

AgrAbility e·Note

April 2020

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

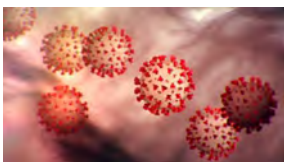
National AgrAbility Project News

Join the AgrAbility all-staff virtual meeting **TODAY** at 2:30 p.m. EDT. If you didn't get log-in instructions, contact jonesp@purdue.edu.

Save the date for the 2020 AgrAbility NTW: November 30 - December 3 in Madison, Wisconsin. The NAP looks forward to seeing you FACE-TO-FACE!



The National AgrAbility Project is publishing a "temporary" newsletter, *AgrAbility Updates*, to help staff stay connected and provide additional resources during the pandemic. If you have questions about the newsletter or would like to suggest content, contact baldwi19@purdue.edu.



The NAP has also published a webpage dedicated to COVID-19 resources related to disability and agriculture at www.agrability.org/covid-19. If you would like to suggest resources for this page, contact jonesp@purdue.edu.

The AgrAbility Marketing and Media Community of Interest is scheduled to meet by conference call at the end of April. If you would like to participate in this group but are not on the mailing list, contact jonesp@purdue.edu.

The NAP's veteran outreach coordinator, Cindy Chastain, attended the Louisiana Women in Agriculture Conference in Alexandria, LA, on March 12-13. [More](#)

The AgrAbility webinar "Smart Technology in Agriculture & The Home" has been archived and is available for viewing at www.agrability.org/online-training/archived/webinar-series.

National AgrAbility's webinars have been categorized according to subject at www.agrability.org/online-training/archived/webinars-by-subject.

Toolbox Spotlight

Made of heavy canvas with a metal tube support frame, the [YardRack Lawn Tractor Tool Carrier](#) is designed to handle

up to 75 pounds of cargo and has special holders for various lawn/garden tools. Because it's attached to the tractor/riding mower (and not towed behind), there's no chance of jackknifing. Once the mounting hitch and receiver are installed, attaching/removing reportedly takes only a few seconds.



State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

Alaska

While March kicked off with several outreach events planned in coordination with non-profit partner Assistive Technologies of Alaska (ATLA), the coronavirus pandemic forced Alaska AgrAbility during the second week of March to begin to cancel and rearrange schedules. The AK AgrAbility team moved toward working to deliver virtual engagements.

ATLA is putting out [electronic newsletters](#) with pertinent information for clients at this time of change and uncertainty. Information includes everything from sanitizing technology to AT for managing anxiety.

California

Although California was the first state to go into "shelter-in-place," staff kept busy finding resources that would help small farmers and agricultural workers around California. [More](#)



California AgrAbility Director Fadi Fathallah presented on AgrAbility program services and ergonomics research for a group of agriculture teachers from Sonoma County. [More](#)

California AgrAbility participated in the March Ability Tools AT Advocates Monthly (Zoom) Meeting. This meeting is provided by Ability Tools and CFILC in partnership with the CA Department of Rehabilitation. [More](#)

Staff joined the virtual Wildfire Induced Air Pollution Mitigation & Assessment Symposium. With the increase of wildfires in California, farmers and farmworkers continue to work through smoky days. [More](#)



Colorado

March was spent doing a lot of catch-up paperwork and beginning to feel the impact of COVID-19 on parent company operations. All Americans have felt it and know there is more to come. People are resilient and will weather this storm as the nation has others.

As a member of the Colorado Agriculture Council, Colorado AgrAbility helped in the preparations for Colorado Ag Day. Unfortunately, it was cancelled due to COVID-19.

CO AgrAbility has also been privileged to serve as a stakeholder for the CSU search for a new dean of the College of Agriculture and the Experimental Agriculture Station. In April, staff will participate in the Skype interviews of two finalists.

Georgia



In the new way of doing business, staff are learning all of the benefits of virtual interaction. As part of the FarmAgain/AgrAbility Project, staff normally are in the field meeting with farmers. Now they are using Zoom and Facetime to interact on a regular basis. [More](#)

At the beginning of March, Georgia AgrAbility had two farmers in North Georgia receive Jiffy Hitch PTO hitches on their tractors. One of the farmers had the 3-point system while the other farmer received the new tongue pull system. [More](#)



Illinois

AgrAbility of Illinois is currently working on developing a new ADA-compatible website that will provide a more user-friendly experience and easy access to resources for clients and potential clients.

AgrAbility of Illinois is also collaborating with other state programs in researching potential client management systems to use in the future.

Indiana



Indiana AgrAbility participated as an exhibitor at the 2020 Indiana Small Farm Conference. AgrAbility partnered with the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Indiana, the Indiana AgVet project, and the LIFE Project in the exhibit. [More](#)

Steve Swain, Indiana AgrAbility rural rehabilitation specialist, conducted three farm visits as preliminary visits to them applying for Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services funding. [More](#)

Steve Swain participated in the AgriSafe Webinar: "What Ag Producers Need to Know About COVID19." It is archived for later viewing.

Kansas

Kansas AgrAbility Project Coordinator Tawnie Larson made a presentation to the KSU Dairy Club. The focus of the presentation was twofold: Larson encouraged the students to share information about AgrAbility services with their friends and family as well as to consider AgrAbility as they graduate and move into the workforce as managers in the agriculture industry.

KAP had planned to meet with several agriculture student groups; however, the meetings have been postponed until the fall semester due to COVID-19.

Maine

Boots to Bushels (B2B) started in January 2020 with sixteen students attending classes on the Veterans Administration Togus campus in Augusta, Maine, with plans for four months of classroom training covering topics from soil health to crop planning to marketing. [More](#)

Maine AgrAbility's Kelley Spencer exhibited agricultural information and assistive technology ideas at the 2020 Brain Injury Association of

America, Maine Chapter, Brain Injury Resource Fair on March 2.
[More](#)



March 5-7, Maine AgrAbility exhibited FishAbility at the annual Fishermen's Forum. Many great conversations were had about stress and available resources. Staff revised the farm stress display to represent fishing industry topics. [More](#)

Maine AgrAbility shared a new success story on its website about a double amputee farmer in Central Maine. [More](#)



Staff have been networking with their USDA partner NRCS to schedule AgrAbility presentations and increase disability awareness as part of their annual training meetings.

The second week of March, Maine AgrAbility had a Husson University OT student complete her level 1 fieldwork experience with the AgrAbility team. She was able to spend a few days with different AgrAbility specialists exploring their roles and participate in staff and advisory council meetings.

While a lot of the planned AgrAbility exhibit and education opportunities have been postponed, staff are continuing to meet weekly as a team via Zoom, keeping client discussions moving forward and working on developing webinar and presentations for future events.

Michigan



Easterseals Michigan produced a sensational video highlighting "working from home" and featuring one of Michigan AgrAbility's own, Bev Berens, multitasking - feeding her lamb and working on her laptop! You will find her picture 10 seconds into the video, which you can [watch here](#).

Regretfully, the Sigma Alpha Gamma had to cancel the 2020 5K Duck Race fundraiser for Michigan AgrAbility due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Coming together to support the Michigan AgrAbility fundraiser, area businesses and sponsors came through with donations for the Sigma Alpha Gamma fundraiser. Thank you Sigma Alpha Gamma for your support!



Bev Berens joined Michael and Kenny of the Morning Grind on radio station 92.7 FM from a local bar and restaurant (not a bad gig...). Bev went to high school with one of the hosts! On air, the hosts discussed Michigan AgrAbility, the need, what services are provided, how Michigan AgrAbility is funded, and how people can help and donate.

Missouri

As part of Missouri's commitment to rural mental health, Missouri AgrAbility was a sponsor for the 2020 North American Raspberry & Blackberry Conference, March 3-6, in St. Louis, Missouri. [More](#)

Complying with COVID-19 local and state mandates, Missouri AgrAbility is maintaining the health and safety needs of AgrAbility clients by using Zoom, Skype, cell phone, email, and other means of technologies, as well as releasing targeted information via social media outlets.

COVID-19 stress and mental health infographics have been developed and posted on Missouri webpages and social media outlets.

MUE actively participated in March National Brain Injury Awareness Month by posting three times weekly to #MOAgrAbility.

March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month. AgrAbility awareness efforts included website and social media posts each day of March that featured a unique fact related to brain injury, farming, ranching, rural life and/or military veterans. [More](#)

AgrAbility marketing was conducted at the School Principals Conference held at the Lake of the Ozarks. [More](#)

The Networking Coffee for Professionals in St. Louis on March 3 featured a discussion about the Missouri AgrAbility Project for the 15 rehabilitation, employment, and community support professionals in attendance.

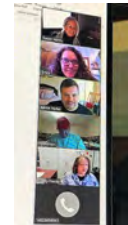
Nebraska

Another Nebraska AgrAbility staff member, Rod Peterson, successfully completed the Mental Health First Aid course.



Staff set up at the Triumph of Ag Conference in Omaha and the Governor's Ag Conference in Kearney. While the crowds were low, there was time to talk with other vendors about their products and how they can assist Nebraska AgrAbility clients.

Right now, Nebraska AgrAbility is trying to find the best ways to reach clients virtually; a continuing challenge as internet connections throughout the state are poor in places. Staff continue to meet regularly online as a team.



During these trying times, Nebraska AgrAbility provided farmers and ranchers an opportunity to learn more about stress through a [webinar](#) hosted and promoted by Nebraska Cattlemen. Invitations to farmers and ranchers were also extended to attend AgriSafe and CS-CASH webinars regarding COVID-19.

North Carolina



On March 2, North Carolina AgrAbility Partnership participated as a presenter at the 2020 AgriShop Series in Vance County. The event was organized by NC Cooperative Extension and was attended by around 60 farmers from Vance and other nearby counties. [More](#)

Hagan Kiser, occupational therapist doctoral student from Mary Baldwin University, is currently completing her doctoral experiential component by working with the NC AgrAbility program. She developed the [Ergonomics in Farming](#) video... [More](#)

NC AgrAbility will continue preparing documents, videos, and trainings to share with NC farmers and the rural community via the [NC AgrAbility website](#), [Facebook page](#), and the [NCA&T Cooperative Extension webpage](#).

Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility staff are using their work-from-home time to present webinars on Ohio AgrAbility, AT, and farming and gardening with

arthritis, to their farmers, stakeholders and the Ohio agricultural and Ohio State University communities. [More](#)



The Ohio AgrAbility rural rehabilitation coordinators have shifted their work online and over the phone and are working with state VR to continue to serve clients, write assessments, and place orders for AT and equipment so that there is no lapse in service for the farmers who continue working and farming.

To support Ohio AgrAbility caregivers, as well as all other caregivers, staff have updated the Ohio AgrAbility website with resources for caregivers during the coronavirus pandemic and will continue to add resources as they become available.

Pennsylvania

It's fair to say that many staff saw things playing out much differently when March first began. AgrAbility PA staff members were set to attend the NTW, to present at outreach events, and were looking forward to spring's arrival. [More](#)

In early March, Abbie Spackman provided an interactive presentation to more than 50 4-H members and families about AgrAbility. Abbie used the 4-H Pledge as a way to connect to what AgrAbility does. She shared her experience in 4-H and how it has helped her personally and professionally in life. [More](#)

AgrAbility PA printed and mailed its Spring 2020 newsletter. Download a copy or [view past print newsletters here](#).



The month ended with a hopeful story. "If more people, like the high school students with the Tyrone FFA chapter, experienced a day in someone else's shoes," says a farmer with a disability, "compassion for one another would surely rise." [More](#)

Tennessee

Hope all the AgrAbility family and clients stay safe at home and healthy! Like the rest of the world in crisis from the COVID-19 pandemic, Tennessee AgrAbility is working remotely and has modified their normal working conditions to prioritize the health and safety of the employees and community it serves. [More](#)

Before social distancing started, TNAP presented at the March 13 East TN New Farmer Academy. There were 23 attendees 16 of whom were veterans or their spouses. [More](#)

In early March, a series of large tornadoes tore through West and Middle TN with most of the damage in the Nashville and Cookeville areas and many deaths. [More](#)

Do you have 20/20 vision when it comes to agriculture safety? TNAP supported Agriculture Safety Awareness Program (ASAP) week, which was March 1 - 7, 2020! [More](#)

Next time you go to Memphis, TN, staff suggest you visit one of TNAP's friends, Alpha Omega Veteran Services (AOVS) Urban Farm. TN AgrAbility has been working with AOVS Urban Farm in Memphis thru partners with Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN. [More](#)

TNAP also supports Coops for Troops, a program that provides chickens and coops to veterans and their families, and their campaign for social distancing.

[Tennessee's first grain bin safety and rescue class](#) was held March 7 in



Texas

Texas AgrAbility has had to cancel in-person workshops and trainings through the end of May due to Covid-19. [More](#)

Texas AgrAbility and BattleGround to Breaking Ground are partnering to host a Texas cottage food law webinar on April 16. [More](#)

Utah

AgrAbility of Utah set up a display table at the 8th Annual Urban and Small Farms Conference in West Valley City, UT, March 4-5. Michael Porter and Randall Bagley were able to explain AgrAbility to many of the 240 people who attended.

Virginia

Dr. Kim Niewolny, AgrAbility Virginia project director, presented a lecture on socio-technology and human-centered design at the Farmers Accelerating Research in Materials Science (FARMS) Workshop, a two-day "day in the life of a farmer" event in Pittsburg, Kansas lead by Pittsburg State University and Virginia Tech.

AgrAbility Virginia has announced it will continue to offer services via phone and email throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. An announcement infographic is embedded in the [website front page](#) and published on social media with an accompanying PDF of additional resources. More resources and information will be shared throughout the month.

Washington



Washington State AgrAbility Program (WSAP) hosted its first workshop March 6th, facilitated by Curt Johnson, assistive technology specialist with Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP). Sixty-two percent of survey respondents reported hearing about AgrAbility for the first time. [More](#)

WSAP staff is working on building a lending library based on specific injury sectors. However, because of COVID-19, distribution has been postponed.

WSAP is working on building Washington's home assessment portfolio and gathering forms, materials, and information for program participants.

Wisconsin

The AgrAbility staff in Wisconsin is continuing to find ways to provide assistance and connect to clients through social media, blog posts, and phone conversations during this time. They plan to try Zoom meetings for different functions as well.

If anyone is interested in the Wisconsin AgrAbility COVID-19 blog, it can be found by

International AgrAbility Network News

AgrAbility for Africa

The hearts of the staff of AgrAbility for Africa go out to everyone in time of fear and isolation. [More](#)

The AgrAbility for Africa staff is sad to report that the inaugural AgrAbility in Africa workshop that was to take place in Entebbe, Uganda, April 27-29, 2020, had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic for the safety and health of the speakers, farmers, partners, and friends, and per government recommendations. The new dates for the event will be communicated in the coming weeks.

AgrAbility for Africa staff, faced with the challenges due to COVID-19 to reach those that require their services and to increase their outreach and impact to farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers faced with disabilities across Africa, have developed a collaboration with Professor Barry Pittendigh and Professor Julia Bello-Bravo of Scientific Animations without Borders (SAWBO). [More](#)



AgrAbility for Africa is working on a partnership with the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) to develop prototypes of low-cost motorized and leveraged bicycles and wheelchairs from recycled bicycle parts to enhance mobility of farmers impacted by disability and to support mobility of extension workers and rural health workers to reach those that need their support. [More](#)

Other International News

Ned Stoller is scheduled to present a webinar panel discussion on disability and agriculture in the international community. Save the date for May 14 at 11:00 a.m. EDT and look for details coming soon. Panelists include Mutumba Faisal of Uganda, Betty Rodriguez of North Carolina AgrAbility, and the NAP's Bill Field.

StaffChanges and Recognition

Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia welcomes Liza Dobson as the SRAP's first community outreach specialist. Liza, in a 20-hour/week position, will focus on marketing and outreach planning and materials.

AgrAbilityin the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- AgrAbility Challenge Course Brings Insight to Ag Students / Published in *Lancaster Farming* / March 21, 2020 (AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians)

- [AgrAbility program focuses on keeping farmers working](#) (Washington State AgrAbility Project, National AgrAbility Project)
- [First responders receive grain bin rescue training](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [Agriculture and Natural Resources Madness](#) (Ohio AgrAbility)
- [Stress Webinar](#) (Nebraska AgrAbility)
- [Rural ag business ideas topic of March 19 webinar](#) (Texas AgrAbility)
- [Providing Producers a Resource for “AgrAbility”](#) (USDA/NIFA AgrAbility, National AgrAbility Project)
- [Goodwill closing retail locations until April 6](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [Fruit and berry farm years in the making](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
- [Using Assistive Technology for Working Farmers](#) (Washington State AgrAbility Project)
- [Purdue Ag Week 2020 to go virtual](#) (AgrAbility)

OtherNews

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

- [Perdue salutes heroes in US food supply chain](#)
- [Tribal Colleges Extension Program - Special Emphasis \(TCEP-SE\)](#)
- [AFT launches Farmer Relief Fund](#)
- [Veterans Turned Farmers Get Creative During COVID-19 Challenges](#)
- [Feds fast track foreign farm workers' return](#)
- [FSA Service Centers are open for business by phone](#)
- For many children, the canceling of school and the media coverage of the outbreak can be very scary. It can also increase stress and anxiety. The great people at MindHeart developed a **free downloadable book for families** that will help children understand this pandemic. The book is downloadable by clicking [here](#). A PDF of the booklet can be found [here](#). (Deb Chester, Michigan AgrAbility)
- [Kids on the farm during COVID-19](#)
- [FB highlights immediate challenges facing ag sector](#)
- [Visit Farmers.gov for updates on services](#)
- [What's in the CARES Act for food and agriculture](#)
- [Farmers, grain companies step up to help out](#)
- [Health insurance options for farm families](#)

UpcomingEvents

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

Problems? Contact Chuck Baldwin, National AgrAbility Project, baldwi19@purdue.edu
[Unsubscribe from the e-Note](#)

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April 2020

National AgrAbility Project

The NAP's veteran outreach coordinator, Cindy Chastain, attended the Louisiana Women in Agriculture Conference in Alexandria, LA, on March 12-13. Although this was the last few days before travel was suspended for many across the country due to COVID-19, at least 300 people participated in this event. Cindy set up a display table in the exhibit hall and did a presentation titled "AgrAbility and the Farmer Veteran Coalition." In retrospect, some may question why the conference wasn't postponed because of the virus threat, but the positive and joyful atmosphere of this conference, especially to women farmers, was palpable.

Submitted by Cindy Chastain

April 2020

California

Although California was the first state to go into "shelter-in-place," staff kept busy finding resources that would help small farmers and agricultural workers around California. The UC Davis Western Center of Agricultural Health and Safety has compiled a list of resources in Spanish and English to help agricultural workers combat COVID-19. Here is [their page](#). Additionally, the American Farmland Trust released the [Farmer Relief Fund](#). Each applicant may receive up to \$1000 in this time of need.



California AgrAbility Director Fadi Fathallah presented on AgrAbility program services and ergonomics research for a group of agriculture teachers from Sonoma County. The gathering was part of the Extension Education and Tour with Sonoma County Ag Teachers. The event was hosted by the UC Davis Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering.

California AgrAbility participated in the March Ability Tools AT Advocates Monthly (Zoom) Meeting. This meeting is provided by Ability Tools and CFILC in partnership with the CA Department of Rehabilitation. The meeting began with an icebreaker activity in which attendees shared a favorite AT related to World Down Syndrome Day (March 21). AgrAbility staff shared the *Memo to Me* web service that sends reminders for different things such as watering plants and feeding chickens. AgrAbility staff updated members on upcoming events that have been postponed. However, staff encouraged AT Advocates to watch for future AgrAbility events in which they can do outreach along with AgrAbility staff.

Staff joined the virtual Wildfire Induced Air Pollution Mitigation & Assessment Symposium. With the increase of wildfires in California, farmers and farmworkers continue to work through smoky days. Researchers are slowly trying to understand the effects of aerosols with more non-organic material burned from buildings such as homes. Researcher Kathryn Conlon is investigating the health outcomes through targeting at-risk populations, such as farmworkers, by creating exposure profiles. Through this, she hopes to see the health effect in workers who were still out in the fields while previous fires were burning.



Submitted by Sara Wat

April 2020

Georgia



In the new way of doing business, staff are learning all of the benefits of virtual interaction. As part of the FarmAgain/AgrAbility Project, staff normally are in the field meeting with farmers. Now they are using Zoom and Facetime to interact on a regular basis. While it has been a learning curve for most, they have been able to embrace the change to keep their farmers moving



forward.



At the beginning of March, Georgia AgrAbility had two farmers in North Georgia receive Jiffy Hitch PTO hitches on their tractors. One of the farmers had the 3-point system while the other farmer received the new tongue pull system. Both farmers are extremely happy and said they are so excited not to have to wait for someone to connect the implements for them. Vocational Rehab in Georgia paid for the entire cost of the systems. Fred and Linde Farnsworth with Jiffy Hitch have an awesome product and are great to work with.

Submitted by Rebecca Brightwell

April 2020

Indiana



Indiana AgrAbility participated as an exhibitor at the 2020 Indiana Small Farm Conference. AgrAbility partnered with the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Indiana, the Indiana AgVet project, and the LIFE Project in the exhibit. Over 450 attendees attended educational sessions, keynote speaker



sessions, poster sessions, and visited with over 50 exhibitors.

Steve Swain, Indiana AgrAbility rural rehabilitation specialist, conducted three farm visits as preliminary visits to them applying for Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services funding. Another farm visit was conducted to check with a former client on the condition of a Life Essentials Pilot lift and the prototype for the current Life Essentials truck lift. Farm visits have since been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Submitted by Steve Swain

April 2020

Maine

[Boots to Bushels \(B2B\)](#) started in January 2020 with sixteen students attending classes on the Veterans Administration Togus campus in Augusta, Maine, with plans for four months of classroom training covering topics from soil health to crop planning to marketing. In May, six months of practical fieldwork training was planned at the Togus community gardens with the goal of developing a CSA and building a supportive cohort of beginning veteran farmers. Then, as with the rest of the world, COVID-19 struck, and the VA had to focus on the health of their at-risk veteran population and canceled all recreational therapy programs, including B2B. In an attempt to salvage the learning opportunity, Zoom classes will continue through April, and starting in May, 7 out of the 16 participants are going to finish out the program at veteran-owned farm, Chase Stream Farm. The students will get the same benefit of getting weekly CSA shares, and gain practical farm and marketing skills. [Chase Stream Farm](#) is owned by Anne Devin (AgrAbility outreach coordinator) and her husband Tim, both retired USMC.

Maine AgrAbility's Kelley Spencer exhibited agricultural information and assistive technology ideas at the 2020 Brain Injury Association of America, Maine Chapter, Brain Injury Resource Fair on March 2. This event was part of Brain Injury Awareness month activities. Maine AgrAbility recently shared the [#13DayswithBIAA](#) resource on Facebook and Twitter. The message may be helpful to other AgrAbility clients across the US. The [#13DayswithBIAA](#) campaign is to support members of the community who are feeling isolated or anxious.



March 5-7, Maine AgrAbility exhibited FishAbility at the annual Fishermen's Forum. Many great conversations were had about stress and available resources. Staff revised the farm stress display to represent fishing industry topics. It was a great conversation starter: "What Stresses You Out?" And the responses were consistent: the 'under 30' age group said 'everything' stressed them out, whereas the 'over 50' age group just chuckled at the question and said, 'Not much stresses me out anymore'. Must be true then, that "with age comes wisdom."



Maine AgrAbility shared a new [success story on its website](#) about a double amputee farmer in Central Maine. After two seasons adjusting to a 'new normal', Bill is a full partner with Carol on the farm again. "We are a team," she said. "Maine AgrAbility got Billy back on his feet. Now he has all the tools he needs-it's been tremendous."

Submitted by Lani Carlson

April 2020

Missouri

As part of Missouri's commitment to rural mental health, Missouri AgrAbility was a sponsor for the 2020 North American Raspberry & Blackberry Conference, March 3-6, in St. Louis, Missouri. On behalf of Missouri AgrAbility, Dr. Sean Brotherson, a professor and Extension family science specialist at North Dakota State University (NDSU), presented a "Tools for your wellness toolbox in times of stress" platform session, followed by Karen Funkenbusch and Brotherson leading a farm & family, "More tools for your wellness toolbox in times of farm stress" roundtable discussion. For information about the conference, [click here](#).

Submitted by Karen Funkenbusch and Shon Bishop

March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month. AgrAbility awareness efforts included website and social media posts each day of March that featured a unique fact related to brain injury, farming, ranching, rural life and/or military veterans. Additional information regarding the daily Brain Injury Fact of the Day was on the Brain Injury Association of Missouri website with a link to the Missouri AgrAbility website. The #MOAgrAbility recognition was featured on each social media and website post.

AgrAbility marketing was conducted at the School Principals Conference held at the Lake of the Ozarks. Maureen Cunningham, BIA-MO Executive Director, hosted an exhibit and discussed the Missouri AgrAbility Project with conference attendees who work with future farmers and their families.

Submitted by Maureen Cunningham

April 2020

North Carolina



On March 2, North Carolina AgrAbility Partnership participated as a presenter at the 2020 AgriShop Series in Vance County. The event was organized by NC Cooperative Extension and was attended by around 60 farmers from Vance and other nearby counties. NC AgrAbility presented on the importance of keeping farmers safe and how to prevent musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Attendees had the opportunity to try some ergonomic tools, do some exercises, and register to the NC AgrAbility listserv.

Hagan Kiser, occupational therapist doctoral student from Mary Baldwin University, is currently completing her doctoral experiential component by working with the NC AgrAbility program. She developed the [Ergonomics in Farming](#) video which seeks to increase knowledge on common MSDs in the farming population and teach how ergonomics can help to decrease the risk of such injuries.

Submitted by Beatriz (Betty) Rodriguez

April 2020

Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility staff are using their work-from-home time to present webinars on Ohio AgrAbility, AT, and farming and gardening with arthritis, to their farmers, stakeholders and the Ohio agricultural and Ohio State University communities. OSU Extension's Ag and Natural Resources division has organized an Ag Madness Bracket and is holding three webinars each weekday on agriculture and natural resource topics. OSU Ag Safety and Health presented three webinars April 3, and Ohio AgrAbility is presenting three webinars Friday April 10: "Making your Events, Festivals and Agritourism Accessible to the Public," "Assistive Technology to Keep you Farming," and "Farming and Gardening with Arthritis and Other Physical Limitations."



Submitted by Laura Akgerman

April 2020

Pennsylvania

It's fair to say that many staff saw things playing out much differently when March first began. AgrAbility PA staff members were set to attend the NTW, to present at outreach events, and were looking forward to spring's arrival. A lot has changed - but the collective wish of the AgrAbility PA team is that everyone is staying safe and healthy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. If there's ever a time to rely on family, friends, or colleagues for support (albeit socially distant support), now's the time!

Gratefully, the AgrAbility PA team is overcoming these challenging times and team members are still fulfilling the commitment to provide services and support to farmers and ag workers with disabilities and health conditions. The team is adhering to governmental and organizational regulations and guidelines, both from Penn State Extension and UCP Central PA. This has required some creative thinking and outside-the-box arrangements when it comes to providing client services, but things are going well. AgrAbility PA team members are healthy, working remotely, and looking forward to in-person networking with AgrAbility colleagues in the future!

In early March, Abbie Spackman provided an interactive presentation to more than 50 4-H members and families about AgrAbility. Abbie used the 4-H Pledge as a way to connect to what AgrAbility does. She shared her experience in 4-H and how it has helped her personally and professionally in life.

I pledge my head to clearer thinking,
My heart to greater loyalty,
My hands to larger service,
and my health to better living,
for my club, my community, my country, and my world.



The month ended with a hopeful story. "If more people, like the high school students with the Tyrone FFA chapter, experienced a day in someone else's shoes," says a farmer with a disability, "compassion for one another would surely rise."

In consultation with staff from AgrAbility PA, the students set up an AgrAbility course where they simulated experiencing a vision, hearing, or mobility challenge while trying to complete daily farm tasks. "I learned how difficult it was for farmers to complete daily tasks when they have a disability...I take things for granted and this challenge reminded me of this," said Trinity Lingafelt, a sophomore in high school.



The full article is attached as images. The article only appeared in print.

Submitted by Kendra Martin

April 2020

Tennessee

Hope all the AgrAbility family and clients stay safe at home and healthy! Like the rest of the world in crisis from the COVID-19 pandemic, Tennessee AgrAbility is working remotely and has modified their normal working conditions to prioritize the health and safety of the employees and community it serves. TNAP continues taking phone calls and emails. Staff are staying flexible, eager to provide education in alternative formats and delivery methods. TNAP is staying positive and trying to see the silver lining in this pandemic by using time wisely to catch up on all the tasks that get pushed down the priority list in overscheduled, busy lives. Staff are making phone calls to clients with disabilities who are most at risk with compromised immune systems. TNAP has shared several AgriSafe network educational trainings plus NAP webinars. They will continue sharing information and webinars on the TN AgrAbility Facebook page. Please keep sharing any relevant webinars with National AgrAbility or with us and TNAP will post them. Stay safe. Keep positive thoughts and prayers going.

Before social distancing started, TNAP presented at the March 13 East TN New Farmer Academy. There were 23 attendees 16 of whom were veterans or their spouses. The first class is "Who is Who" in the local USDA and TN ag resources for beginning farmers. All veterans were encouraged to become members of the Farmer Veteran Coalition and were told about AgrAbility services.

In early March, a series of large tornadoes tore through West and Middle TN with most of the damage in the Nashville and Cookeville areas and many deaths. TSU reported that there was roughly \$20 million in damage to the TN State University main campus and farm as a result of the recent tornadoes, but no loss of life because campus was on spring break. TN New Farmer Academy was scheduled to start March 16 and had over 50 registered with the West TN New Farmer Academy scheduled later. Currently scheduled meetings of all three New Farmer Academies are postponed until it is safe to meet again. All Extension face-to-face meetings are suspended until April 30 due to public health concerns.

Do you have 20/20 vision when it comes to agriculture safety? TNAP supported Agriculture Safety Awareness Program (ASAP) week, which was March 1 - 7, 2020! Staff promoted safe and healthy practices on farms with educational sessions that were scheduled for each day of the ASAP week. ASAP is part of the American Farm Bureau's Health and Safety Network of professionals who share an interest in identifying and decreasing safety and health risks. This year's ASAP program theme 20/20 Vision on Ag Safety reminds us that it is everyone's responsibility to prioritize safety on the farm. AFBF President Zippy Duvall wrote in a [Zipline column](#) about mental health: "If more of us acknowledge it's a problem-and there is no shame in admitting it-then we can begin to help ourselves and each other."

Next time you go to Memphis, TN, staff suggest you visit one of TNAP's friends, [Alpha Omega Veteran Services \(AOVS\) Urban Farm](#). TN AgrAbility has been working with AOVS Urban Farm in Memphis thru partners with Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN. In addition to the main farm, this project is developing a one-acre "wellness garden" on the grounds. The wellness garden seeks to meet the therapeutic needs of clients by offering sensory-engaging experiences such as a water feature and additional horticultural therapy opportunities. TNAP is helping AOVS organize a [veterans' horticulture therapy workshop June 13](#) with UT Gardens Horticultural

Therapist Derrick Stowell. Derrick hopes the program encourages interested veterans to become involved with their organization by sharing knowledge about the therapeutic benefits of working in horticulture or agriculture and by sharing AgrAbility services that are offered. One piece of good news is that AOV's Urban Farm sold out in five minutes at the most recent farmers' market. Please find a local farmer to support either through a community supported agriculture (CSA) group or a farmers market.

[Tennessee's first grain bin safety and rescue class](#) was held March 7 in Carroll County, West Tennessee. This event was sponsored by: UT Extension - Carroll County; Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads T.A.R.S.; Carroll Co. Emergency Management; Carroll Co. Fire Department; TN AgrAbility; West Carroll FFA; and Renfro Farms. Pioneer and Espey Gin purchased four Turtle Rescue Tubes to be distributed throughout the county.

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

April 2020

Texas

Texas AgrAbility has had to cancel in-person workshops and trainings through the end of May due to Covid-19. Staff are exploring ways to host a virtual agriculture business workshop with multiple sessions for beginning farmers and ranchers, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

Texas AgrAbility and BattleGround to Breaking Ground are partnering to host a Texas cottage food law webinar on April 16. The webinar will explore the types of products that fall under Texas cottage food law, rules and regulations, and more. The webinar will be recorded for later viewing on the [Texas AgrAbility YouTube Channel](#).

Submitted by Makenzie McLaurin Thomas

April 2020

Washington



Washington State AgrAbility Program (WSAP) hosted its first workshop March 6th, facilitated by Curt Johnson, assistive technology specialist with Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP). Sixty-two percent of survey respondents reported hearing about AgrAbility for the first time.

WSAP collaborated with the Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Network in a presentation during the March 6th workshop. Brett with Safer Homes, a Stress Assistance Network partner, provided insight on firearm safety, available tools, and programs to ensure firearms are safely locked up, keeping household members safe.

Submitted by Kristen Hinton

April 2020

AgrAbility for Africa

The hearts of the staff of AgrAbility for Africa go out to everyone in time of fear and isolation. We hope that no one reading this, nor their family or friends, have been severely affected by the dreaded COVID-19. And, it may be worse if faced with disabilities or pre-existing conditions. Staff hope that those who are alone, overwhelmed, and need help can still reach out for support from the AgrAbility network.

AgrAbility for Africa staff, faced with the challenges due to COVID-19 to reach those that require their services and to increase their outreach and impact to farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers faced with disabilities across Africa, have developed a collaboration with Professor Barry Pittendrigh and Professor Julia Bello-Bravo of Scientific Animations without Borders (SAWBO). SAWBO is a Michigan State University-based program to develop educational health and agriculture digital clips to enhance farm productivity, farm safety, mental health, children's health, and wellness in rural farming communities across Africa through low-literacy animations.



AgrAbility for Africa is working on a partnership with the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) to develop prototypes of low-cost motorized and leveraged bicycles and wheelchairs from recycled bicycle parts to enhance mobility of farmers impacted by disability and to support mobility of extension workers and rural health workers to reach those that need their support. Under the arrangement, AgrAbility for Africa and UIRI will develop prototypes of the technologies, then pass on the skills to youth for the purposes of scaling the inventions and increasing access to low-cost assistive technologies for many people in Africa who need it.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

April 2020

Upcoming Events

- Name** AgrAbility National Training Workshop - **NEW DATES SET**
Dates **November 30-December 3, 2020**
City, State Madison, Wisconsin
Contact Info/Web link <http://www.agrability.org/agrability-national-training-workshop/>
- Name** ATLA (Assistive Technology of Alaska) Free Live Webinars: Various topics
Dates April 16, 23, 30, May 7 & May 14, Thursdays 2:00p.m.-3:00p.m. AKDT (Alaska Time)
City, State Online Webinars
Contact Info/Web link **Topics:**
April 16: COVID-19: Solutions for Patients & Caregivers
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Dz8HNQ4bReSx5YCumRiKxQ
April 23: Zoom Accessibility
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6Q1Vt94fQhi27tCP4ijXQw
April 30: Solutions for Distance Communication
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yZ1A1DosRk-J0BgTU7qSNA
May 7: Solutions for Managing Focus & Attention
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sKft5I89SmWp6ISJdATF5w
May 14: Get Connected: Solutions for Vision & Hearing Loss
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_JdoaGibWSFO4FBDqtFGvOA
- Name** Coffee Chat with ATLA (Assistive Technology of Alaska)
Dates April 16-May 14, Every Thursday 11:00a.m.-12:00p.m. AKDT (Alaska Time)
City, State Online via Zoom
Contact Info/Web link ATLA will be hosting a virtual open house via Zoom for Alaskans to log on and chat, get answers to their questions, and connect with their specialists. Every week they will be discussing a different topic, but encourage folks to come with any question!
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4enA88aJQmezX8rS-z8XDg
Topics:
April 16: Vision Solutions
April 23: Aging in Place Solutions
April 30: Communication Solutions
May 7: Hearing Solutions
May 14: Independent Living Solutions

Name "Stress and Safety: Decrease one, Increase the other" Webinar
Dates April 20, 2020
City, State Online webinar
Contact Info/Web link <https://tinyurl.com/t8gj5a7>

NAME 2020 West Tennessee New Farmer Academy: (Scholarships for beginning farmers with disabilities and veterans)
Dates 7-month certificate program April 23 – October 22, 2020
City, State Memphis, Tennessee
Contact Info/Web link <http://www.tnstate.edu/extension/NFA.aspx>

Name Seven Secrets of Effective Farmers
Dates May 7, June 4, August 6, September 3, 2020; 11:00a.m.-12:00p.m. CDT
City, State Online webinar
Contact Info/Web link <https://7secrets.questionpro.com/>

Name World Pork Expo
Dates June 3-5, 2020 - **CANCELLED**
City, State Des Moines, Iowa
Contact Info/Web link <https://tinyurl.com/tng564r>
Note: the 2021 World Pork Expo is scheduled for June 9-11.

Name TN AgrAbility Project/UT Gardens Veterans Horticultural Therapy Workshop
Dates June 13, 2020
City, State Memphis, Tennessee
Contact Info/Web link <https://utgardens.wildapricot.org/event-3761992> or, for a PDF flyer on the event, [click here](#).

Name Midwest Poultry Federation (MPF) Convention
Dates July 9-11, 2020
City, State Minneapolis, Minnesota
Contact Info/Web link <http://midwestpoultry.com/>