



Farm Rescue arrived at Steve Dick's farm, Englevale, on May 29 to plant his soybean crop. Dick suffered a stroke during a county commissioner's meeting in April. Pictured: (l to r) Steve Dick, J.R. Rutledge, Georgia, and Kenneth Chyle, Kentucky.

## Farm Rescue starts planting Steve Dick's soybeans

By Terri Kelly Barta

Farm Rescue arrived at the Steve Dick farm on Wednesday, May 29 to plant his soybean crop. Dick suffered a stroke during an April county commissioners meeting.

Farm Rescue is a nonprofit organization that provides planting and harvesting assistance free of charge for farm families who have experienced a major illness, injury or natural disaster. Operations are funded by donations, business sponsorships and grants. Volunteers do the work. The main office is in Jamestown, ND. Farm Rescue covers a five-state area (ND, SD, MN, Iowa and eastern Montana).

A two-man team, one from Georgia and one from Kentucky brought a planter and the Farm Rescue pick up to the farm. Each drove a vehicle at 27 miles/per/hour for ten hours (That is as fast as the tractor with the planter will go.) They had been in Sioux Falls, SD working on a rescue.

Kenneth Chyle, Kentucky and Jack "J.R." Rutledge, Georgia both joined Farm Rescue a couple of years ago from their respective states. They met when they were both assigned to the same rescue operation last year. They planted crops for the Klemetson family of Ulen, MN so that Matt could be with his wife, Staci as she battled cancer. Unfortunately, Staci lost her battle with cancer as Farm Rescue was finishing up the harvest in the fall. Farm Rescue either plants or harvest a crop. They don't normally do both, but for this family with five young children, they made an exception. Farm Rescue gave the family quality time with each other in the final days of Staci's life.

Chyle read about Farm Rescue in "Successful Farming" magazine. He is a retired farmer. He has been through troubled times of his own and others helped him. He decided to return the favor.

"It's being able to give back," said Chyle. "I lost two wives and others helped me, now I am giving back."

Not only is he volunteering his time but he is responsible for getting himself to the work site from his

home in Kentucky and back home again. Once at a site, a room and meals are often provided.

Rutledge's story is a little different but with the same result. He was helping a friend and was looking up some information online when he came across the website for Farm Rescue. He read the information provided by founder and president of Farm Rescue, Bill Gross. Rutledge decided it fit very well as a volunteer opportunity for him.

Rutledge teaches firefighters from the University of Illinois through online classes. He is married and his wife is supportive of his volunteering efforts.

"I have met a lot of really fine people," said Rutledge with a big grin.

Both men have been gone from home since May 8, but Rutledge said he would be going back to Peachtree City, Georgia in time for a June 6 appointment.

"North Dakota is a beautiful state," he added.

Chyle and Rutledge joined for the second time to plant soybeans at the farm of Steve and Judy Dick, near Englevale. They brought a planter with them and got right to work. They planted about 25 acres out of the 300 acres of soybeans that needed to be planted when Mother Nature intervened with a downpour of rain.

"We can plant about 40 acres per hour when it is not raining," said Chyle.

The two men were scheduled to be in Park Rapids, Minnesota for another Farm Rescue on Thursday. They were unable to finish the job at Dick's farm. Rainy conditions were expected to last through Saturday in the area.

Should any one else need help with planting or harvesting crops due to a major illness, injury or natural disaster, apply at [farmrescue.org](http://farmrescue.org) or call 701-252-2017.