

VIRGINIA STATE 1890S AGRABILITY WORKSHOP REPORT

August 17-18, 2016

Follow up Report

A total of 48 people from six states plus Washington, D.C. attended the workshop.

1890 Institutions

Kentucky State University (1)
University of Maryland Eastern Shore (1)
North Carolina A&T University (2)
Virginia State University (15)
West Virginia State University (1)

1862 Institutions

Purdue University (2)
Virginia Tech (3)

Organizations/Agencies

USDA/NIFA (2)
Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (4)
Easterseals UCP (3)
Virginia Valley Associates for Independent Living (1)
The Choice Group (1)
Occupational Enterprises (1)
TALMAR (Therapeutic Alternatives of Maryland) (3)
Action Trackchair (2)
Life Essentials (1)

Other Participants

VA farmer panel (4)
VA (1)

VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY | BUILDING A BETTER
WORLD

Founded in 1882, Virginia State University is one of Virginia's two land-grant institutions and is located 20 minutes south of Richmond in the village of Ettrick. VSU's College of Agriculture consists of three academic departments: Agriculture, Hospitality Management, and Family and Consumer Sciences. Integrated within the College are an Agricultural Research Station; Randolph Farm, a 417-acre research and educational facility; and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

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Day 1 (Wednesday, August 17)

The workshop opened with a welcome from VSU President Makola Abdullah, VSU College of Agriculture Interim Dean Ray McKinnie, and VSU . Mr. Chuck Baldwin (NAP Special Populations Outreach Coordinator) was the workshop facilitator.

Dr. Kim Niewolny of Virginia Tech gave an overview of AgrAbility's purpose, and Dr. Bill Field from Purdue University gave a short introduction to AgrAbility and showed a video on how AgrAbility has helped disabled farmers. Joe Young and Kirk Ballin (Coordinator and Program Coordinator for AgrAbility Virginia) and William Crutchfield (Director of VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program) spoke about the VSU Small Farms Project Partnership.

Mr. Young then led a panel of four Virginia farmers with disabilities who have utilized and benefited from AgrAbility services and resources. In particular, Mr. Barry Fitzgerald spoke about his spinal stenosis which left him unable to stand for long periods. AgrAbility helped him build a specialized cart so that he can tend his berry bushes.

Mr. Bill Begley from Assistive Technology / Life Essentials showed a presentation about specialized lifts built into trucks and agricultural machinery, and demonstrated two all-terrain wheelchairs with accessories for activities such as hunting. He explained how the equipment is developed and how farmers are consulted on its development and trained on its use.

During free time, many of the attendees got a chance to try out the Life Essentials equipment, as well as the specialized tools on a table near the front.

After-dinner meeting:

There was a discussion on barriers and opportunities for AgrAbility in working with the 1890 institutions, and how best to reach out to our target audience; followed by general questions and answer time.

Some of the ways of reaching the target audience included: Churches, County Extension Offices, Landowner groups, Small Farm Workshops, Agriculture Field Days, Farmer's Markets

Day 2 (Thursday, August 18)

Kirk Ballin and Bill Field spoke about conducting a farm assessment and the challenges that are often faced. Then Chuck Baldwin gave an overview of the resources available on the AgrAbility.org website. Bill Field mentioned that the AgrAbility.org website is the first place people looking for resources check, even in poor villages in India.

Three representatives from the state of Virginia then spoke in a panel discussion on the role the state plays. Dolores Heisler, John Allen, and Thomas Rybak of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services told about the assessments the state can make and the resources available.

Ms. Aida Balsano from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) then spoke about the importance of the 1890 schools to AgrAbility. Following her, Steven Thomson gave some pointers on applying for grants from NIFA and other organizations.

Bill Field then took the stage again to speak about his long experience with AgrAbility and how he's noticed many secondary injuries can be prevented. He introduced the on-line assessment tool, assessment guide and the step-by-step checklist for assessment.

The workshop concluded with an open dialogue among participants about the importance of the relationship between 1890s and AgrAbility. Participants completed an evaluation document to determine whether the workshop's goals and objectives were met.

Mark Klingman
Secretary