



## Native American Woman Overcomes A Disability

### IAC Northwest Region

This is a story about perseverance, tenacity and hard work. Shawna Kalama is an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. When Shawna was a teenager, she was involved in a horrible car accident that left her paralyzed from the waist down. This tragedy, for some, would seem unsurmountable, but not for Shawna.

In 2013 Shawna decided that she was interested in the ranching business. Her family lives on an 80-acre parcel that her dad raises oat hay on. She contacted the Intertribal Agricultural Council (IAC) for assistance. With some guidance and a very helpful Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan officer, Shawna completed her first FSA Micro-Loan. Shawna purchased 20 pair of beef cattle and utilized the second growth of the oat pasture to winter her cattle on. Shawna's cattle herd grew to 30 pair in 2016. In December of that year, Shawna received the producer of the year award at the annual IAC membership meeting.

After seeing that she could easily make her payments and that she really wanted to continue to be a rancher, Shawna decided that she would like to obtain a second FSA Micro-Loan. Once again, she sought out the guidance of the IAC and obtained the Micro-Loan. Shawna utilized the loan to lease 80 acres of pasture. Shawna kept 40 acres in pasture and developed the other 40 acres into alfalfa hay. Shawna identified that there was a great need to produce small bales of hay for people with cattle and horses in her area. Her father had an old bailer and swather that hadn't been used for years, with some repairs, they were ready for use. That first year, Shawna sold her hay for a very high price and made a large profit and continues to do so.



Shawna recently has decided that she wants to expand her hay acreage to 160 acres. She is in the process in looking for more ground to lease. Once she finds the ground, she and IAC will begin the process of seeking an FSA Operating Loan. Shawna has been a great inspiration for all that have ever met her. Her desire to be self-sufficient despite her disability, truly is awe inspiring.