

# AgrAbility e•Note

September 2020

*A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility*

## National AgrAbility Project News

The inaugural AgrAbility Virtual State Fair starts in just over two weeks! Follow the fair on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#); "like" and share the posts. The schedule of SRAP days and weekend special topics is available. [More](#)



AgrAbility Regional Workshops: staff would like to plan an in-person regional workshop or two for spring/summer 2021. If you think that you might be interested in hosting a regional workshop in conjunction with Goodwill and NAP, please contact Tess [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org) or JoBeth [jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org).



NAP welcomes the [Osteoarthritis Action Alliance](#) (OAAA) as a nonprofit collaborating partner for the 2020-21 project year. Headquartered at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, OAAA is a national coalition of concerned organizations mobilized by the Arthritis Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and it will work with NAP to reach rural audiences with arthritis resources.

AgrAbility Webinar: "Using Readers' Theater for Supporting the Health and Safety of Farmers and Their Families," by Dr. Deborah Reed of the University of Kentucky. Thursday, October 15 at 3:00 p.m. Registration opening soon.

## Toolbox Spotlight

With a range of models to choose from (e.g., stand-on vs. walk-behind, tracked vs. wheeled, telescoping- vs. fixed-arms, various rated operating capacities), [Mini Skid Steer Loaders](#) are ready to take on a host of tasks around the farm.



With the affixing of adapter plates, dozens of [Mini Skid Steer Attachments](#) are available for attaching to most any skid-steer make or model. Some of the main categories include auger



attachments, backhoes, booms, brooms, brush cutters, buckets, cement mixers, concrete breakers, dozer blades, forks, graders, grapples, hitches, mowers, snow removal systems, sod rollers, soil conditioners, stump grinders, tree shears, tree shovels, trenchers, vacuum lifting tools, and vibratory plows.

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## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

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### California



California AgrAbility staff co-hosted the "Virtual Promotores Meeting: Our well-being in COVID-19 times" via Zoom. The effort included various community agencies helping promotores to sign up for emails and become familiar with the Zoom platform. [More](#)

Staff participated in the San Fernando Valley Promotores Virtual Conference. This year the conference theme was "Knowing the past to understand the present and where we are headed." [More](#)

California AgrAbility joined the monthly Health Window Providers Meeting with the Health Education Council. AgrAbility staff have been working with this group to promote their COVID19 text information line with AgrAbility Program participants. [More](#)

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### Colorado

During the month of August, Colorado AgrAbility was quite busy researching and writing a grant proposal under the OPPE RFA for a 2501 grant to assist underserved, socially disadvantaged farmers and veterans to have improved access to USDA programs and funds. [More](#)

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### Georgia

Staff presented on their work at the USDA/NIFA National Food Safety Outreach Program Project Director's Meeting on August 19, 2020. AgrAbility in Georgia has a project teaching military veterans about produce food safety utilizing the universal design for learning framework.

A staff member was elected to serve on the steering committee for the National Farmers Union. A meeting was held on August 20.

Many of the farmers that AgrAbility in Georgia works with manage their businesses by using QuickBooks. Staff attended a QuickBooks webinar on August 26 to gather knowledge on the software so they can assist farmers with questions and problems that they may encounter.

Staff attended a webinar on August 31 through the UGA Small Business Development Center titled "Marketing Your Georgia Grown Product through E-commerce." Staff will use the information shared in the webinar to help their farmers who have been asking about different ways to sell their products. Georgia Grown is one of the premier marketing strategies of agricultural products in the nation.

Field staff have received approval to do in-person site visits again while following strict Covid-19 protocols. They have developed an internal checklist that is available at

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## Indiana

The world of farm shows continues to change. The Indiana State Fair and the Indiana Farm Equipment and Technology Show are canceled, ... [More](#)

Steve Swain, Indiana AgrAbility rural rehabilitation specialist, conducted several farm visits in August. [More](#)

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## Kansas

Kansas AgrAbility would like to congratulate John Slocombe on his retirement from Kansas State University, which includes serving as PI on the KAP Project for over 18 years. The reorganized leadership team includes ... [More](#)

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## Maine

Although the summer in-person activities have been canceled, working remotely hasn't slowed Maine AgrAbility down. The summer has flown by and staff have been busy!



Staff have been continuing to work with existing clients and reaching new clients as they navigate available resources and look for recommendations on ways to continue to work successfully and safely. Veterans from the Boots-2-Bushels class are continuing to gain hands-on experience at Chase Stream Farm.

On July 21, Ellen Gibson presented a program on AgrAbility and small changes or accommodations for backyard gardeners to 21 AARP members via Zoom. This format allowed for follow-up questions and information sharing between the presenter and audience in real-time.

UMaine Extension has created a bi-weekly [Victory Garden for ME video series](#) - short, pre-recorded videos geared towards Mainers growing their first vegetable garden. [More](#)

With the pandemic limiting in-person activities, Maine AgrAbility's Brie Weisman (OT), recognized the need for OT students to gain experience. Staff developed a [Level 1 virtual experience for OT students](#). [More](#)

Richard Brzozowski has started a fact sheet working group comprising SRAP members from across the US. [More](#)



Staff have taken this "down" time to reconnect with their larger network of partners to learn more about specific topics to enhance Maine AgrAbility's programming. [More](#)

Maine AgrAbility routinely shares news posts and articles on its [website](#), [blog site](#), and social media accounts.

- [Small Bites](#) are short, informational articles with practical ideas about stress reduction, improved communication, and farmer well-being. They are written by coaches from UMaine Extension's farm coaching team.
- Staff finalized a few new [fact sheets](#) on hiring farm workers with disabilities and beekeeping skills and assistive technology.
- ["Gotta Lotta Living to Do"](#) is a blog series that deals with issues surrounding aging,

## Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility has a new website! Thank you Easterseals Michigan and Grit HQ for the financial support and tech savvy! Check it out [here](#).

Meet Dwight Carpenter! Dwight is the owner of Carpenter's Greenhouse and Produce. He was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2000 and decided to change over from bedding plants to hydroponic tomatoes. [More](#)



Detroit urban farmers are now in the know! Travis Peters at Greenboots Veterans Community Gardens hosted Michigan AgrAbility staff, who demonstrated assistive technology for growing vegetables. [More](#)

In the June 2020 e-note, Michigan AgrAbility highlighted Ned Stoller's contributions to the [instructables](#) website that hosts a platform for individuals 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 staff continue their educational outreach efforts by continuing to post assistive technology ideas to make farming jobs easier for their Facebook visitors. Examples include the Livestock Mineral Tub Sling, the Blaux Personal Fan, the WeWALK Smart Cane,... [More](#)



In "normal" years, Michigan AgrAbility has a booth at Agro Expo at AgroLiquid in St. Johns. [More](#)



Highlighted in the August e-note was the Run Free Michigan fundraising event by Maj. Maggie Seymour. If you would like to learn more, the [Michigan Farm News](#) has a great article about her upcoming Sept. 5-17 fundraising run... [More](#)

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## Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility has been focusing its social media efforts on showcasing resources available to farmers and ranchers through MU Extension and highlighting programs of interest (local & virtual) for its clients.

Staff have started to develop new marketing materials to highlight their Missouri AgrAbility clients.

Social media update for the FY20 grant year:

- MO AgrAbility's social media posts on Facebook had a reach of 28,767; 33,019 impressions and 1,370 engagements (likes, comments, shares). [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility staff from the University of Missouri Extension (MUE) worked with statewide collaborators and cooperators to complete the following activities:

- Facilitated three new onsite farmstead assessments. [More](#)

Lincoln University Cooperative Extension through the Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program (ISFOP) in collaboration with University of Missouri Extension is excited to announce that Shon Bishop is a licensed UAV section 107 drone pilot. [More](#)



The Missouri AgrAbility Project is featured as the Military Veterans Track Sponsor in registration material for the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) Annual Statewide Conference that will be held October 1 - 2.



BIA-MO hosted the quarterly Networking Coffee for the Springfield area in Missouri. [More](#)

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## Nebraska



The Farm Safety Coloring Book is finally complete! Readers will find the printable PDF on the [Nebraska AgrAbility webpage](#) (direct link is [here](#).) The staff are also in the process of applying for a grant to help print and disperse the Farm Safety Coloring Book throughout the state.

The staff is excited to get back on the farms to complete farm assessments, even with all the PPE. After one assessment was finished, a client took the time to show off one of his hobbies, which is making toy tractors for his grandkids! How neat are these?!



A staff member presented at a teleconference with the Alternative Loan Financing Loan Review Board to educate about what AgrAbility does, the history of the program, and how the project works with the loan program.

A staff member trained in the Michigan State University Communicating with Farmers under Stress curriculum offered a third webinar (rather than a live workshop) on September 2. This program was for ag professionals to help them identify signs of stress in producers, use techniques for approaching someone in distress, and learn where to access resources that are helpful for someone experiencing stress.

Unfortunately, the Nebraska team will not be at the Nebraska State Fair due to the pandemic, but many virtual options were sent for use in the fair's virtual tours!

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## New Mexico

New Mexico AgrAbility conducted a webinar on promoting back health and assistive technologies to 40 health care and rehabilitation professionals on August 29. The three-hour webinar was created by the University of New Mexico Occupational Therapy Graduate Program student interns and faculty, using evidence-based resources. Attendees received continuing education credits for participating.

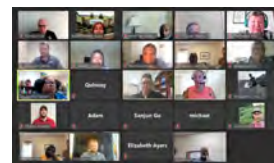
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## North Carolina



On August 5, NC AgrAbility hosted the first "Peer Virtual Networking Event," which was the equivalent of its "Peer Lunch Support Program" offered to its farmers every year. This time, staff were able to gather distant farmers from far eastern and western NC at the same time. [More](#)

On August 12, NC AgrAbility Partnership hosted a virtual training for Extension agents. The training "Helping Farmers with Disabilities Overcome Limitations: AgrAbility Services" was presented at the NCA&T 2020 Faculty and Staff Institute. [More](#)



Beatriz Rodriguez presented via Zoom "Health and Safety: Bending and Lifting" on August 20 at the NCA&T Extension Extended Virtual Programming Series. [More](#)

## Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility was proud to be featured on Spectrum New Ohio. Ohio farmer Kane Lewis and Ohio AgrAbility Rural Rehabilitation Coordinator Rachel Jarman spoke to Spectrum News about Ohio AgrAbility, the partnership between Ohio State, Easterseals Greater Cincinnati, and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, and how AgrAbility keeps farmers farming. [More](#)

Ohio AgrAbility staff are busy creating videos and presentations for the first ever virtual Farm Science Review. AgrAbility staff have five presentations and two "Coffee and Conversations" with their farmers scheduled,... [More](#)



## Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA prepared new ways to interact with those who would have attended Penn State's Ag Progress Days (APD) in person as the event rolled out virtually in mid-August. [More](#)



AgrAbility PA created a video highlighting the question: "What is AgrAbility?" It features farmers that have been assisted by AgrAbility PA, assistive technology, funding sources, resources, and farm assessments. [Take a look!](#)

AgrAbility PA is excited to be a part of the upcoming AgrAbility Virtual State Fair! [More](#)

During a recent AgrAbility PA farm assessment, a client demonstrated a handy piece of assistive technology: a rechargeable, magnetic LED work light. This light is magnetic, and has hooks on each end, making it possible to place it in multiple locations. [More](#)



## Tennessee

Honoring "International Assistance Dog Week" in August, here is a story from Smoky Mountain Service Dogs (SMSD) who serves disabled military veterans: [More](#)

Welcome to Clay Summers who was hired at Agricenter International in Memphis, TN, as the Veterans Employed in Technology and Service in Agriculture (VETSA) program manager. [More](#)

TN AgrAbility continues working with veterans with disabilities who want to farm. Sometimes the beginning farmer does not immediately need assistive technology but rather needs to learn about local resources such as Extension and USDA services and to be connected with other veteran farmers. [More](#)

[Gale Barber, Bedford County farmer](#) and TN AgrAbility client, passed away August 27. He will be missed! He lived with Parkinson's disease and dementia and farmed 100 acres of beef cattle and hay with his son Jason, who is legally blind. [More](#)

## Texas

Texas AgrAbility conducted Battleground to Breaking Ground Cohort 8 Basic Training on August 27 and 28. There were a total of 23 participants with sessions that included ag

safety, business planning, agriculture career opportunities, and goal setting.

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## Utah

On Aug. 11, AgrAbility of Utah staff gave online AgrAbility training to the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT). UCAT is a statewide resource offering information and technical services to help people with disabilities identify and obtain the technology that will help them become more independent in their lives.

AgrAbility of Utah staff gave two online AgrAbility training presentations to two vocational rehabilitation districts in August. The first one was for the central Utah office and was attended by 18 counselors and staff on August 25. The second one was August 26 for the eastern Utah district and was attended by 13 counselors and staff.

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## Virginia

AgrAbility is mailing updated brochures out to partners this month. Updated event outreach materials are being printed, organized, and mailed to field staff within the next few weeks.

AgrAbility Virginia has been a key partner in the Farm Safety, Health, & Wellness Initiative. As this initiative comes to a close, staff are organizing a webinar for September 16 (12-1 EDT) to present accomplishments and resources: [More](#)

AgrAbility Virginia staff have developed a farm financial stress assessment tool and are organizing a webinar for September 9 (12-1 EDT): "Using the Farm Financial Stress Assessment Tool with Struggling Farmers: A Webinar for Extension Agents." More details will be posted to social media soon.

AgrAbility Virginia is developing an outreach strategy for high school ag teachers and college students as schools return to classes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff are developing material for the Virtual State Fair where the SRAP will be highlighted on October 16th.

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## Washington

Washington State AgrAbility Program (WSAP) offered an AgrAbility and veterans workshop through the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs on August 7 where 18 people participated from across the state.

WSAP gave a presentation at the Skagit County Farm Bureau meeting August 11 with 12 participants.



While maintaining social distance, staff conducted a field day style presentation and demonstration of AT at the Growing Veterans farm in Lynden, Washington, on August 19 with 18 participants while maintaining social distance.

United States Congressman Rick Larsen met with AgrAbility staff on August 19 to learn about the program and its effect in Washington. His aides asked the WSAP staff to continue to update them on AgrAbility's outreach.

WSAP is working with Skagit DVR to coordinate activities that support farmers and farm workers in assessing appropriate resources.

Staff continues to work on virtual fair ideas and content for the Washington state showcase.

WSAP staff continues to work on building their lending library based on specific injury sectors and is updating the website with the lending library component.

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## Wisconsin

Wisconsin AgrAbility has been busy with virtual meetings, sharing information with its NRCS Wisconsin partners and participating in the new Farmer Veteran Coalition WI chapter and its VA FARMS advisory council.

Most recently, AgrAbility of WI hosted a farm stress webinar with their partners at UW Madison Division of Extension. Lori Zierl from Pierce County shared what the emotional toll of farm stress does and some strategies to help create resilience to stress can be. Staff have recorded this webinar and will have it on their website for viewing soon.

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## International AgrAbility Network News

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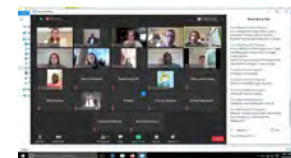
### AgrAbility for Africa



The International AgrAbility Network is a global initiative by the National AgrAbility Project (NAP) that is intended to guide and support projects that provide services and resources to farmers, ranchers, farm workers, and their families with disabilities around the world. It is through this arrangement that the AgrAbility for Africa staff constructed two BiCrawler Wheelers, and one was donated to Mrs. Nabawanuka Agnes, a farmer in Uganda. [More](#)



On August 19, the AgrAbility for Africa team was invited to join in a conversation by Chaeli Campaign, a social justice foundation in South Africa focused on changing society's views of the capabilities and role of children with disabilities. [More](#)



## Staff Changes and Recognition

### Georgia



Paige Tidwell's last day with AgrAbility in Georgia was August 31, 2020. While we are very sad to see her leave IHDD (Institute on Human Development & Disability), we are excited about her new opportunity. She will be joining the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency as the assistant director of client services.

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Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [Fifth-Generation Farmer Faces Adversity Head-On](#)
- [UMaine Extension offers webinar on pain-free gardening Aug. 31](#)
- [UMaine Cooperative Extension offers virtual classes](#)

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### OtherNews

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

- [1890 Land-grant Universities Celebrate 130 Years of Cutting-edge Science, Education and Community Service](#)
- [Funding Opportunity: Centers of Excellence at 1890 Institutions \(1890 COEs\)](#)
- [Trump Administration Announces Additional \\$1 billion for the Farmers to Families Food Box Program](#)
- [Protecting present and future generations of farmers](#)
- [Maple syrup producers now eligible for pandemic help](#)
- [Farm Aid to host 35th Anniversary Virtual Festival Sept. 26](#)
- [Homeless veterans use urban gardening to heal invisible wounds](#)
- [Resource hub helps local food system respond to COVID-19](#)
- [4-H gives incarcerated youth freedom to try growing vegetables](#)
- [Feeder profit calculator adds value, reduces risk](#)

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### UpcomingEvents

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

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

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September 2020

## California



California AgrAbility staff co-hosted the "Virtual Promotores Meeting: Our well-being in COVID-19 times" via Zoom. The effort included various community agencies helping promotores to sign up for emails and become familiar with the Zoom platform. California AgrAbility staff participated with an announcement about program services and the program's current activities to support essential workers. Participants learned about mask use

and care, family bubbles, and practicing social distancing at work and at home. The day also included an afternoon session with mental health programming information and an overview of resources to help farm working parents to support their children as they are returning to school virtually. Some daycare spaces will continue to be open for farmworker areas. The webinar was well-received, and a second webinar session was requested by participants and presenters.

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Staff participated in the San Fernando Valley Promotores Virtual Conference. This year the conference theme was "Knowing the past to understand the present and where we are headed." The conference featured sessions such as best practices to help working parents with the virtual back-to-school effort, self-care through life, and COVID-19 resources and experiences. The virtual room provided a space for attendees to share their experiences during this pandemic. California AgrAbility staff presented their experience on staying open during the pandemic and how they are working to support essential workers on farms.

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California AgrAbility joined the monthly Health Window Providers Meeting with the Health Education Council. AgrAbility staff have been working with this group to promote their COVID19 text information line with AgrAbility Program participants. The text information line provides testing site information for 24 northern California counties. The text information line connects directly to the Health Education Council office where its personnel have been referring farmworkers to AgrAbility for services.

Submitted by Sara Wat

**September 2020**

## **Colorado**

During the month of August, Colorado AgrAbility was quite busy researching and writing a grant proposal under the OPPE RFA for a 2501 grant to assist underserved, socially disadvantaged farmers and veterans to have improved access to USDA programs and funds. The concept is to provide one-on-one mentoring and assistance in business planning and financial process analysis with feasibility studies. As an unexpected benefit, staff touched base with the Colorado Veterans To Farmers program. They also were writing a grant proposal. Staff were able to assist each other, and if either organization receives funding, both will benefit from ongoing collaborations.

Submitted by Jim Craig

September 2020

## Indiana

The world of farm shows continues to change. The Indiana State Fair and the Indiana Farm Equipment and Technology Show are canceled, and the Farm Progress Show and the Ohio Farm Science Review go virtual. The next potential farm show on the calendar is in January - the Fort Wayne Farm Show.

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Steve Swain, Indiana AgrAbility rural rehabilitation specialist, conducted several farm visits in August. Three were with VR clients, and they involved the installation of automatic hitches and acquisition of an Action Track Stander. Two were initial VR farm assessments. The other visits were with a farmer veteran and with another farmer with a disability to put together a plan of action for acquiring accommodations thru VR.

Submitted by Steve Swain



September 2020

## Kansas

Kansas AgrAbility would like to congratulate John Slocombe on his retirement from Kansas State University, which includes serving as PI on the KAP Project for over 18 years. The reorganized leadership team includes lead PI Joe Harner and co-PIs Ed Brokesh and Dan Flippo, all from the K-State Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department, and Shari Coatney, co-PI from SKIL, the project's nonprofit partner. The entire team looks forward to continuing to serve Kansans that benefit from AgrAbility's mission and services.

Submitted by Tawnie Larson

September 2020

## Maine

UMaine Extension has created a bi-weekly [Victory Garden for ME video series](#) - short, pre-recorded videos geared towards Mainers growing their first vegetable garden. On August 13, Ellen Gibson and Leilani Carlson presented "pain-free gardening," sharing information about how to plan a day in the garden, proper stretching and lifting techniques, selecting ergonomic tools, adapting existing tools to improve their ergonomics, designing a garden to match one's abilities, and much more. As a follow-up to this video, Ellen Gibson presented an hour-long webinar about pain-free gardening, ergonomics, arthritis, and AgrAbility on August 31 as part of the UMaine Extension Summer Series.



With the pandemic limiting in-person activities, Maine AgrAbility's Brie Weisman (OT), recognized the need for OT students to gain experience. Staff developed a [Level 1 virtual experience for OT students](#). It is a list of educational activities and opportunities available to students that can be conducted virtually with guidance from an AgrAbility professional. Staff have worked with one student so far and gotten positive feedback.

Richard Brzozowski has started a fact sheet working group comprising SRAP members from across the US. The goal of this working group is to create a fact sheet collection with a searchable library of relevant topics for AgrAbility audiences. If anyone is interested in being part of this group, email [maine.agrability@maine.edu](mailto:maine.agrability@maine.edu).

Staff have taken this "down" time to reconnect with their larger network of partners to learn more about specific topics to enhance Maine AgrAbility's programming. So far, staff have had presentations from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) with a special focus on veterans' issues and a presentation from Jade Integrated Health with a focus on chronic pain and management techniques.

Submitted by Lani Carlson

September 2020

## Michigan

Meet Dwight Carpenter! Dwight is the owner of Carpenter's Greenhouse and Produce. He was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2000 and decided to change over from bedding plants to hydroponic tomatoes. He was sleeping one night and woke up with an idea to save his back and shoulders from aching due to lifting and lowering the tomato plants. It worked but was a bit inefficient. At a farm show several years ago, Dwight met Ned Stoller from Michigan AgrAbility who, working with Michigan Rehabilitation Services, installed six Lower and Lean machines in his greenhouse. Easterseals Michigan helped out with a gas-powered sweeper when Dwight shared the shoulder strain encountered while sweeping. Dwight shared his experience about his disability, the transition to a different crop and, with Ned, his experience with Michigan AgrAbility. Check out [Dwight and Ned's video here!](#)



Detroit urban farmers are now in the know! Travis Peters at Greenboots Veterans Community Gardens hosted Michigan AgrAbility staff, who demonstrated assistive technology for growing vegetables. Salutes to the community leadership of Myra Gracey of the Citizens Radio Patrol in Detroit. Check out



the [Michigan AgrAbility Facebook](#) page for a [video](#) and some pictures of this event.

In the June 2020 e-note, Michigan AgrAbility highlighted Ned Stoller's contributions to the [instructables](#) website that hosts a platform for individuals 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 videos needed for making the project. New to Ned's instructables page ([here](#)) is the [BiCrawler](#). The BiCrawler assists individuals who cannot crawl or use their legs to work along the ground in fields, gardens and flower beds. People in developing countries can sit on the platform to access latrines. It is made by welding bicycle wheels to a rebar frame with wood platform. Ned Stoller's instructables page contains the video about the BiCrawler and directions for assembly of this inexpensive assistive technology. You can also view the video on [Michigan AgrAbility's YouTube channel](#).



Michigan AgrAbility staff continue their educational outreach efforts by continuing to post assistive technology ideas to make farming jobs easier for their Facebook visitors. Examples include the Livestock Mineral Tub Sling, the Blaux Personal Fan, the WeWALK Smart Cane, and Warren Eicher's (a Michigan AgrAbility client) installation of steps on his harvest equipment to make entering and exiting the equipment easier, safer, and less painful, while



helping to reduce his overall fatigue.

In "normal" years, Michigan AgrAbility has a booth at Agro Expo at AgroLiquid in St. Johns. The live event has been postponed until 2021, but a [virtual library](#) of exhibitors' services was developed to highlight available agricultural resources. Michigan AgrAbility is highlighted under the Goods and Services tab. Take a look!



Highlighted in the August e-note was the Run Free Michigan fundraising event by Maj. Maggie Seymour. If you would like to learn more, the [Michigan Farm News](#) has a great article about her upcoming Sept. 5-17 fundraising run for the [Michigan Chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition](#). She will be joined by retired Master

Sgt. Jordan Weeks, a South Carolina-based fellow Marine.

Submitted by Deb Chester



September 2020

## Missouri

Social media update for the FY20 grant year:

- MO AgrAbility's social media posts on Facebook had a reach of 28,767; 33,019 impressions and 1,370 engagements (likes, comments, shares). Of the individuals reached on Facebook, 73% were women and 25% were men, with the largest audience being women ages 25-54 (45% of the readership).
- Social media posts on Twitter had 47,843 impressions and 688 engagements (likes, comments, retweets)
- Social media posts on Instagram had a reach of 7,628 and 8,780 impressions.

Submitted by: Tevin Uthlaut

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Missouri AgrAbility staff from the University of Missouri Extension (MUE) worked with statewide collaborators and cooperators to complete the following activities:

- Facilitated three new onsite farmstead assessments.
- Developed requested resources to address the needs of AgrAbility clients.
- Showcased static awareness display about Missouri AgrAbility during 2020 Missouri State Fair.
- Participated in AgrAbility partnership ZOOM meetings.
- Certified three AgrAbility staff members who will facilitate 10 "Question. Persuade. Refer." (QPR) programs.
- Worked on video to be aired during National AgrAbility Virtual State Fair.

Submitted by: Karen Funkenbusch

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Lincoln University Cooperative Extension through the Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program (ISFOP) in collaboration with University of Missouri Extension is excited to announce that Shon Bishop is a licensed UAV section 107 drone pilot.



The purpose of this effort is to further develop curriculum to assist farmers with disabilities who need to check livestock, fences, watering systems, and areas of the farm in a safe and effective way without risk of secondary injuries.

Drones are one way for farmers to check on large areas of their property without placing themselves or their farm equipment in potentially dangerous situations.

Submitted by: Shon Bishop

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BIA-MO hosted the quarterly Networking Coffee for the Springfield area in Missouri. Professionals in the Springfield area gathered for a virtual Networking Coffee to discuss resources in Southwest Missouri to benefit survivors of brain injury and families, including the Missouri AgrAbility Project.

Submitted by: Maureen Cunningham

September 2020

## North Carolina



On August 5, NC AgrAbility hosted the first "Peer Virtual Networking Event," which was the equivalent of its "Peer Lunch Support Program" offered to its farmers every year. This time, staff were able to gather distant farmers from far eastern and western NC at the same time. This was a great networking experience with nine participants during which farmers stated

they are willing to meet every other month to receive information about different topics related to agriculture and disabilities.

On August 12, NC AgrAbility Partnership hosted a virtual training for Extension agents. The training "Helping Farmers with Disabilities Overcome Limitations: AgrAbility Services" was presented at the NCA&T 2020 Faculty and Staff Institute. Presenters Tammy Koger, Chuck Oaks, Jessica Wilburn, Betty Rodriguez, and Alexea Davis had the opportunity to interact with 25 participants who learned about how AgrAbility was created, who the NC AgrAbility Partnership partners are and their services, what is considered a disability, and who can qualify for services from the program. This was the introductory level of a NC AgrAbility Ambassador Training for Extension Agents.



Beatriz Rodriguez presented via Zoom "Health and Safety: Bending and Lifting" on August 20 at the NCA&T Extension Extended Virtual Programming Series. Fifteen participants had the opportunity to learn about how to prevent injuries when bending and lifting. Participants received materials on how to build an electric jib crane.

Submitted by Beatriz (Betty) Rodriguez

September 2020

## Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility was proud to be featured on Spectrum New Ohio. Ohio farmer Kane Lewis and Ohio AgrAbility Rural Rehabilitation Coordinator Rachel Jarman spoke to Spectrum News about Ohio AgrAbility, the partnership between Ohio State, Easterseals Greater Cincinnati, and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, and how AgrAbility keeps farmers farming. Special thanks to Rachel and Kane for their rapid response to the news story request, which was received Thursday morning and filmed Friday afternoon.

[https://spectrumnews1.com/oh/columbus/news/2020/08/30/fifth-](https://spectrumnews1.com/oh/columbus/news/2020/08/30/fifth-generation-farmers-faces-adversity-head-on)

[generation-farmers-faces-adversity-head-on](https://spectrumnews1.com/oh/columbus/news/2020/08/30/fifth-generation-farmers-faces-adversity-head-on) The news story was inspired by a Facebook post about Kane and Ohio AgrAbility, which Rachel wrote earlier in the summer.

Ohio AgrAbility staff are busy creating videos and presentations for the first ever virtual Farm Science Review. AgrAbility staff have five presentations and two "Coffee and Conversations" with their farmers scheduled, and they are creating new videos and educational resources to make FSR 2020 Online as informative and engaging as the traditional in-person FSR. All Ohio AgrAbility activities will be available through the website, [Agrability.osu.edu](http://Agrability.osu.edu), or at [fsr.osu.edu](http://fsr.osu.edu).



Submitted by Laura Akgerman

September 2020

## Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA prepared new ways to interact with those who would have attended Penn State's Ag Progress Days (APD) in person as the event rolled out virtually in mid-August. The annual event typical draws upwards of 50,000 visitors over the three-days it runs. AgrAbility PA offered an on-demand video highlighting AgrAbility and featured examples of farmers who have been assisted. Staff members highlighted resources and assistive technology, and they held interactive live sessions (presentations and Q&A) on social media. The event as a whole featured live and on-demand webinars and videos, Zoom-based town-hall-style meetings with agricultural leaders and officials, and virtual tours of farms and research projects. Take a look at the [APD website](#) for more information.

AgrAbility PA is excited to be a part of the upcoming AgrAbility Virtual State Fair! Follow @AgrAbility Virtual State Fair on Facebook and @AgrAbilityVSF on Twitter. Looking forward to being part of this collaborative effort that will bind and strengthen the projects in a collective way.

During a recent AgrAbility PA farm assessment, a client demonstrated a handy piece of assistive technology: a rechargeable, [magnetic LED work light](#). This light is magnetic, and has hooks on each end, making it possible to place it in multiple locations. It can be used for working on equipment, around the barn and shop, and in many other settings. The work light can be used to light up a toolbox workspace while charging. It is a low-cost light with many possibilities! The AgrAbility PA staff loves learning about ideas for assistive technology options.



Submitted by Kendra Martin



September 2020

## Tennessee

Honoring "International Assistance Dog Week" in August, here is a story from Smoky Mountain Service Dogs (SMSD) who serves disabled military veterans:

"SMSDs make new experiences possible for their veterans. This was my first time to visit the Smokies. SMSD Dagger and I experienced our first hike together and he was fantastic giving me assistance when needed," stated Charley Jordan, flower farmer, AgrAbility client, and member of the NAP Advisory Team, in Woodlawn, TN, at Jordan Farms. "Learning to relax is not easy after spending a life in the military. Hopefully, I've taken away a few lessons on my own to just be in the moment." Charly Jordan started farming after a 28 1/2 year career in the Army. Dagger, his service dog, helps him with farming and his PTSD, and is a great companion. He is passionate about supporting other veterans in agriculture. Follow his adventures and cameos from Dagger, Charley's service animal @Jordanfarmstn.

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Welcome to Clay Summers who was hired at Agricenter International in Memphis, TN, as the Veterans Employed in Technology and Service in Agriculture (VETSA) program manager. VETSA will help meet the demand of a shrinking agriculture workforce by bringing veterans' leadership and technological skills to the agriculture space and finding new "missions" at home. Differing from other programs that encourage veterans to start farming, this program will prepare veterans for a variety of careers related to the agriculture industry. Participants will begin their training by going through a two-week "agriculture boot camp" orientation that will be offered on a bi-annual basis at Agricenter International, the University of Tennessee-Martin or the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA). The boot camp will be modeled after the Tennessee New Farmer Academy developed by Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension and will include topics such as careers in agriculture, farm business and marketing basics, agricultural production practices, assistive technology for farmers with disabilities, and workplace safety. The VETSA program will coordinate with the TN AgrAbility program, a national initiative that aids farmers and ranchers with disabilities, including disabled veterans. The program will be kicking off in the near future so please share with anyone who would be interested in enrolling, additional information, or helping in another way. More information is available at [www.agricenter.org/agvets](http://www.agricenter.org/agvets)

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TN AgrAbility continues working with veterans with disabilities who want to farm. Sometimes the beginning farmer does not immediately need assistive technology but rather needs to learn about local resources such as Extension and USDA services and to be connected with other veteran farmers. Meet another 2020 FVC Fellowship Fund awardee Keith Bridges of Knox Goats, his goat-scaping service. He has been [spreading the word about Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN](#).

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[Gale Barber, Bedford County farmer](#) and TN AgrAbility client, passed away August 27. He will be missed! He lived with Parkinson's disease and dementia and farmed 100 acres of beef cattle and hay with his son Jason, who is legally blind.

Gale was Jason's eyes and hands while farming. They were a great team! John, Jason's brother said, "Jason was his dad's right hand for 50 years, helping him keep the farm going - a farm that has been in our family for over 150 years. With the help of his sister (who is also legally blind) he will continue that work and legacy. Jason let Siri read the kind words of encouraging comments and texts from family and friends

offering love and support." Please keep Jason and the Barber family in your prayers!

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

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**September 2020**

## **Virginia**

AgrAbility Virginia has been a key partner in the Farm Safety, Health, & Wellness Initiative. As this initiative comes to a close, staff are organizing a webinar for September 16 (12-1 EDT) to present accomplishments and resources: "Farm Safety, Health & Wellness: Spotlight on Managing Farm Financial Stress and Mental Health." More details will be posted to social media soon. The resources and related infographics will then be published on the AgrAbility Virginia website.

Submitted by Virginia AgrAbility Project

September 2020

## AgrAbility for Africa



The International AgrAbility Network is a global initiative by the National AgrAbility Project (NAP) that is intended to guide and support projects that provide services and resources to farmers, ranchers, farm workers, and their families with disabilities around the world. It is through this arrangement that the AgrAbility for Africa staff constructed two BiCrawler Wheelers, and one was donated to Mrs. Nabawanuka Agnes, a farmer in Uganda. This was made possible



by Ned Stoller, Michigan AgrAbility's assistive technology specialist, founder of Disability Work Tools, and leader of the International AgrAbility Network. Ned has leveraged his creative assistive technology expertise and resources to reach out to underserved farming populations worldwide by supporting them in adapting to a wide variety of disabling conditions, improving their overall productivity, health, and well-being.

On August 19, the AgrAbility for Africa team was invited to join in a conversation by Chaeli Campaign, a social justice foundation in South Africa focused on changing society's views of the capabilities and role of children with disabilities. Staff joined in the Impact Story Initiative to enhance the effectiveness of their social inclusion mission, to improve the quality of client engagement, and to build expertise in mobilizing communities and groups to respond to and support the transformation of lives of children with disabilities.



The conversation helped the AgrAbility for Africa team improve their communications and interpersonal connections through learning about different personal engagement approaches, inclusive activities, and programs. Borrowing from the different experiences, the AgrAbility for Africa team will enhance the quality of client case management and their overall program impact - leading to happier children and more productive and healthier farm families.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

September 2020

## Upcoming Events

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|------------------------------|---|
| <b>NAME</b>                  | 2020 West Tennessee New Farmer Academy: (Scholarships for beginning farmers with disabilities and veterans) |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | 7-month certificate program April 23 – October 22, 2020   |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Memphis, Tennessee  |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="http://www.tnstate.edu/extension/NFA.aspx">http://www.tnstate.edu/extension/NFA.aspx</a>           |
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|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Name</b>                  | Farm Science Review                                     |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | September 22-24, 2020                                   |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Virtual event online                                    |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="https://fsr.osu.edu/">https://fsr.osu.edu/</a> |
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|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Name</b>                  | Virtual AgTech NEXT Summit  |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | Each Tuesday from 1:00-2:00 p.m. Eastern Time beginning Tuesday September 22 and going through Tuesday November 10 (with a break on Tuesday, November 3, for election day); seven sessions total. |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Virtual - online  |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="https://webcast.center/agtechnext/main.php">https://webcast.center/agtechnext/main.php</a>   |
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| <b>Name</b>                  | Farm Aid 35th Anniversary Virtual Festival  |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | September 26, 2020  |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Virtual - online  |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="https://www.morningagclips.com/farm-aid-to-host-35th-anniversary-virtual-festival-sept-26/">https://www.morningagclips.com/farm-aid-to-host-35th-anniversary-virtual-festival-sept-26/</a> |
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|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Name</b>                  | 93rd National FFA Convention & Expo   |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | October 27-29, 2020   |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Virtual - Online and on RFD TV  |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="https://www.morningagclips.com/tune-into-the-93rd-national-ffa-convention-expo/">https://www.morningagclips.com/tune-into-the-93rd-national-ffa-convention-expo/</a> |
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| <b>Name</b>  | 2020 Angus Convention simplified to 137th Annual Meeting |
| <b>Dates</b> | November 8-9, 2020                                       |



**City, State** Kansas City, Missouri, and online  
**Contact** <https://www.morningagclips.com/2020-angus-convention-simplified-to-137th-annual-meeting/>  
**Info/Web link**

**Name** DCRC (Dairy Cattle Reproduction Council)  
**Dates** November 10-12, 2020  
**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact** <https://www.morningagclips.com/dcrc-pivots-from-in-person-to-virtual-conference/>  
**Info/Web link**