

AgrAbility e•Note

December 2019

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

National AgrAbility Project News

NTW Updates

- Registration will be opening soon! Please visit www.agrability.org/ntw and check your email for the registration announcement.
- Remember to contact possible exhibitors or sponsors for the NTW. [Online Exhibitor Form](#) / [Printable Exhibitor Form](#). Anyone interested may also be directed to contact Tess or JoBeth.
- A reminder to all SRAPs to consider providing a travel stipend for at least one farmer to come to the NTW. Funds do not have to come from the Project's budget. Several SRAPs have had fundraisers for this purpose or have requested donations from organizations like the Farm Bureau, Farm Credit, and others. At least one such organization donated \$10,000 to send farmers from their state this year. Nothing will be lost by asking, and a great deal may be gained.
- As has been requested for the past few years, PLEASE SEND THE NAME OF THIS "FIRST FARMER" TO [CHUCK BALDWIN](#) OR [TESS MCKEEL](#). Do this as soon as possible, as until the name of that "first farmer" has been received, no other farmers who apply for a stipend from the NAP can be considered.



Join the next [AgrAbility all-staff meeting](#) Thursday, January 9 at 3:00 p.m. EST. Look for details coming in your inbox.



The Regional Workshop in Davis, CA, December 3-4 was a success. There were 30 attendees from 6 different states and a wide cross section of occupation types and organizations, such as VR, OT, AT, independent living, migrant health, Western Center for Ag Safety and Health, health and human services, and Farmer Veteran Coalition. [More](#)

The NAP is already starting to think about regional workshops for 2020. If interested in hosting a workshop in conjunction with a non-AgrAbility state, please contact JoBeth jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org or Tess tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org.

The AgrAbility Marketing & Media Community of Interest is scheduled to meet via teleconference on Monday, January 6 at 1:00 p.m. EST. If you are interested in participating and aren't yet on the COI mailing list, please contact [Paul Jones](#).

The NAP has established a playlist on its YouTube channel dedicated to SRAP videos. [Click here to view the playlist](#), which currently contains seven videos from Maine AgrAbility. If you would like your SRAP's videos included, please contact [Paul Jones](#).

The recent AgrAbility webinar "Alternative Financing for Assistive Technology" is now archived along the presentation file at www.agrability.org/online-training/archived.

Toolbox Spotlight

Designed to replace partial or total loss of one's fingers, these custom-designed and fabricated [Prosthetic Fingers](#) are powered by the remainder of each finger. Three different devices are available: the PIPDriver (for amputees who still have their middle joint), the MCPDriver (for amputees with finger loss closer to the knuckle joint), and the ThumbDriver (for amputees with loss of the thumb).



State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

Alaska



In November, the University of Alaska, Fairbanks Cooperative Extension AgrAbility PI presented in a panel at the Cold Climate Housing Research Center on adaptive modifications for food/flower growing with other aging-in-place experts.

The Alaska AgrAbility PI also gave an inaugural presentation to staff of many Alaskan tribes about the state AgrAbility outreach services at the Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management. Both events were well received.

California

California AgrAbility staff attended the Fifth Annual Latino Farmer Conference at the International Agri-Center in Tulare. Staff spoke to about 70 farmers and several agency representatives. The keynote speaker was Honduran farmer Jorge Inestroza from Tenalu Ranch.

[More](#)



Staff presented at the Native American Training & Technical Assistance Conference in Oroville. [More](#)



California AgrAbility staff shared a booth with Santa Rosa's Department of Rehabilitation at the Latinos Unidos Farmworker Health Fair in Geyserville, which was recently impacted by the Kincade Fire.

[More](#)

Colorado

Candy and Jim were invited to attend a first meeting of stakeholders in farmer suicide and opioid use disorders held November 5, hosted by Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.

[More](#)

Bruce Fickenscher, the county director for Otero County Extension, served as master of

ceremonies for the annual Arkansas Valley Water Symposium held on November 14 at the Gobin Building in Rocky Ford, CO. [More](#)

Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility staff visited Hillside Orchards located in Lakemont, Georgia, on November 13. Hillside Orchards is a third-generation farm that takes pride in their cannery, farm, and agritourism operations. [More](#)



Illinois



Kelly Gagnon, AgrAbility of Illinois communications coordinator, recently attended the Farmer Veteran Coalition National Stakeholders Conference in Austin, Texas, to sign paperwork to establish an FVC chapter in Illinois. [More](#)

AgrAbility of Illinois is partnering with the University of Illinois Extension to plan and host the Illinois Ag Mental Health Summit on Wednesday, March 4, in Bloomington, IL. [More](#)

Indiana

The Master Gardener Association of Tippecanoe County held their monthly meeting on November 5 at the Tippecanoe County Extension office. Steve Swain, Indiana AgrAbility rural rehabilitation specialist, presented "Gardening Tools for People with Disabilities." [More](#)

Indiana AgrAbility, in cooperation with Hoosier Uplands Economic Development Corporation, launched the Indiana AgVets Career Certification and Internship Program for military veterans in Indiana and surrounding states. The program is supported by USDA-NIFA Grant Number 2019-77028-29971. [More](#)



Kansas



Kansas AgrAbility Project (KAP) Assistive Technology Ag Specialist Karin Rasmussen presented at a Western Kansas "Keeping the Farm" Women in Ag conference in Phillipsburg, Kansas. Karin shared past KAP customer case studies along with the NAP "Renewing Hope" video. [More](#)

Maine

Anne Devin exhibited Maine AgrAbility program information at the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) Farmer to Farmer conference on November 3 and 4 in Rockland with over 100 farmers and service providers in attendance.

Lani Carlson exhibited project information at the 2019 Maine State Occupational Therapy fall conference in Orono on November 9, 2019. This one-day conference is designed to provide education and resources to OT/COTA professionals and students.

Richard Brzozowski made an AgrAbility presentation at the Maine Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, held Saturday, November 9, in Portland. [More](#)

The University of Maine Cooperative Extension hosted its two-day biennial conference on November 12 and 13 in Orono. AgrAbility was a featured program and shared success stories on video throughout the event.

Ketra Crosson, OT from Alpha One, conducted several driver evaluations this fall, during which she asked about horseback riding and motorized vehicle experience, including UTVs and tractors, and shared AgrAbility information.

ME AgrAbility is excited to share that Waldo County Extension Executive Association is going to host a farm dinner theater on Feb 29 using the University of Kentucky farm theater toolkit!

Anne Devin, AgrAbility veteran outreach coordinator and co-owner of Chase Stream Farm was joined by Richard Brzozowski, food system program administrator with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, as guests on [WERU Community Radio's](#) "Public Affairs" series. The show "Common Ground" focused on veterans and farming in Maine.

Anne Devin was featured in the [Portland Press Herald](#) article, "Former Marine turned to farming and helps other vets do the same." [More](#)

Michigan

It's a long way to the top. Warren Eicher of Montcalm County had some safety issues when climbing into his combine and tractors after joint replacements and rotator cuff injuries. A ladder with an extra step replaced the factory installed steps leading up to the combine cab.

[More](#)



Michigan AgrAbility is proud to partner with such a giving group of men, the brothers of Michigan State University's Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. Alpha Gamma Rho presented Michigan AgrAbility a \$20,000 check, [More](#)

Mark your calendars! The 2020 Alpha Gamma Rho Beef Preview is soon to be here! Join the fun Friday-Sunday, February 7-9, at the MSU Livestock Pavilion in East Lansing. If you would like to sponsor or contribute to this great cause, please find the sponsorship form [here](#).

Want to be a part of something bigger?? Michigan AgrAbility's Ned Stoller is coordinating a new International AgrAbility Network community of interest group. [More](#)

Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility received a grant to assist stakeholders with holding three Farm Bill USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs to educate participants about services offered by Missouri AgrAbility, stress resources, and suicide prevention contacts, in three targeted high-risk areas of the state.

MU Extension AgrAbility staff members facilitated education, networking, and direct assistance across the state of Missouri in addition to engaging collaborative and cooperative Missouri AgrAbility ambassadors who assisted with prompting and marketing activities.

November 1-2, 60 women in agriculture participated in Pearls of Production, a two-day hands-on conference for women interested in livestock production. [More](#)

November 4, Missouri AgrAbility participated in the Brain Injury Association Support Group meeting in Southeast Missouri. [More](#)

Karen Funkenbusch, PI of the Missouri AgrAbility Project, and Maureen Cunningham, Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO), attended the BIA-MO Support Group in Cape Girardeau, MO. [More](#)

David Middleton, farm outreach worker with MAP partner Lincoln University, attended the BIA-MO Networking Coffee in Springfield, MO. [More](#)

Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility shared a booth with Extension's "Wellness in Tough Times" team at the Nebraska Community Foundation Conference. There were over 200 participants throughout the day and even more at the banquet. [More](#)



The FFA Career Pathways Conference was held in Kearney. Emily gave a presentation about AgrAbility and careers for FFA members throughout Nebraska. Participants learned about the many different career paths they could choose... [More](#)

Staff had a Nebraska AgrAbility booth at the Ag-ceptional Women's Conference in Norfolk. There was a record-breaking crowd, with over 400 attending. The speaker for the day was Gus Gustafson. [More](#)



Nebraska AgrAbility was represented at the 2019 Gateway Farm and Ranch Expo in Kearney and the McCook Farm and Ranch Expo. Several farmers, as well as some former AgrAbility clients, stopped at the booth to visit with staff about AgrAbility. [More](#)

Don't forget to follow Nebraska AgrAbility on its social media pages! This December, they will be talking about awesome stocking stuffers!

North Carolina

Nov 1-3, NC AgrAbility participated as an exhibitor at the Sustainable Ag Conference in Durham, NC. This event gathers farmers, foodies, researchers, educators, and activists from over a dozen states for a weekend celebration of innovation in local sustainable agriculture. [More](#)



Dr. Crystal Kyle presented at the Farmer Veteran Coalition National Stakeholder Conference in Austin, TX, November 17-20. This year was the fifth national gathering of the farmer veteran community and featured two days of education, distinguished speakers, guest panels, networking, and more. [More](#)

Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility staff presented a webinar on accessibility of physical spaces for an OSU Extension/Purdue Extension webinar series. [More](#)

OAP received a generous donation from OSU's Alpha Gamma Rho, Beta

chapter, after the fraternity hosted a car smash event. OAP is excited about using this donation to sponsor an Ohio AgrAbility farmer's attendance at the 2020 NTW.



Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA demonstrated farm and garden assistive technology during the Penn State DuBois Assistive Technology Awareness Day on Nov. 7. [More](#)



Pennsylvania's Department of Agriculture and Department of Military Affairs co-hosted a Homegrown by Heroes recognition ceremony on November 8. AgrAbility PA participated in a roundtable discussion following the ceremony. [More](#)

AgrAbility PA provided a "Farm Safety and Family Wellness" session during Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB)'s Annual Statewide Meeting in November. [More](#)



AgrAbility PA also participated in the health and wellness fair held during the PFB annual meeting on Nov. 19. [More](#)

South Dakota

Tatanka Ki Owetu's first Mental Health First Aid training was conducted on the Pine Ridge Reservation at the All-Nations Gathering Center. It was attended by 17 individuals who completed the training and were certified.

In November, the team assisted Little Wound School in Kyle, SD, in applying for and receiving a Team Nutrition Grant and applying for the EQIP cost-share program through USDA-NRCS towards getting a high-tunnel set up at the school for their farm-to-school program. [More](#)

The team is also assisting seven AgrAbility clients on Pine Ridge, two incubator-hubs, and two schools, including Little Wound School mentioned above, in applying for a SARE farmer/rancher group grant and for a Farm-To-School Implementation Grant.



The team's partnership with the Oglala Sioux Tribal Land Office and USDA-NRCS Tribal Liaison's office and their EQIP program successfully secured funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) towards getting an additional 10 high tunnels to go up across the reservation starting next spring. [More](#)

The team's work with the Pine Ridge Food Sovereignty Coalition's planning committee has introduced AgrAbility to all their partnering organizations, and staff will be co-hosting the 1st Annual Lakota Food Summit in Rapid City, SD, in February of 2018 as well as hosting a booth and doing a presentation on Tribal AgrAbility at this upcoming conference.

The team is also nearing completion of a "Tribal New Farmers Resource Guide." [More](#)

The AgrAbility team also officially moved into their newly built office at 536, BIA 23, Porcupine, SD on one of the two incubator-hub sites that they partner with. This new office will be the main assistive technology center on Pine Ridge Reservation and sits on 160 acres that the team and their partners will be developing... [More](#)



South Dakota's AgrAbility team recently presented on AgrAbility at the Annual South

Tennessee

TNAP remembered all veterans on Veterans Day and every day. Staff thank all the farmer veterans for their dual service. Their thanks also go out to organizations like the Farmer Veteran Coalition who work to assist veterans and active members embark on careers in agriculture.



The TNAP team has been working hard to spread the word across the state for veterans with disabilities who want to farm. TN AgrAbility is forever grateful to Charley Jordan of Circle J Ranch in Woodlawn, TN, and the founding member of the Tennessee chapter of FVC. Charley has passionately worked to build a network of veterans who want to transition into farming. [More](#)

To see recent statistics on the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Tennessee, including membership statistics and types of diversified farming, [click here](#).

Several TNAP staff attended the 2019 Farmer Veteran Coalition Stakeholders Conference in Texas, which had great speakers and networking. TN had the fourth largest registered attendance, and several members of FVC of TN board also attended.



Exciting news: TN AgrAbility partnered with AgriCenter for the Veterans Employed in Technology and Service in Agriculture (VETS in AG or VETSA) program of NIFA Ag Vets grant and was funded to start in 2020. [More](#)

TNAP presented at the "Boots to Agribusiness" workshop sponsored by the Veterans Business Outreach Program. [More](#)

Marissa Buchanan, an AgrAbility client and a Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN member from McMinn County, lost her barn and many animals due to an incubator fire. There is currently no shelter for her animals. [More](#)

November was national COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) month. Dr. Deborah Reed, TN/KY Extension ag nurse, says that cold air can play havoc with respiratory illnesses like COPD or asthma, so be sure to cover your nose and mouth when you go out. [More](#)

TNAP attended the Fayette County Farm Fest for fifth-graders (225 in attendance) with a helmet safety demonstration.



TNAP was part of the three-day Calloway County, KY, safety days for middle and high school students (500 in attendance). Students participated in disability awareness activities. TNAP was very appreciative of the assistance at the disability awareness station from Murray State University OSH students.

TNAP continued its program presentations with Middle TN Vocational Rehabilitation regional meetings. The VR supervisors and counselors were very appreciative of the AgrAbility program and the audience AgrAbility serves.

TNAP staff and several UT Extension agents attended the KY Department of Ag grain bin rescue class and demonstration two-day event. The information and training received was very eye-opening. TN attendees plan to take the information learned back to Tennessee and host events statewide.



Texas



Texas AgrAbility staff members Makenzie Thomas, Erin Kimbrough, and Rick Peterson attended the Farmer Veteran Coalition National Stakeholders Conference in Austin. Nearly 500 farmer veterans and their family members were in attendance for the event. Check out this story from [AgriLife Today](#) covering the event.

Texas AgrAbility clients and cohort members shared their experience farming and ranching as a veteran and with a disability at the general session for the Farmer Veteran Coalition conference.



Texas AgrAbility shared a booth at the Farmer Veteran Coalition conference with National AgrAbility, Life Essentials, and Action TrackChair. [More](#)



Texas staff conducted an onsite assessment for a bridge inspector. The individual is a double amputee and must be able to access off-road bridges and rights-of-way for his occupation with the department of transportation. [More](#)

Applications opened for the 7th cohort of the BattleGround to Breaking Ground project. [More](#)

Utah

AgrAbility of Utah held its annual advisory board meeting on November 6 on the Utah State University campus. The meeting was well attended by four AgrAbility staff and fourteen board members.

Utah State University Extension hosted the Weber County Pesticide Training Workshop in Roy, UT, on November 18, and AgrAbility of Utah was able to present and pass out brochures. Over 70 farmers, ranchers, and commercial applicators attended the workshop.

AgrAbility of Utah presented at the NRCS northern Utah staff training on November 19 in Brigham City. Forty-five NRCS agents and staff attended the event, which was held in the auditorium of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge Center.

Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia is excited to have the Virginia Tech, Virginia State University's Small Farm and Outreach Program, and Easterseals UCP team back together to collaborate and move our program forward. [More](#)

AgrAbility Virginia also operates in close partnership with Virginia Cooperative Extension's [Farm Safety, Health and Wellness Initiative](#) to ensure alignment and synergy across the work. [More](#)

AgrAbility Virginia also continues to be active in two NSF-funded projects. [More](#)

StaffChanges and Recognition

Kentucky

The AgrAbility family was saddened by the passing of John Hancock. He was the long-time project director of Kentucky AgrAbility and made significant impacts on the lives of many AgrAbility clients and staff. [His obituary, including service times, is linked here.](#)



South Dakota

We'd like to welcome onboard two part-time staff members, Emit King and Ted Poirier, Sr., who will be joining our AgrAbility team as assistive technology support technicians. Both are enrolled members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. In addition, we'd like to welcome Patrick Hall as our AgrAbility tribal local foods AmeriCorps VISTA team member. The addition of these three individuals will greatly assist the project in meeting the needs of our clients.

AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects.

- [Smart Farms \(see page 27\) \(AgrAbility Virginia\)](#)
- [Veterans Recognized In Rural America \(Texas AgrAbility\)](#)
- [AgrAbility for Africa - 2020 Training Workshop \(new International AgrAbility Network\)](#)
- [Battleground to Breaking Ground agriculture workshop set Dec. 6 in Belton \(Texas AgrAbility\)](#)
- [How FFA has helped turn this young man's disabilities into capabilities \(National AgrAbility Project\)](#)
- [AgrAbility offers services despite funding limitations \(AgrAbility of Wisconsin\)](#)
- [Maine AgrAbility's Anne Devin featured in Press Herald article on farming among veterans \(Maine AgrAbility\)](#)
- [New Penn State leadership for AgrAbility PA named - Penn State News \(AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians\)](#)
- [AgrAbility's 2020 goals include new clients, funding \(AgrAbility of Wisconsin\)](#)
- [East Texas Ag News: Details on the Battleground to Breaking Ground program \(Texas AgrAbility\)](#)
- [Three elected to Compeer Financial board of directors \(AgrAbility in Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin\)](#)
- [Colorado Farm Show \(Colorado AgrAbility\)](#)
- [AgrAbility 2020 \(AgrAbility of Wisconsin\)](#)

Other News

Click titles below for other news of interest to AgrAbility staff members.

- [Farm groups partner to help farmers manage stress](#)
- [USDA extends deadlines for support programs](#)
- [Developing the next generation of agriculture](#)
- [\\$11M will support specialty crop farmers](#)
- [New rule will help link farms, food banks](#)
- [Engaging students, sharing the story of agriculture](#)
- [Farmers in Idaho rallied to harvest a neighbor's potatoes as a deep freeze threatened to ruin them](#)

UpcomingEvents

[Click here for professional development events related to AgrAbility.](#)

Problems? Contact Chuck Baldwin, National AgrAbility Project, baldwi19@purdue.edu
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