

AgrAbility e·Note

June 2020

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

National AgrAbility Project News

AgrAbility Virtual State Fair!

Since many state fairs around the country are being canceled, AgrAbility will be holding a Virtual State Fair in October! This social media event will highlight one SRAP per day in addition to the National AgrAbility Project and other AgrAbility-related resources and stakeholders. Look for details coming soon.



AgrAbility Virtual New Staff Training is on its way. Since new SRAP staff members were not able to participate in new staff training at the NTW in March, the NAP is recording web versions of new staff training presentations via WebEx. The first installations of these web recordings should be available next week.



The NAP was informed that its video [AgrAbility: Restoring Hope. Renewing Productivity with Eric Beckman](#) was chosen to receive a 2020 ASABE Educational Aid Blue Ribbon Award. Many thanks to all who contributed, especially Nebraska AgrAbility.

The NAP is planning a webinar on farm succession planning, particularly for underserved populations. The tentative date/time is Wednesday, July 8 at 3:00 p.m. EDT. Look for details coming soon.

The NAP was saddened (and shocked) to hear that due to a realignment of priorities at the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), AbleData will be discontinued on September 27th, 2020. AbleData has been a premier assistive technology database for decades and is a non-funded partner with the NAP. Content is still available for now at <https://abledata.acl.gov/>.



Toolbox Spotlight

Things are really heating up outside! Worn like a vest, the [ExtremeMist Personal Cooling System](#) generates a cloud of cooling moisture that can reportedly reduce the ambient temperature around face, neck, and upper body by up to 30°. The system consists of a 2-liter-capacity hydration



backpack and a misting unit, which includes a rechargeable battery-powered pump plus connectors, hoses, clips, and nozzles.

State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

Alaska

May brought more virtual engagements with Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) offering free live webinars on various topics [More](#)

By request, DeShana York also did a virtual presentation on May 7 for the Anchorage Garden Club group to inform the group about the AK AgrAbility project and resources.

California

Staff participated in the "Stress, Resilience, and Resources: Responding to the Impacts of COVID-19 on Farms" webinar presented by Dr. Leslie Forstadt and Maine AgrAbility. During this pandemic, many farmers are feeling more stress... [More](#)

| On your body | On your mind | On your behavior |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Headache | Anxiety | Overeating or overdrinking |
| Muscle tension or pain | Restlessness | Angry outbursts |
| Chest pain | Lack of motivation or focus | Drug or alcohol misuse |
| Fatigue | Frustrated, overwhelmed | Substance use |
| Changes in sex drive | Irritability or anger | Social withdrawal |
| Sleeping upset | Thoughts of death | Exercising less often |
| Stomach problems | | |

California AgrAbility staff attended the Mexican Consulate Health Window Providers meeting via Zoom. [More](#)



Staff continue to attend AgriSafe's Think Tank webinars. The Zenith presented COVID-19 resources to address communication by promoting action, being credible, expressing empathy, communicating with respect, and reaching out by looking for new ways to communicate. [More](#)

Georgia

On May 28th, Georgia AgrAbility hosted a workshop featuring Dr. Therese Willkomm called "Creating Low Cost AT Solutions for Upper Extremities". The participants loved seeing all of the new innovative items that Dr. Willkomm has created!



Please join GA AgrAbility for the remaining two webinars in the series



1. Tuesday, June 23rd 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. "Creating Low Cost Assistive Technology Solutions for Lower Extremities" <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1068880740045609228>
2. Tuesday, July 28th 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. "New Fabrication tools, materials, and techniques for making AT solutions in minutes" <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/230539407750147084>

Staff attended the Maine AgrAbility webinar "Stress, Resilience, and Resources: Responding to the Impacts of COVID - 19 on Farms" and were thankful to hear information on how to assist farmers during the pandemic with the many stressors that they are facing.

Illinois

Farm Corps, a partnership of Illinois organizations (including IL AgrAbility) and agricultural entities, is working to address the labor gap caused by COVID-19. The program pairs furloughed or laid off veterans with producers across the state of IL who have an immediate need for on-the-farm labor. Additional information can be found by [clicking here](#).

Indiana

May was filled with catching up on projects and answering VR farm assessment questions and supplying quotes. [More](#)

As a part of the AgrAbility team, staff have attended weekly zoom meetings with Purdue ag & natural resources Extension educators for updates on Covid-19 and Extension activities. They have also taken part in multiple webinars related to Covid-19 and conducted follow-up calls and e-mail communications with clients and vendors.

Kansas

During the stay-at-home order in Kansas, Kansas AgrAbility Project (KAP) staff, along with partner AT specialists, have been participating in a weekly Zoom meeting (AT & Caffeine) that allows all staff to share their resources and experiences that include videos related to mental health during the pandemic ([click here for videos](#)), podcasts, and most recently, AgrAbility in Georgia's series.

Karin Rasmussen and other KAP staff have found the shared materials and strategies from recent webinars on coping with stress, anxiety, and depression, have been in high demand during phone conversations, texts, and video chats with farmers and ranchers and their families. [More](#)

KAP staff are working on "Welcome to KAP" folders to give to all new clients. [More](#)

Lesia Clubine, AT ag specialist and quilter, took advantage of her quilting skills and lots of scrap fabric to provide home-made masks with filter inserts for the local nursing facility staff. [More](#)



KAP AT Ag Specialist Cassie Ramon brought gardening to a new level. She constructed raised beds along with an arch to grow vines and a bench for her family to share when working her plants. [More](#)

KAP recently released two new publications: a new [KAP trifold brochure](#) and a [bulletin board card](#). [More](#)

Maine

With the recent restrictions to travel and event cancelations, Maine AgrAbility staff have been busy developing webinars on relevant topics.

On May 14, Project Coordinator Lani Carlson presented "Maine AgrAbility 101" as part of the "Employment for ME Employment Services Workforce Development System" monthly webinar series. There were 78 attendees learning about the program, resources, and network partners.

On May 20, 2020, staff hosted the webinar "Stress, Resilience, and Resources: Responding to the Impacts of Covid-19 on Farms". [More](#)

On June 2, Maine AgrAbility presented "Arthritis and Agriculture: The Importance of Protecting Your Joints". [More](#)

ME AgrAbility has an upcoming webinar, "The Essentials of Accessibility: School and Community Gardens", scheduled for June 16, 2020. [More](#)

Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC) has redesigned their Level 1 OT field work experience for spring 2020. Three Maine AgrAbility staffers have delivered interactive webinars to the students about AgrAbility farm visits (Brie Weisman, OT/L), assistive technology (Kelley Spencer, COT, ATP) and adaptive driving (Ketra Crosson, OT/L).

Staff have recently finalized publication of the "Veteran rack card" as well as a "Checklist for Veterans Who are Farming" to help veterans become familiar with informational resources/agencies/organizations in Maine. These new resources are available on the [Network & Resources page of Maine AgrAbility's website](#).

A couple of other recent publications Maine AgrAbility helped to develop are:

- [Bulletin #1063](#), "The Benefits and Drawbacks of Farm Work Experience in Maine"
- [Bulletin #2021](#), "Why Beekeeping in Maine Might Be a Suitable Enterprise for Persons with Disabilities"

Michigan

Ned Stoller from Michigan AgrAbility has become a contributing member to [instructables](#), a website that hosts a platform for people who like to make things (like Ned does) and encourages community members to explore the site and share projects so others may benefit from them (Ned certainly fits this!). [More](#)

Michigan AgrAbility continues to share resources with their clients and visitors to the [Michigan AgrAbility Facebook page](#). [More](#)

Michigan AgrAbility's own Ned Stoller rocked the [home-made hay bale dolly](#) on the Michigan AgrAbility You Tube Channel. [More](#)

Need to climb into the tractor and want a fold up assistive technology step? Well, the [Fold-up Tractor Step](#) is for you! [More](#)

Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility collaborated with the University of Missouri Extension, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program, USDA Farm Service Agency, Missouri Farm Bureau, statewide cooperators, stakeholders and farmers with disabilities and their family members in launching a successful statewide social media campaign promoting mental health awareness and suicide prevention. [More](#)



Karen Funkenbusch and Maureen Cunningham participated in the AgrAbility National Training Workshop planning committee meeting.

Funkenbusch also facilitated a meeting with the Missouri Aging and Disability Research Network committee to discuss resources available to offer aging clients who may be struggling during these uncertain times, rapid-fire COVID-19 response grants, and potential research opportunities.

Missouri AgrAbility Project Director Karen Funkenbusch shared about resources and

programs for Missouri farmers and ranchers with an inter-professional rural health panel for 32 student pharmacists at UMKC School of Pharmacy enrolled in the rural health & agromedicine course. [More](#)

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) participated in Mental Health Awareness Month with social media and website postings. [More](#)

BIA-MO's support group facilitator networking calls and e-newsletter encouraged the facilitators to share the mental health awareness of farmers and ranchers with support group members in rural Missouri to increase awareness of the MAP.

Nebraska

The Nebraska AgrAbility team wrote an article for the GovDelivery newsletter that goes to all Nebraska USDA employees. This article features basic information regarding AgrAbility to inform FSA ag professionals about the project since they work directly with producers across the state.

Staff have been reaching out to clients, talking to them about services available and whether they have been affected by COVID-19 directly or indirectly.



The AgrAbility coloring book is still in progress, with requests to youth for drawing pages such as this one for grain bin safety. If anyone has a budding artist in the family with some free time on his or her hands, staff welcome art suitable for coloring!

New Mexico

New Mexico AgrAbility Project welcomes three new occupational therapy interns from the University of New Mexico for the summer. [More](#)

The New Mexico AgrAbility Project invites SRAPs to see their spring newsletter highlighting NAP COVID-19 resources, quality of life information for farm producers, project partner updates, and technology corner, by [clicking here](#).

North Carolina

During the time of COVID-19, NC AgrAbility Partnership has been working on providing resources to farmers through the NCA&T Cooperative Extension webpage, NC AgrAbility website, and the Facebook page. Here is one of the resources developed: "[User Friendly Technology for Farming and Gardening](#)".

On May 7, Beatriz Rodriguez presented a webinar at Extension Extended Virtual Programming Series: "How to Stay Safe in your Garden". Attendees were interested in connecting to NC AgrAbility by registering to the listserv and require resources.

On May 14, Beatriz Rodriguez participated as a panelist in an AgrAbility webinar: "[Disability and Agriculture Outside the U.S. - an International Panel Discussion](#)".

Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility staff have been focusing on education and outreach this spring. [More](#)

OAP Program Director Dee Jepsen and two OSU students, Dr. Leah Schwinn, DOT, and Andrew Kramer, MPH, presented three Fitness for Farm Life webinars: "Body Mechanics and Safe Lifting", "Stretches and Exercises", and "Health, Wellness and Chronic Pain Management", in May. [More](#)



Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA staff continues to work and provide services and support to farmers and ag workers throughout the state. [More](#)

AgrAbility PA staff are reaching out to some of the farmers that the project has worked with in recent times to learn more about how COVID-19 has impacted their operation. [More](#)



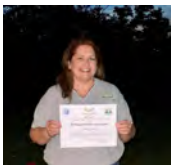
There has been more publicity for the ag students connected to Tyrone FFA as they "walk the walk" to learn about farmers with disabilities! Their story was featured on [AGDaily](#).

Tennessee

Breaking Ground, produced by the TN Council of Developmental Disabilities since 1990, informs readers of innovative programs and practices, disability policy issues, and stories about the lives of Tennesseans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. [More](#)

Three new state chapters just became part of the Farmer Veteran Coalition Family: Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee. [More](#)

Congratulations to FVC of TN officially announcing in May they became a new chapter. TN AgrAbility is proud to partner with FVC of TN and support Homegrown by Heroes/Pick TN Products. [More](#)



Congratulations to Eileen Legualt, TN AgrAbility, on receiving the very *first* Farmer Veteran Coalition Tennessee Distinguished Service Award. Legualt was very instrumental in forming the Farmer Veteran Coalition Tennessee chapter. It is a much-deserved award.

Haywood County, TN, hosted a virtual Progressive Agricultural Safety Day for fourth graders. Due to schools closing in the spring, the students were going to miss their annual safety day. [More](#)

Texas

Applications are now open for the newest cohort BattleGround to Breaking Ground training program. The program includes 16 weeks of agriculture business planning courses, disability support services, veteran support services, [More](#)



Texas AgrAbility and BattleGround to Breaking Ground will be



hosting a virtual agriculture business workshop series June 23 - July 7. The series will be hosted as webinars on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. CDT. [More](#)

Utah

During the recent pandemic, several potential clients who are struggling financially have contacted AgrAbility of Utah (AofU). Using state guidelines, staff has carefully started working with them to help receive assistive technology from other agencies.

Weekly check-in calls have been helpful for AofU staff to connect and share their concerns, questions, and positive experiences with each other. AofU staff have a broad knowledge of agriculture and are willing to share this knowledge and help each other on the team.

Virginia

Garland Mason, program coordinator, and Dr. Kim Niewolny, project director, authored and published extension publication *Farm Stress and Grief in the Time of COVID-19: Strategies and Resources* as part of the Farm Safety, Health, & Wellness Initiative. [Click here](#) to view the PDF.

AgrAbility Virginia continues to be active in NSF-funded projects that aim to

1. advance affordable, wearable robotic technologies developed specifically for farmers with mobility restrictions, and
2. explore the role of socio-technology to addressing sustainability on small farms. ... [More](#)

The new AgrAbility Virginia Advisory Group is formed and plans for an initial meeting are being organized for the end of June. This group consists of farmers and practitioners who help guide the work of the AgrAbility Virginia team.

The new AgrAbility Virginia brochure and website will be finalized and published by the end of June.

Washington

Washington State AgrAbility Program (WSAP) hosted its second webinar May 7th facilitated by Curt Johnson, assistive technology specialist with Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP). Sixteen people participated from across the state.

WSAP staff has been attending several webinars on behavioral health and safety.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin staff recently held two virtual meetings: the first being with the VA FARMS members in WI and the second being open to all. Both meetings included an informative guest speaker from the WI Farm Service Agency office ... [More](#)

AgrAbility for Africa

On the 14th of May, the National AgrAbility Project held a Zoom webinar with an international panel discussing the international perspective on vocational rehabilitation and assistive technologies. AgrAbility for Africa staff contributed during the presentation to discuss the state of vocational rehabilitation in Uganda, [More](#)



[AgrAbility](#) for Africa, amidst the hold on physical community outreach and educational projects, has had to go virtual to continue to provide support and care for farmers faced with disabilities in Uganda. AgrAbility for Africa staff is working to enhance outreach and impact through expanding partner networks and collaborations. [More](#)

AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [Tyrone FFA students get first-hand understanding of farming with a disability](#) (AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians)
- [Program Pairs Unemployed Veterans with Farmers Who are Hiring](#) (Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited)
- [US \(AK\): Program assists agricultural workers with disabilities](#) (Alaska AgrAbility Project)
- [Arthritis and agriculture webinar June 2](#) (Maine AgrAbility)
- [Farm Corps offers jobs for veterans](#) (Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited)
- [AgrAbility Virginia Program Evaluation Brief: 2016 Survey Results](#) (AgrAbility Virginia)
- [Program pairs unemployed veterans with farms needing labor during COVID-19](#) (Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited)
- [Webinar on school, community gardens accessibility is June 16](#) (Maine AgrAbility)
- [Virtual Agriculture Business Workshop Series](#) (Texas AgrAbility)

Other News

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

- [Funds for Farmers to Families Food Box Program](#)
 - [Supporting veterans and responding to farm stress](#)
 - [USDA Invests \\$4.8 Million In Three 1890 Centers of Excellence](#)
 - [Over three years](#) - Widow of farmer who died by suicide shares her story and where to go for help.
 - [Learn about B&I CARES Act Program loans](#)
 - [Games teach farm safety skills to young children](#)
 - [Efforts underway to get food from farms to needy](#)
 - [Managing farm stress: what works for me](#)
 - [FSA expands set-aside loan provision](#)
 - [UnitedAg expands behavioral health resources](#)
 - [Urban ag and community compost funding](#)
 - [New USDA team to better serve beginning farmers](#)
 - [ALB relaunches Lamb Resource Center](#)
 - [New online dashboard to inform better food policy](#)
 - [USDA expands Farmers.gov features](#)
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[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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June 2020

Alaska

May brought more virtual engagements with Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) offering free live webinars on various topics entitled: "Solutions for Managing Focus and Attention", "Get Connected: Solutions for Vision & Hearing Loss", and "Solutions for Isolated Seniors". ATLA also continued offering "Coffee Chat with ATLA" where participants heard a short presentation on a topic and then were encouraged to have a dialogue with Q&A on the topics. Topics included: "Solutions for Alaskans who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing", "Independent Living Solutions", and one open forum session. On May 28, ATLA teamed up with Art Nash & DeShana York to offer a chat on accessible gardening. All of the chats were well attended. Since the 'hunker down' order was initiated in Alaska, like many places, there is a new interest in gardening. Also like other places, there is a new insurgence of "victory gardens". In Anchorage there is an initiative by volunteers called "Anchor Gardens" where folks are getting together to share gardening education and resources. Some folks have sold their harvests at farmer's markets but it is exciting to see others new to gardening having a newfound interest in growing their own food and having a newfound interest in food security.

Submitted by DeShana York

June 2020

California

Staff participated in the "Stress, Resilience, and Resources: Responding to the Impacts of COVID-19 on Farms" webinar presented by Dr. Leslie Forstadt and Maine AgrAbility. During this pandemic, many farmers are feeling more stress due to chain supply changes, decreased sales with less market demand in produce, changes in childcare with school closures, workers unable to come to work, and many more. Mayo Clinic published an informative resource for individuals to determine the signs of stress and depression affecting your body, mood, and behavior.

| Older your body | Older your mood | Older your behavior |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Headaches | Worry | Changeability of personality |
| Weight changes or gain | Restlessness | Highly irritable |
| Chest pain | Lack of interest in life | Clay or alcohol abuse |
| Fatigue | Thinking obsessively | Isolation |
| Change in sex drive | Intensity of anger | Social withdrawal |
| Increased use of alcohol | Excessive apologizing | Changing how often |
| Other symptoms | | |

See the image for Mayo Clinic's findings. With the increase in stress, it is important to recognize this change, and properly address the situation. Forstadt gives many great ideas for farmers and representatives to approach this situation such as connecting with others and consumers, building resilience through exercise, understanding your signals, practicing gratitude, and creating a resilient community with members becoming interdependent. During this trying time, it is important to reach out to encourage and support one another to create a stronger community that will be able to overcome this obstacle.

California AgrAbility staff attended the Mexican Consulate Health Window Providers meeting via Zoom. This is a collaboration that offers services at the Mexican Consulate in Sacramento which serves the Northern California counties. Other agencies attending the virtual meeting included Community Medical Centers, Health Education Council, Opening Doors, and UC Davis MIND Institute. Each agency presented an overview of how they have adjusted their services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations in this association are working together to deliver services efficiently while minimizing person-to-person contact. The Mexican Consulate personnel will be visiting various migrant centers along with CalOES representatives to distribute printed information to these communities which have limited access to internet-based information.



Staff continue to attend AgriSafe's Think Tank webinars. The Zenith presented COVID-19 resources to address communication by promoting action, being credible, expressing empathy, communicating with respect, and reaching out by looking for new ways to communicate. They highlighted the essential elements of an infection prevention program which will be necessary and vital to ensure the health and safety of

farmers, farmworkers, and agricultural workers. With this, Zenith created a checklist with a guideline of the expectations for each farming capacity along with a comprehensive list of resources including infographics. Check it out [here](#).

Submitted by Sara Wat

June 2020

Indiana

May was filled with catching up on projects and answering VR farm assessment questions and supplying quotes. It also included the attempt to conduct a virtual farm assessment of completed VR farm modifications (notice it was an attempt). Staff took part in a zoom meeting with the Indiana VR home modification workgroup and Indiana Director of Project Initiatives. Indiana/Purdue regulations have wavered from being able to conduct farm assessments, to not being able to, to now one can with a mask and social distancing. Farmers want to see a person and be able to discuss matters in a more relaxed environment.

Submitted by Steve Swain

June 2020

Kansas

Karin Rasmussen and other KAP staff have found the shared materials and strategies from recent webinars on coping with stress, anxiety, and depression, have been in high demand during phone conversations, texts, and video chats with farmers and ranchers and their families. The combination of ag economic stress and anxiety about Corona virus has impacted KAP clients, families, and other members of rural communities who serve as referral sources and rural service providers.

KAP staff are working on "Welcome to KAP" folders to give to all new clients. KAP is refining materials shared with clients. The packets will include a staff business card, KAP brochure, rural mental health resource list, KS Ag Mediation brochure, and tip sheets selected to reflect the client's identified concerns.

Lesa Clubine, AT ag specialist and quilter, took advantage of her quilting skills and lots of scrap fabric to provide homemade masks with filter inserts for the local nursing facility staff. She enlisted her teen-age boys to cut fabric. Knowledge of her skills quickly spread, and she has provided masks to a variety of groups including co-workers around the state.



KAP AT Ag Specialist Cassie Ramon brought gardening to a new level. Cassie constructed raised beds along with an arch to grow vines and a bench for her family to share when working her plants. Ramon constructed and planted strawberries in vertical PVC pipe with holes for easy access and an innovative space saver. Ramon's creations have not only created access to fresh fruits and vegetables



but also encouraged her toddler son and 93-year-old grandmother to participate in gardening. KAP can utilize Ramon's experience at home when educating Kansans about vertical farming techniques.

KAP recently released two new publications: a new [KAP trifold brochure](#) and a [bulletin board card](#). The bulletin card is 4 1/4" x 11" cardstock and features a plastic sleeve over a printed business card. Loose business cards can slide into the sleeve for potential customers to take while leaving the primary card in place for others.

Submitted by Tawnie Larson

June 2020

Maine

On May 20, 2020, staff hosted the webinar "Stress, Resilience, and Resources: Responding to the Impacts of Covid-19 on Farms". Extension professor Leslie Forstadt, PhD, presented information about stress, building resilience, and available resources to meet farmers' needs during this ever changing time. There were over 30 attendees for this event.

On June 2, Maine AgrAbility presented "Arthritis and Agriculture: The Importance of Protecting Your Joints". Staff collaborated with the Maine CITE Coordinating Center to offer this free webinar on making small changes in farmers' working routines and how using assistive technology (AT) can significantly reduce injury to the joints. This was a discussion of arthritis, the prevalence of the disease in farmers, and possible modifications to reduce its effects. The webinar was recorded and can be viewed on the [Maine AgrAbility website](#).

ME AgrAbility has an upcoming webinar, "The Essentials of Accessibility: School and Community Gardens", scheduled for June 16, 2020. This presentation discusses planning for school and community gardens for all users including those of all ages and abilities. The presentation includes concepts on making the garden an enjoyable destination and how assistive technology in the form of adaptive garden tools can help. For more information and to register for the webinar, visit the [Maine AgrAbility website](#).

Submitted by Lani Carlson

June 2020

Michigan

Ned Stoller from Michigan AgrAbility has become a contributing member to *instructables*, a website that hosts a platform for people who like to make things (like Ned does) and encourages community members to explore the site and share projects so others may benefit from them (Ned certainly fits this!). The projects on the website also include written instructions, photos, and video needed for making the project. Ned is now using this platform to share low-tech assistive technology ideas and tools. You can find Ned's *instructables* page [here](#). Both of the low-tech assistive technology tools highlighted below are posted on this website.

Michigan AgrAbility continues to share resources with their clients and visitors to the [Michigan AgrAbility Facebook page](#). Facebook posts included assistive technology tools such as the Paper Pot Transplanting System, Stand 'n Plant Planter/Transplanter, and the Pull-Out Tailgate Step. Webinar training opportunities are highlighted as well as Covid-19 resources.

Michigan AgrAbility's own Ned Stoller rocked the [home-made hay bale dolly](#) on the Michigan AgrAbility You Tube Channel. Ned used 1 1/2" x 1/4" thick angle iron and 1/2" rebar to create a hay bale dolly. Weld the 15" long rebar onto the 24" long angle iron at 8" spacing. Bolt it to a two-wheel dolly to save your back from carrying bales across the barnyard! Watch the hay bale dolly [You Tube demonstration here](#).

Need to climb into the tractor and want a fold up assistive technology step? Well, the [Fold-up Tractor Step](#) is for you! Ned's engineering background helped to develop this assistive technology tool that allows the step to flip up and down with a rope and stay in place while driving. Other workers who do not need the extra step can just leave it folded up and step on it in place. [Here are instructions](#) for making it.

Submitted by Deb Chester

June 2020

Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility collaborated with the University of Missouri Extension, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program, USDA Farm Service Agency, Missouri Farm Bureau, statewide cooperators, stakeholders and farmers with disabilities and their family members in launching a successful statewide social media campaign promoting mental health awareness and suicide prevention. The social media campaign targeted rural agricultural communities three times a week on the MU Extension #Show-MeStrongFarmFamilies

Facebook site. Missouri's "Together We Can" movement national efforts to raise awareness about mental health ran through the end of May. The campaign Public Service Announcement is found [online here](#), and the link to the [media toolkit here](#).



Submitted by Karen Funkenbusch and Tevin Uthlaut

Missouri AgrAbility Project Director Karen Funkenbusch shared about resources and programs for Missouri farmers and ranchers with an interprofessional rural health panel for 32 student pharmacists at UMKC School of Pharmacy enrolled in the rural health & agromedicine course. Panelists included a large-animal veterinarian, a rural primary care physician, rural nurse practitioner, rural pharmacist, rural health administrator, ag producer, flight nurse, and Funkenbusch representing Missouri AgrAbility Project and MU Extension. The seminar focused on team-based strategies to foster collaboration among interprofessional team members in rural communities to connect farmers and ranchers with care needs to resources for improving safety and health.

Submitted by: Kelly Cochran

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) participated in Mental Health Awareness Month with social media and website postings. These postings focused on the mental health of potential Missouri AgrAbility Project (MAP) clients of farmers and ranchers.

Submitted by: Maureen Cunningham

June 2020

New Mexico

New Mexico AgrAbility Project welcomes three new occupational therapy interns from the University of New Mexico for the summer. Although "on-site" and "in-person" is a moving target, the students will be immersed in conducting tele-AgrAbility services, conducting online learning events and equipment demonstrations, and working at Mandy's Farm as the farm gradually re-opens to apprentices.

Submitted by Carla Wilhite

June 2020

Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility staff have been focusing on education and outreach this spring. Two AgrAbility staff presented training webinars to over 600 Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) staff and contractors. OOD is the state Vocational Rehabilitation agency, and OAP staff work closely with OOD staff and supervisors to serve Ohio AgrAbility farmers.

OAP Program Director Dee Jepsen and two OSU students, Dr. Leah Schwinn, DOT, and Andrew Kramer, MPH, presented three Fitness for Farm Life webinars - "Body Mechanics and Safe Lifting", "Stretches and Exercises", and "Health, Wellness and Chronic Pain Management", in May. All webinars were well attended, and the archived webinars continue to draw more viewers. Videos are available on the OAP website. Fact sheets and other resources will be added to the website after they are reviewed and published. A Train-the-Trainer program is also in final review and will be available late summer/early fall. See the ["Fitness for Farm Life" page here](#).



Submitted by Laura Akgerman

June 2020

Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA staff continue to work and provide services and support to farmers and ag workers throughout the state. As waves of counties in the state of Pennsylvania transition from red to yellow to green phases, the safe reopening of the state is a welcome sign. The staff expects to see an increase in farm visits in the summer months ahead, as calls and inquiries for AgrAbility PA services have been steadily rising this spring. The staff have seen an increase in overall website and social media traffic.

AgrAbility PA staff are reaching out to some of the farmers that the project has worked with in recent times to learn more about how COVID-19 has impacted their operation. The project plans to use this information in a resourceful way to assist other farmers.

Submitted by Kendra Martin

June 2020

Tennessee

Breaking Ground, produced by the TN Council of Developmental Disabilities since 1990, informs readers of innovative programs and practices, disability policy issues, and stories about the lives of Tennesseans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Approximately 5,400 copies of each issue are distributed. The latest addition featured TN AgrAbility and Jason Barber, a seventh-generation Unionville, TN, farmer who manages a 100-acre beef cattle and hay farm. The Barber family has been farming since 1866 and would not think of doing anything else. Those with sight might assume that farming depends on visual work. Unionville native Jason Barber is proving what is possible with limited sight. Using support and technology through Tennessee AgrAbility, TN Technology Centers, and TN State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Jason is continuing his family legacy of farming. Read [full article here](#).

Three new state chapters just became part of the Farmer Veteran Coalition Family: Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee. A spokesperson for the Farmer Veteran Coalition said "We're exuberant! We commend the leadership teams in each state who dedicated hours to their formation."

Congratulations to FVC of TN officially announcing in May they became a new chapter. TN AgrAbility is proud to partner with FVC of TN and support Homegrown by Heroes/Pick TN Products. TN AgrAbility is on the FVC of TN advisory committee and helps veterans with disabilities who farm. See the two websites connected with FVC of TN at <https://tennessee.farmvetco.org/> and at <https://tinyurl.com/y75m3hax>.



Haywood County, TN, hosted a virtual [Progressive Agricultural Safety Day](#) for fourth graders. Due to schools closing in the spring, the students were going to miss their annual safety day. Tim Roberts, coordinator for the safety day, made it happen by going viral during May. Students will receive their t-shirts when they pick up their end of the school year packet in June. TN AgrAbility was featured with their disability awareness station.

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

June 2020

Texas

Applications are now open for the newest cohort BattleGround to Breaking Ground training program. The program includes 16 weeks of agriculture business planning courses, disability support services, veteran support services, 100 hours of hands-on training with a mentor, and agriculture production education. Check out the program requirements and [application information here](#).



Texas AgrAbility and BattleGround to Breaking Ground will be hosting a virtual agriculture business workshop series June 23 - July 7. The series will be hosted as webinars on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. CDT. Sessions include: "Navigating the Obstacle Course of Farming and Ranching: A Producer's Perspective", "Resources for Farmers and Ranchers", "Agriculture Business Planning", "Community of Interest in Agriculture Business", and "Training Programs for Military Veterans and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers". There is a \$10 fee for attending the entire series. [Click here](#) for more information on the sessions and registration links.

Submitted by Makenzie McLaurin Thomas

June 2020

Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia continues to be active in NSF-funded projects that aim to

1. advance the affordable wearable robotic technologies developed specifically for farmers with mobility restrictions and
2. explore the role of socio-technology to addressing sustainability on small farms.

Currently, AgrAbility Virginia partner Virginia Tech College of Engineering is developing a glove with farmers in mind to improve the grasp of someone with tendon damage or hand weakness.

Submitted by Virginia AgrAbility Project

June 2020

Wisconsin

Wisconsin staff recently held two virtual meetings: the first being with the VA FARMS members in WI and the second being open to all. Both meetings included an informative guest speaker from the WI Farm Service Agency office and focused on Wisconsin AgrAbility history, information on enrolling in the program, and assistive technology examples. Staff received great feedback from these virtual meetings and are planning to do more in the future.

Submitted by Amanda Harguth

June 2020

AgrAbility for Africa

On the 14th of May, 2020, the National AgrAbility Project held a Zoom webinar with an international panel discussing the international perspective on vocational rehabilitation and assistive technologies. AgrAbility for Africa staff contributed during the presentation to discuss the state of vocational rehabilitation in Uganda, and also gave their perspective on the overall state of vocational rehabilitation services across Africa.

To view the archived recording of the discussions, [click here](#).

Among other presenters who joined in the zoom meeting was Dr. Bill Field, a professor of agricultural and biological engineering at Purdue University, the Purdue Extension safety specialist, and project leader for the National AgrAbility Project, who shared his perspective on rural rehabilitation efforts in Europe. Beatriz Rodriguez of North Carolina A&T State University provided a brief overview of agriculture in Colombia, and Ned Stoller, an agricultural engineer, assistive technology professional, (ATP), rural rehabilitation specialist with Michigan AgrAbility, and coordinator of the AgrAbility International Network (IAN), described his observations of the farming methods, equipment variations, and availability of materials and fabricators in one region of Mexico.



AgrAbility for Africa, amidst the hold on physical community outreach and educational projects, has had to go virtual to continue to provide support and care for farmers faced with disabilities in Uganda. AgrAbility for Africa staff is working to enhance outreach and impact through expanding partner networks and collaborations. During the month of May, the team held a virtual meeting with the Rural Institute at the University of Montana to discuss challenges of chronic vocational rehabilitation skill shortage in Uganda and Africa at large- and the discussions focused on vocational rehabilitation

skills development and assistive technology capacity development in Uganda as a strategic base for expansion to other African states.

Under the arrangement, the rural institute would regularly send experts to Africa to teach skills in vocational rehabilitation care, use of assistive technologies, and other disabilities interventions, to professionals, agriculture extension workers, and village health teams. This would be a stop-gap to fill the big skills shortage and would support the development of transition employment activities and programs such as teletherapy to combat increased isolation and loneliness among farmers and ranchers; a situation that has been exacerbated by the pandemic - especially in areas where access to basic information and resources is limited.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

June 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** The Essentials of Accessibility: School and Community Gardens
Dates June 16, 2020, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT
City, State Webinar online
Contact Info/Web link [Register here.](#)
Accommodation: CART captioning is provided for all Maine CITE webinars. If you need an additional accommodation to participate in this webinar, please contact Maine CITE Program via e-mail at iweb@mainecite.org or by calling 207-621-3195 or Maine Relay 711. All Maine CITE webinars are recorded and archived. If you cannot attend the live session, please make sure you register so you can get the link to the archive. Questions, please contact Maine CITE at iweb@mainecite.org
- Name** Beekeeping Summer Webinar Series
Dates June 17, July 1, July 15, 2020
City, State Webinar online at 6:00 p.m. EDT
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.morningagclips.com/beekeeping-summer-webinar-series/>
- 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** Dr. Therese Willkomm, Assistive Technology for Lower Extremities
Dates June 23, 2020, from 3:30-5:00 p.m.
City, State Webinar online
Contact Info/Web link <https://tinyurl.com/y8ph9cts>

Name Milan No Till Virtual Field Day (TN AgrAbility will have a tour)
Dates July 23, 2020
City, State Tennessee
Contact Info/Web link <https://milannotill.tennessee.edu/rsvp-to-the-milan-no-till-field-day/>

Name Dr. Therese Willkomm, Assistive Technology Tools
Dates July 28, 2020, from 3:30-5:00 p.m.
City, State Webinar online
Contact Info/Web link <https://tinyurl.com/yapcv99w>

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

Name Data organization yields positive returns
Dates August 7, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time
City, State Webinar online
Contact Info/Web link For further information, [click here](#).

Name 2020 Midwest Poultry Federation Virtual Trade Show & Convention
Dates August 12-13, 2020
City, State Virtual - Online
Contact Info/Web link <https://midwestpoultry.com/attendees/registration/>

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