

Dept. of Workforce Development: DWD and DATCP secretaries tour farms assisted by DVR program

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AUBURNDALE, Wis. – Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Randy Romanski and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek recently hit the road to highlight the DWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR).

At the Darrel Jones Farm, the secretaries heard from Darrel, who owns and operates an approximately 60 cow dairy farm with his wife Kathy. After an ATV accident, Darrel sought accommodations that allow him to complete his work.

“The DVR program plays an important role in the agriculture industry,” said Romanski. “Farmers like Darrel exemplify why it is important that we offer reasonable accommodations. Through the services and partnership of AgrAbility, DWD, DATCP, and other partners, Wisconsin farmers can continue doing what they love.”



DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek, left, and DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski, right, meet with farmer Darrel Jones to learn more about his use of assistive technology. Darrel and his wife Kathy own and operate an approximately 60 cow dairy farm in Auburndale, Wisconsin.

AgrAbility of Wisconsin Rural Rehabilitation Specialist Jeff Kratochwill joined the visit at the Darrel Jones Farm.

“There are many farmers in Wisconsin who have been negatively impacted by a disability and services are needed by AgrAbility and the Easterseals Wisconsin FARM program to assist those farmers,” said Kratochwill. “Today was a great day to showcase a farm that has been involved with AgrAbility and Easterseals and then received support from the DVR program in Wisconsin. It was great for Secretary Romanski and Secretary-designee Pechacek to visit the farm together and witness the benefits of working in partnership to serve farmers with disabilities.”

The secretaries also visited the farm of Barry Richardson, who milks 80 cows and grows corn and other crops. Barry required a knee replacement and continues to experience some work limitations following the surgery.

“Farmers are used to being self-sufficient and we know it’s hard for many to ask for help when injury or illness affects their work,” DWD’s Pechacek said. “DWD’s vocational rehabilitation staff are friendly, helpful, and eager to work with farmers to understand their unique situations. Our full spectrum of services includes onsite farm assessments, vocational guidance and counseling, self-employment planning, and assistive technology services including assessments, customization, repair, and training.”

Individuals with a disability that makes it difficult to get or keep a job can apply for DWD’s DVR services using the [online referral form](#) or contact the DVR administrative office at 608-261-0050 or toll-free at 800-442-3477.

Additional services for Wisconsin farmers are available through DATCP’s Wisconsin Farm Center. With decades of agriculture experience, the Wisconsin Farm Center staff are able to answer questions and connect farmers to resources through the Farm Center’s toll-free number and email address. To learn more, visit the [DATCP Farm Center page](#).

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