
- Bobcat S205, cab/heat, 2900 hrs.
- '11 Bobcat S300, 2 spd, A91 BTS tracks
- '11 Bobcat S650 CAH, 2600 hrs.
- '05 Bobcat 205 SIS, 5748 hrs.
- '07 Case 440 cab/heat 1200 hrs.
- '07 Bobcat S300 cab/heat, 2spd, 2700 hrs.
- '02 Polaris 500 Sportsman 4WD, 4977 mile
- '09 Gehl 5240, 2spd
- '04 Bobcat S250, cab, heat, 25 sod, 3200 hrs.
- '09 Bobcat T-250 C/A/H, 1200 hrs.

MISCELLANEOUS

- SF 6333-34 Finisher 5 bar spike
- '12 Summers 20' Super coultter plus
- JD 215 15' disc
- '13 JD 2210L 30' F. C.
- '13 980 24' F.C.
- SF 5034 30' F.C.
- KD 726 22' finisher
- Wilrich 3400XL 28' FC
- NDE 1552 TMR
- '09 Sunflower 4511-11 disc chisel
- (2) REM 2500 HD vacs
- Butler 370 TMR scale
- Rhino TX135A turf mower, 15" Crustbuster 15' rotary mower
- DMI 730 B Ecolo-Tiger
- '07 Summers 23' Supercouler
- '09 Unverferth 1225, 44'
- REM 2500 HD grain vac, like new
- Yetter 15' rotary hoe
- Feterl 8 x 55' auger
- Feterl 8x66
- Mayraih 8 x 66
- Kngiht 8024 Slinger w/lid
- JD 960 32' F.C.
- '11 GP turbo til 3000 30' vertical tillage
- Brent 774 Grain Cart
- Brent 420 Cart
- Meyer 5636 sprd
- Kuhn 8132 Spreader
- Unverferth 430 Box
- Kinze 840 Grain cart
- Kinze 640 grain cart w/scale
- '08 MF 9690 424 duals
- Harvestec 4308 8R30, IH & Deere mts.
- NH 324 2 row picker
- '79 MF750 hydro, 3600 hrs.
- '82 MF 850 hydro, 4500 hrs.
- '89 IH 1660 4800 hrs
- '80 MF 750 hydro, 3800 hrs.
- '86 MF 8560, 5100 hrs.
- CIH 800 Cycle6-30 dr4
- JD153515' drill
- JD7000 4RW dry
- '07 Kinze 3500 15R15
- '08 Kinze 3700 24R20
- '82 JD 7200 Vac 12R30
- '13 Kinze 3500 15R15
- '94 MF 8570, 4000 hrs.
- '85 MF 550 dsl, 2600 hrs.
- '11 MF 9695, 860 hrs., 600 sep. hrs.
- '07 MF 9895 RWA chopper, sprdr, duals lat, tilt, Fieldstar II
- '07 MF 9690 chopper spd, 681-455 hrs.
- '08 MF 9690 424 duals
- Harvestec 4308 8R30, IH & Deere mts.
- NH 324 2 row picker
- '79 MF750 hydro, 3600 hrs.
- '82 MF 850 hydro, 4500 hrs.
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- '13 Kinze 3500 15R15

COMBINES/HEADS

- '94 MF 8570, 4000 hrs.
- '85 MF 550 dsl, 2600 hrs.
- '11 MF 9695, 860 hrs., 600 sep. hrs.
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- '89 IH 1660 4800 hrs
- '80 MF 750 hydro, 3800 hrs.
- '86 MF 8560, 5100 hrs.

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- NH 790 chopper
- '06 MF 2050 big square baler
- 3 Hesston 1345 12' disc mower
- '08 MF 1359 9' DM
- MF1372, 12' DM
- CIH 800 Cycle6-30 dr4
- JD153515' drill
- JD7000 4RW dry
- '07 Kinze 3500 15R15
- '08 Kinze 3700 24R20
- '82 JD 7200 Vac 12R30
- '13 Kinze 3500 15R15

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One of the earliest and biggest sponsors was RDO Equipment Company.

"RDO Equipment Company loans us millions of dollars worth of equipment to use free of charge," said Gross.

More than 250 entities are sponsors of Farm Rescue. They range from private individuals to seed companies and commodity groups to corporations as large as Wal-mart. Farm Rescue takes no funds from the federal government; it relies entirely on private and good-will donations.

"We do not give out money," said Gross. "Our mission is to do harvesting or planting for farmers who have had an illness or an injury or suffered a natural disaster."

This mission has met with a good deal of success. Over the past seven years, Farm Rescue has helped more than 235 farmers from Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa. This assistance is provided at no cost, although the farmer being helped provides diesel fuel, seed and fertilizer.

Some farmers have been hesitant to reach out to Farm Rescue.

"About half of the farmers we help contact us directly, while the other half are referred to us by a neighbor or business associate," said Gross. "Anyone can refer a farmer to us anonymously. Many farmers find it easier to ask for help from Farm Rescue because they feel that their neighbors are too busy."

Farm Rescue has a database of more than 500 volunteers that can be called upon. These volunteers come from all across the nation and all walks of life, including doctors, ministers,

plumbers, dairy farmers and pilots.

"All of our volunteers receive rigorous training because they are representing our organization and our sponsors," said Gross. "Pilots make some of the best volunteers because they can often fly in on short notice and are accustomed to operating large machinery."

While they currently offer only planting and harvesting assistance, Farm Rescue is looking into the possibility of adding help with haying.

Levi and Carol Wielenga live in Sioux City, Iowa and have done volunteer work for Farm Rescue for the past four years. Levi is an engineer for BNSF railroad and Carol is a stay-at-home mom.

"We just love working for Farm Rescue," said Levi. "It's a way to serve God and serve others while helping the farming community. I grew up on a family farm located just a few miles from the De Groot, so it was very special when we helped them plant their crops this spring."

"Meeting the farm families is really a blessing," said Carol. "We often become part of the families that we help. They feed us and sometimes put us up for the night. It's nice to be a part of that family culture."

De Groot has since had a new knee installed and was hoping to be back and moving around Sept. 1.

"It was a real blessing when Farm Rescue came to help us with the planting," said De Groot. "I don't know how we would have gotten everything in with the wet spring that we had. I can't thank the volunteers from Farm Rescue enough. They are some of the most Godly people on the face of the earth."

You can learn more about Farm Rescue at: www.farmrescue.org



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Farm Rescue volunteers – (from left) Faron Wahl, regional operations manager; Carol Wielenga, holding her son, Lincoln (22 months); Carol's husband, Levi Wielenga; his brother, Lorn Wielenga; and Jack Rutledge from Georgia – attended a planter clinic put on this spring by RDO Equipment Company. Farm Rescue volunteers go through rigorous training before they are allowed to operate any equipment.



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(WA) '12 JD S660, #38388	\$279,900	(NF) '07 JD 9560, #43030	\$159,900
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(LE) '09 JD 9870, #42216	\$199,900	(SV) '02 JD 9550, #37179	\$94,900
(WA) '08 JD 9870, #33251	\$174,900	(PL) '99 JD 9510, #37014	\$89,900
(LE) '08 JD 9870, #38834	\$174,900	(WA) '98 JD 9510, #42766	\$67,900
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(NF) '11 JD 9770, #38283	\$259,900	(NF) '79 JD 7720, #37652	\$19,900
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(SV) '11 JD 9770, #36897	\$229,900	(NF) '83 JD 6620, #43189	\$14,900
(NF) '06 JD 9760, #38774	\$149,900	(NF) '82 JD 6620, #43137	\$17,900
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