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# AgrAbility

Cultivating Accessible Agriculture

## for Pennsylvanians



## Project Funding

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*AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians is a statewide partnership between Penn State Extension and UCP Central PA.*



This publication is available in alternative media on request.

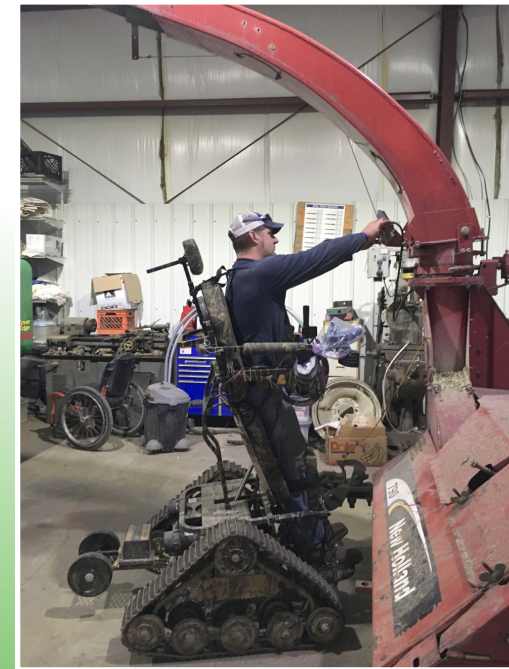
### Promoting success in agriculture for farmers with a disability or long-term health condition

# AgrAbilityPA

***"I grew up on the farm -- it's in my blood. It's where I'm going to stay. I'm so grateful for the support from AgrAbility PA and the resources provided by OVR."***

- Ryan Frye | RDR Farms  
A dairy and beef operation near Blairsville

Ryan received a flatbed truck lift from Life Essentials and a power wheelchair on rubber tracks called an Action Trackstander® that allows him greater access to the barns, his workshop, and the rugged terrain around the farm.



***"I wouldn't be able to do what I do without the help of AgrAbility PA and OVR. The utility vehicle is indispensable in carrying the totes of produce up and down the hills of the farm."***

- Cathie Dibert | Green"er" Acres  
A diversified ag farm in Claysburg

Cathie served her country as a Specialist E4 in Army military intelligence. Returning to the Claysburg area, she became a registered nurse, and now, a farmer. She sells her products under the Homegrown by Heroes and Pennsylvania Preferred labeling programs.

# Modify your practices, not your dreams.

# What is AgrAbilityPA

AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians provides a critical service to the Commonwealth's agricultural community.

Farming ranks as one of the most dangerous occupations in the country; and farmers may struggle each day to keep up with the daily demands of production agriculture.

AgrAbility PA assists farmers and agricultural workers with a disability or long-term health condition by providing direct services and support they need to live independently and to continue working in or return to production agriculture.

## What services are offered?

AgrAbility PA promotes independence in farming for individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions by providing the following services

### at no cost:

- On-site farm assessments that help identify barriers to successful completion of everyday tasks
- Identification of safe and appropriate modifications, equipment, or assistive technology
- Peer and caregiver support
- Educational opportunities such as farm safety days, presentations to health care and rehabilitation professionals, county crop and dairy days, and statewide agricultural expositions
- Referrals and information about state and local resources

## Maintain your livelihood... and your independence

Any Pennsylvanian with a disability or long-term health condition who is engaged in farming or a farm-related occupation may be eligible to receive services. Examples include:

- Arthritis
- Spinal cord injury
- Amputation
- Traumatic brain injury
- Back pain or injury
- Knee pain or injury
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Visual or hearing loss
- Respiratory problems

## What is the cost?

There is no cost for professional training, technical assistance, on-site assessments, or educational materials available through AgrAbility PA. However, the project does not provide direct funding or equipment. AgrAbility PA staff works with the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF), Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT), and other third-party funding sources to help obtain needed equipment, modifications, or assistive technology.



## What is assistive technology?

Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities for someone with a disability or long-term health condition. In other words, **AT devices make every day work and life easier, and make impossible tasks possible.**

Agricultural modifications may vary depending on the type of disability and farm operation. Many solutions exist, including manufactured or modified devices and structures, or modified work practices. Some examples include:

- Larger, slip-resistant steps or a lift to help access a tractor
- Ergonomic seats to provide back and impact support
- Use of power or motorized feed carts instead of wheelbarrows
- Hitching systems designed to reduce repetitive motions on equipment
- Mobility aides such as an Action Trackchair®, Action Trackstander®, or utility vehicle
- Modifying equipment with hand controls or visual and hearing impairment aids
- Dairy parlor modifications including automatic takeoffs, rail systems, gutter grates, and motorized feed carts

*Cultivating accessible agriculture one farm family at a time.*

By empowering farmers and agricultural workers to enjoy a high quality of life, we enable them to continue to succeed in rural America.



***"If anyone is on the fence about contacting AgrAbility PA, I'd tell them to go ahead. It needs to be done to ensure you will be able to do the work you love."***

- Todd Zimmerman | Four Zimm Dairy Plus  
A dairy goat farm in Union County

Todd worked with OVR to assist with the cost of improving the workflow around his farm, which included a 3-ton bulk feed bin, a composter, and an adjustable-height desk.



***"Farming is just a way of life for the Deans. We've been farming the same land for all of these years, since 1840, it'd be a shame to see that change."***

- Philip Dean | Dean Farms  
A dairy farm in Lawrence County

Philip worked with AgrAbility PA to modify his milking routine. He now uses automatic takeoffs and has installed gutter grates.