

AgrAbility e·Note

October 2020

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

National AgrAbility Project News

The inaugural AgrAbility Virtual State Fair (VSF) is in full swing! So far, VSF Facebook posts, including pre-fair promotion, have reached more than 11,000 people, and VSF Twitter impressions (total tally of all the times the Tweets have been seen) have exceeded 40,000. Please follow, like, and share VSF posts so that all of AgrAbility can benefit from this awareness event.

- <https://www.facebook.com/AgrAbility-Virtual-State-Fair-105811844494828>
- <https://twitter.com/AgrabilityVSF>



The archive for Dr. Deborah Reed's webinar, "Using Readers' Theater for Supporting the Health and Safety of Farmers and Their Families," should be available at <http://www.agrability.org/online-training/archived/webinar-series/> by the end of today.



AgrAbility/LIFE Project Webinar: "Roots of the Soil: Legal and Policy Issues in Succession Planning for Socially Disadvantaged Farm Families," Wednesday, October 28, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. ET. [More](#)

September was the month of virtual farm shows. The 2020 Virtual Farm Progress Show and the Virtual Ohio Farm Science Review were both interesting and informative. [More](#)

Steve Swain also participated in the [2020 Virtual RESNA Conference](#), which was September 23-24. The presentations were live and offered a range of topics, and they are available online for a registration fee.

Toolbox Spotlight

Fall is here and leaves are falling! Looking somewhat like giant bear claws, a pair of [Handheld Leaf/Debris Grabbers](#) allows one-with a reduced amount of bending-to rake together then pick up all manner of yard and garden debris. Measuring up to 2 feet tall and 1 ½ feet

wide at their base, these rake-shaped, lightweight plastic tools have hand-hold grips that also support the lower arm.



State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

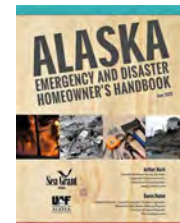
Alaska



The Alaska AgrAbility team is still under restrictions related to COVID-19 and not able to perform in-person assessments.

[More](#)

In recognition of Emergency Preparedness Month, a four-part series of workshops was offered virtually September 28-October 1... [More](#)



The Alaska AgrAbility team is planning for a virtual quarterly eNewsletter that will be sent out broadly and to clients. The first edition will be sent out the first part of October.

Southeast Alaska Independent Living Center hosts the virtual Acquired and Traumatic Brain Injury Group once a month. Staff attended and discussed different assistive technology and funding options available for individuals with disabilities.

Tori Gingras, outreach specialist with ATLA, attended planning sessions for the AgrAbility national virtual fair taking place in October. Alaska is excited to be a part of this opportunity.



ATLA has received a grant from the Department of Health and Social Services for a new program called TechAbility. This program provides free lifetime loans to Alaskans who are Mental Health Trust Authority beneficiaries. [More](#)

During the time of COVID, ATLA is meeting with individuals over distance on platforms such as Zoom. They have also partnered with local disability support agencies to provide a demonstration kit. This allows for individuals to explore devices while on a Zoom call with an ATLA specialist.

California

California AgrAbility conducted outreach at the Madison Migrant Center in Yolo County. Although the migrant centers are closed to the public, limited access is available for agencies petitioning to bring in resources for the farm-working families. [More](#)



Staff joined the virtual RISE collaborative Zoom meeting. This was the first virtual RISE meeting since the pandemic started, and it is expected to continue virtually for the next year. [More](#)

California AgrAbility participated in several National Farm Safety & Health Week webinars hosted by AgriSafe. [More](#)

Colorado

September was a lackluster month for Colorado AgrAbility where outside interest is concerned. Staff made a few site visits and attended some webinars. However, they did do a lot of work on the Virtual State Fair. [More](#)

Georgia



Jacqueline Jacobs, an intern from Fort Valley State University (1890 university), has been doing on-site visits with AgrAbility staff. She is obtaining a Master of Science degree in rehabilitation counseling. Staff are excited to have her as part of the AgrAbility team.

Georgia AgrAbility staff returned to conducting on-site visits with farmers and ranchers during September. With this change, many farmers and ranchers had received equipment that needed installation on various farms across Georgia. Staff are following strict COVID guidelines.

With assistance through Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation, several Georgia farmers received assistive technology equipment this month. A cattle farmer and military veteran received Ghost Control automatic gate operators, an Arrowquip portable cattle working system, a gas-powered T-post driver, and rear-view cameras for his tractors.



A cotton farmer received a Life Essentials truck-mounted lift and GPS autosteer technology for his tractors, sprayers, and cotton pickers. By incorporating GPS autosteer, the farmer will now be able to run his equipment more safely and efficiently. It will also decrease fatigue and input cost.

Dr. Glen Rains recently co-published an Extension article on chainsaws titled [Chainsaw Chains and Bars](#). To make the right choices for the job, a saw operator should be aware of the cutter type, pitch, gauge, and cutter configuration when purchasing a chain or a chainsaw.

Indiana

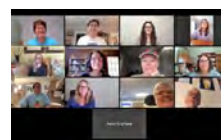
Steve Swain, Indiana AgrAbility rural rehabilitation specialist, was an expert presenter on "Practical AT Assessments" for Dr. Brad Durestock's graduate class at Purdue. The class was presented virtually and recorded for class members to access at a later time.

Steve Swain also continued to answer questions and acquire equipment quotes for VR counselors, supervisors, and clients.

Kansas

Kansas AgrAbility and Kansas Rehabilitation Services (VR) are working on digital training for new VR counselors. In the meantime, KAP staff conducted virtual regional trainings for the Kansas City metro area, a thriving area for small producers. [More](#)

Referrals to KAP staff have increased since March despite Covid19 trends in the state. Virtual training appears to be effective in maintaining collaborative relationships and increasing service authorizations through the Provider Agreement.



Maine



Boots 2 Bushels (B2B) Program 2020 -Boot Camp for Market gardeners and Farmers.

Starting and running a farming program during a global pandemic certainly had its challenges - and rewards! [More](#)

Staff are moving ahead with planning for B2B 2021! Maine AgrAbility was able to successfully coordinate a signed memorandum of agreement between University of Maine Cooperative Extension and Kennebec Valley Community College to allow B2B 2021 use of the farm facility at KVCC! [More](#)



We've gotten some really great press about our B2B program.

- [Bangor Daily News](#)
- ["Inquire Within"](#) Digital magazine hosted by Working Nation

Maine AgrAbility finalized a new [factsheet](#) *Why Growing Lavender in Maine Might Be a Suitable Enterprise for Persons with Disabilities*.

Maine staff routinely share news posts and articles. [More](#)

Michigan



Michigan AgrAbility Demonstration Farm will host a virtual farm tour for Michigan Rehabilitation counselor partners and will demonstrate a large number of assistive technology equipment on the farm on October 14. [More](#)

Join Michigan AgrAbility on October 27 as they share their project and resources with attendees during the [AgrAbility Virtual State Fair](#) on Facebook and Twitter.

The MSU College of Engineering's 2019 Fall Edison Undergraduate Design Award was given to the Mechanical Engineering (ME) 481 design team that was judged to have produced the best technical design project. The winners were Team Michigan AgrAbility!! [More](#)



Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility completed the following AgrAbility client and farm family tasks during the past month: [More](#)

The Missouri AgrAbility Project was highlighted as a resource during the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) quarterly Networking Coffee for Professionals - St. Louis. This virtual meeting was attended by eight vocational, rehabilitation, and education professionals.

Will Matus, BIA-MO program associate, began utilizing the *Guide for Family Caregivers* booklet that jointly features the Missouri AgrAbility Project, BIA-MO, and Brain Injury Association of America.

Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility field staff continues to work on client reports, do visits, and wrap up several cases while physically distancing.

Staff were able to attend Farm Progress's virtual event. This was in place of Husker Harvest Days - one of the largest farm expos in the country. [More](#)

The team celebrated National Farm & Safety Health Week. [More](#)

Staff hope you joined them for the Virtual State Fair in October.

A staff member trained in the MSU [Communicating with Farmers under Stress](#) curriculum is offering the fourth live webinar of the year on Tuesday, November 10, from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. CST. Register by clicking [here](#). [More](#)

North Carolina

During the month of September, North Carolina AgrAbility along with NAP, the LIFE Project, Peoples Foundation, Pangea Farms, Chef Joseph's Kicksauce, and Legacy Taste of the Garden, have been planning for the 2020 AgrAbility/LIFE Project 1890 Land Grant Institutions Virtual Workshop hosted by NC A&T State University.

NC AgrAbility Partnership has been serving farmers by doing regular farm visits and referrals.

Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility recently participated in 2020 Farm Science Review - online! For the first time in FSR history, all activities, presentations, demonstrations, and exhibits were solely online. FSR management challenged all OSU personnel to upgrade presentations from the usual PowerPoint and Zoom calls. [More](#)

Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA staff has resumed fully-on-site farm assessments for new farmers (with added health and safety precautions due to COVID-19). [More](#)

Whether rain or shine, the AgrAbility PA staff works through it. Abbie Spackman met with a client to ensure his assistive technology was implemented and meeting his needs. [More](#)

The AgrAbility PA Advisory Board met in a virtual meeting on September 28. It was a welcome chance to meet and share ideas. Additional virtual small-group sessions will take place during the month of October to solicit and exchange feedback from board members.

The students with Tyrone FFA have had their story shared by the [National FFA on ffa.org](#). AgrAbility PA has been thrilled with this interaction in helping students learn more about farmers with disabilities and the story sharing that has come from it.



Tennessee



"I have one excited papa!" - This is a quote that came via text along with pictures that a TN AgrAbility staff member received from a customer's daughter. TN AgrAbility had helped a 46-year-old farmer with back issues that had resulted in back surgery, neuropathy/foot drop, and arthritis. [More](#)

With September being Mental Health Awareness Month, the TN AgrAbility team continued to support the mental health of their farmers by connecting

them to resources and networks.

"Every Farmer Counts" - This was the theme for the 2020 National Farm Health and Safety week. TNAP staff promoted and participated in the informational webinars from Agri-Safe Network, The National Education Center for Ag Safety, and Progressive Agriculture Safety Days. [More](#)

The [2020 16th Annual Tennessee Small Farmer Expo](#) was held virtually in September. Video and live content were streamed via Zoom and YouTube. TN AgrAbility staff participated, "exhibited," and promoted AgrAbility during this event.

TN AgrAbility participated in the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) 2020 virtual conference. [More](#)

During September, TN AgrAbility staff began preparation for the upcoming TN AgrAbility Day on October 28 as part of the AgrAbility Virtual State Fair.



Tennessee AgrAbility staff promoted the new TN Master Farm Manager Program, which will be held online beginning October 13 and continuing every Tuesday night through December 1, 2020. [More](#)

Texas

The Battleground to Breaking Ground Cohort 9 application and information will be on the [Texas AgrAbility website](#) later this October. [More](#)

Utah

AgrAbility of Utah provided online training for two Vocational Rehabilitation districts in the state. [More](#)

AgrAbility staff met virtually with two Vocational Rehabilitation district supervisors on Sept. 16. The meeting was arranged to communicate more efficiently and to better understand each other's organization. The meeting will continue to occur quarterly.

On Sept. 28, AgrAbility of Utah staff attended the Cache Interagency Council meeting and met with non-profits in the community. [More](#)

Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia has been a key partner in the Farm Safety, Health, & Wellness Initiative, which has produced a significant number of publications, webinars, and resources. [More](#)

AgrAbility Virginia has supported a client farmer in southwest Virginia by connecting him with resources and organizations to install Life Essentials hand controls and a sling lift to get into the farmer's tractor.

New resources developed in the last month include: [Best Practices to Managing Farm Financial Health and Wellbeing](#) and [Farmer Financial Health and Wellbeing Assessment: A Tool for Fostering Supportive Financial Conversations](#). [More](#)

AgrAbility Virginia staff are developing materials for the Virtual State Fair where the SRAP will be highlighted on October 16. AgrAbility Virginia will host a scavenger hunt for participants to enter a raffle to win assorted Virginia grown products.

AgrAbility Virginia Field Coordinator Tony Edwards is organizing an online veteran farmer "Boots to Roots" conference in collaboration with the Virginia chapter of the Farmer

Veteran Coalition on November 12.

AgrAbility Virginia will be an exhibitor during the Brain Injury Association of Virginia virtual conference November 13-14.

AgrAbility field staff have received updated display materials for promotional events, including retractable floor banners and collapsible table displays.

AgrAbility Virginia Field Coordinator Jeremy Daubert exhibited for AgrAbility Virginia at the State Dairyman's Board Meeting and The Dairy Alliance Fall Meeting where there were about 50 people in attendance.

Washington

Washington State AgrAbility Program (WSAP) participated in two mask/hand sanitizer giveaways with Washington Farm Bureau on September 10 and 16. [More](#)

WSAP gave a presentation at the King/Pierce County Farm Bureau meeting September 21 with nine participants.

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

WSAP staff continues to work on Virtual State Fair ideas and content for the Washington state showcase Oct 23 and is promoting the month-long campaign via social media.

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.

Washington State AgrAbility Project has been proud to partner with the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network when providing outreach to farmers and ranchers in Washington state. [More](#)

Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin has been getting ready for the Virtual State Fair and their annual advisory council meeting. Staff will be hosting a more condensed virtual meeting in 2020.

Staff are continuing to reach Wisconsin clients through social media, quarterly newsletters, and virtual presentations.

International AgrAbility Network News

AgrAbility for Africa

Following the easing of targeted sector lockdown restrictions due to COVID 19, the AgrAbility for Africa staff are beginning to renew farm visits to assess the impact to farmers. [More](#)

Among the first farm visits was one to a thriving Lake Victoria waterfront mulberry farm owned by Mr. Arthur Blick ,Senior. Despite being confined to a wheelchair since 1983 following a bike racing accident, Mr. Blick has remained positive, and has recently started adding value to his mulberry fruit by producing wine. [More](#)



Finding unconventional solutions and interventions has helped the AgrAbility for Africa staff create new ideas and solutions to enhance the quality of life of farmers, ranchers, and children in Uganda, and has helped farmers faced with disabilities rebuild and return to a fairly independent lifestyle that is more flexible and meaningful. [More](#)

AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [AgrAbility Virtual State Fair](#) (AgrAbility projects: National, Alaska, California, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin)
 - [VETERANS - Tap Into Your Own Skills, Be Your Own Boss](#) (Maine AgrAbility)
 - [Spotlight on Farm Safety, Health, and Wellness Toolkit for Managing Farm Stress and Mental Health](#) (AgrAbility Virginia)
 - [How a program that teaches veterans to farm pivoted during the pandemic](#) (Maine AgrAbility)
 - [How Knee Pain Can Be Managed With Modified Equipment](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
 - [Fruit and berry farm years in the making](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
 - [Harvest is 'tough row to hoe' for farmers dealing with stress](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
 - [SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
 - [Missouri farmers featured in AgrAbility Virtual State Fair](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project, National AgrAbility Project)
 - [Challenge Course Boosts Members' Empathy](#) (AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians)
 - [AgrAbility Virginia continues serving farmers throughout pandemic](#) (AgrAbility Virginia)
 - [USDA Program Helps Injured Farmers Continue To Work](#) (AgrAbility Virginia)
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Other News

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

- [Strengthening diversity and inclusion in agriculture](#)
 - [Agriculture workers risk safety, health during pandemic](#)
 - [USDA plans additional \\$14B for farmers reeling from virus](#)
 - [USDA implements the OneRD Guarantee Loan Initiative](#)
 - [NRCS & FEMA work together to provide disaster recovery assistance](#)
 - [Farm Bureau launches Think F.A.S.T. for youth](#)
 - [Chainsaw Chains and Bars](#) Dr. Glen Rains (PI, Georgia AgrAbility) recently co-published this extension article on chainsaws.
 - [Free training for supervisors aims to keep young ag workers safe](#)
 - [Harvesting grief: Suicide on the farm](#) (Karen Funkenbusch (PI, Missouri AgrAbility Project))
 - [Farmer who is 'lucky to be alive' takes time for safety](#)
-

[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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October 2020

National AgrAbility Project

September was the month of virtual farm shows. The [2020 Virtual Farm Progress Show](#) and the [Virtual Ohio Farm Science Review](#) were both interesting and informative. Steve Swain would encourage everyone to take some time to view the field demonstrations and presentations from both shows for training purposes. They are free to view. The Virtual Farm Progress Show will be available thru the spring of 2021. Ohio AgrAbility has presentations available on the Virtual Ohio Farm Science Review site.

Submitted by Steve Swain

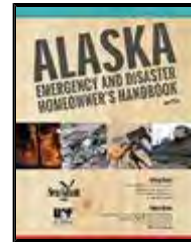
October 2020

Alaska



The Alaska AgrAbility team is still under restrictions related to COVID-19 and not able to perform in-person assessments. In anticipation of limited in-person engagement in the future, on September 11 some of the AK AgrAbility team participated in PPE training coordinated by non-profit partner Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) to gain more insight into appropriate and required protective equipment.

In recognition of Emergency Preparedness Month, a four-part series of workshops was offered virtually September 28-October 1 on the following topics: preparing for disasters, disasters and the home, responding to disasters to include resources for elders, mitigating damage, and resources for readiness such as using the [Alaska Emergency and Disaster Homeowner's Handbook](#) recently published by AK AgrAbility PI Art Nash in collaboration with Alaska Sea Grant.



ATLA has received a grant from the Department of Health and Social Services for a new program called TechAbility. This program provides free lifetime loans to Alaskans who are Mental Health Trust Authority beneficiaries. Starting in March 2020, the delivery service of the TechAbility program had to be reimagined in a very short time. In the last four months, ATLA has qualified 152 Alaskans and provided distance delivery service and equipment to 68 of those.

To qualify for TechAbility, an Alaskan need to be identified as a mental health beneficiary in at least one of the following categories:

- Chronic alcoholism
- Alzheimer's Disease or related dementias
- Developmental disabilities
- Mental Illness
- Traumatic head injury resulting in permanent brain injury

The qualified applicant would receive a call from an assistive technology (AT) specialist who would conduct a consultation to determine the AT that would best meet their individual needs and could be provided through the program. Once the AT has been determined, the selected equipment is sent to the applicant. Follow-up services will also be provided to ensure best use of the AT equipment.

Submitted by DeShana York

October 2020

California

California AgrAbility conducted outreach at the Madison Migrant Center in Yolo County. Although the migrant centers are closed to the public, limited access is available for agencies petitioning to bring in resources for the farm-working families. AgrAbility and colleagues from the Promotores Network were able to leave informational brochures, masks, and hand sanitizers for the families with the housing manager. A total of 82 families are currently living in the center.



Staff joined the virtual RISE collaborative Zoom meeting. This was the first virtual RISE meeting since the pandemic started, and it is expected to continue virtually for the next year. Attending organizations shared their experiences as they continue to provide and even expand services during the pandemic. AgrAbility shared highlights about program services, the device lending library, and upcoming webinars for promotores. Resources for Independent Living has provided five batteries and tool kits for individuals with disabilities in the community.

California AgrAbility participated in several National Farm Safety & Health Week webinars hosted by AgriSafe. The week started off with a webinar on tractor safety and the topic of ROPS. This webinar showed social media clips of agricultural equipment accidents such as ATV rollovers and scenes of children riding machinery with family members. The presenter spoke about the heightened need for safety, especially in these times where unsafe behaviors are portrayed to massive audiences via social media. The week continued with a webinar on mental health innovations and topics such as mental health views across different cultures and ethnicities. The webinar also touched on the importance of having a suicide prevention hotline for farmers that is more culturally responsive to the kind of stressors farmers face. AgriSafe closed NFSHW with a presentation on back pain in America. About 80% of Americans experience back pain at some point and it is second only to the common cold as the most common cause of lost work time.

Submitted by Sara Wat

October 2020

Colorado

September was a lackluster month for Colorado AgrAbility where outside interest is concerned. Staff made a few site visits and attended some webinars. However, they did do a lot of work on the Virtual State Fair. Both Jim and Candy learned a lot about IT and about how much they did not know. Since their traditional Winter Workshops have been face-to-face, the new format of going statewide online requires staff to know about platforms, mp4s, YouTube, etc. So, it will be a fun new adventure for the CAP "dinosaur" team.

Submitted by Jim Craig

October 2020

Kansas

Kansas AgrAbility and Kansas Rehabilitation Services (VR) are working on digital training for new VR counselors. In the meantime, KAP staff conducted virtual regional trainings for the Kansas City metro area, a thriving area for small producers. The training focused on an explanation of KAP services, case studies of farmers and small growers served in the past, and how to access services for current customers. KAP staff repeated regional trainings for VR counselors serving the eastern third of the state and a third training for VR staff in the northwest region. Trainings were similar with the exception of updating case studies to reflect agriculture operations in those regions.

Submitted by Sheila Simmons

October 2020

Maine



Boots 2 Bushels (B2B) Program 2020 -Boot Camp for Market gardeners and Farmers.

Starting and running a farming program during a global pandemic certainly had its challenges - and rewards! Maine AgrAbility staff were able to pivot from in-person learning to remote learning and were, gratefully, able to have in-person field work. A huge thank you went out to all who made this work - their flexibility, creativity and generosity was appreciated.

Staff are moving ahead with planning for B2B 2021! Maine AgrAbility was able to successfully coordinate a signed memorandum of agreement between University of Maine Cooperative Extension and Kennebec Valley Community College to allow B2B 2021 use of the farm facility at KVCC! Staff have



access to the classrooms, farm space, and equipment, and have already started prepping the field that will be filled with veggies next season. The hands-on field workday included tractor safety, tractor implements, and tilling the field - all the time observing health and safety protocols.

Maine staff routinely share news posts and articles.

- [Small Bites](#) are short, informational articles with practical ideas. This month they are about problem solving, staying healthy on the farm, and recognizing patterns to increase efficiency. These shared articles are written by coaches from UMaine Extension's farm coaching team.
- ['Gotta Lotta Living to Do'](#) is a blog series that deals with issues surrounding aging, farming, and quality of life. Two recent blog posts talk about arthritis and farmer health.

Submitted by Lani Carlson

October 2020

Michigan



Michigan AgrAbility Demonstration Farm will host a virtual farm tour for Michigan Rehabilitation counselor partners and will demonstrate a large number of assistive technology equipment on the farm on October 14. As readers may remember from an e-Note last year, Michigan AgrAbility partnered with Holland area farmer Doug VerHoeven to establish a demonstration farm where farmers can "try before they buy"... see and try a variety of assistive technology tools and equipment before investing in aids that can sometimes carry a hefty price tag. A bit about Doug.... In high school, he was

in a vehicle accident and sustained injuries that required him to use a wheelchair. Undeterred, he has been farming from his wheelchair for over forty years! Doug is a member of the Michigan AgrAbility farmer advisory panel and an AgrAbility client. Michigan AgrAbility is grateful for Doug's generosity to share his life's learning and his farmstead so others can benefit. The goal of the October 14 event is to allow Michigan Rehabilitation counselors to see the tools and equipment and, hopefully, to increase their understanding of farming and agriculture.

The MSU College of Engineering's 2019 Fall Edison Undergraduate Design Award was given to the Mechanical Engineering (ME) 481 design team that was judged to have produced the best technical design project. The winners were Team Michigan AgrAbility!! (Left to right: Joe Gusumano, Bradford Chapman, Ryan Qamar, Jeffrey Masten-Davies, Maria Daniela Martin Pereira). Michigan AgrAbility was the project sponsor and Ned Stoller worked closely with the AgrAbility design team. The team focused on designing and manufacturing an "Automatic Gate Opener," an automatic gate opening system that could easily be installed on a wide variety of gates and could be used by agricultural workers across Michigan and the U.S. The gate opener consisted of an actuator connected to the gate and was operated by a push-button similar to a garage door opener.



Submitted by Deb Chester

October 2020

Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility completed the following AgrAbility client and farm family tasks during the past month:

- Developed three video clips and created several posts for the online AgrAbility Virtual State Fair. Missouri will join other AgrAbility projects across the country to provide resources for farmers, ranchers, and farm families with disabilities.
- Nahshon Bishop with Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program at Lincoln University Cooperative Extension and MO AgrAbility co-PI assisted with developing an 1890 video clip for the online AgrAbility Virtual State Fair.
- Maureen Cunningham with the Brain Injury Association of Missouri and Missouri AgrAbility co-PI assisted with developing a nonprofit video clip for the online AgrAbility Virtual State Fair.
- Facilitated three level II onsite farmstead fee-for-service assessments.
- Invited to participate in anti-racism and new farmer training for nongovernmental, nonprofit, and cooperative extension.
- Participated in Annual USDA NIFA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program stakeholders input meeting.
- Developed an ergonomic-tool-talk video clip for beginning, disabled, women, and socially disadvantaged farmers.
- David Middleton with Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program at Lincoln University Cooperative Extension and MO AgrAbility developed an ergonomic tool demonstration video clip.
- Participated in monthly Rural Opioid Task Force and Generation Rx meeting.

Submitted by Karen Funkenbusch and Tevin Uthlaut

October 2020

Nebraska

Staff were able to attend Farm Progress's virtual event. This was in place of Husker Harvest Days - one of the largest farm expos in the country. The sessions attended had great information. It was neat to see the vendors do videos on their products to show benefits they will have for all farmers and ranchers.

The team celebrated National Farm & Safety Health Week. Each day, the NE AgrAbility social media platforms educated on daily topics. Many were shared by its followers. Staff hope that these platforms are reaching farmers and ranchers so they can prevent injuries from occurring.

A staff member trained in the MSU [Communicating with Farmers under Stress](#) curriculum is offering the fourth live webinar of the year on Tuesday, November 10, from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. CST. Register by clicking [here](#). This program is 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.

Submitted by Susan Harris

October 2020

Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility recently participated in 2020 Farm Science Review - online! For the first time in FSR history, all activities, presentations, demonstrations, and exhibits were solely online. FSR management challenged all OSU personnel to upgrade presentations from the usual PowerPoint and Zoom calls. Ohio

AgrAbility staff accepted the challenge and learned quite a bit about editing, filming, B-roll, the importance of lavalier microphones and tripods, and using Zoom to create an interesting, pre-recorded presentation. Ohio AgrAbility gave five presentations and hosted two "Coffee and Conversations." While it would have been preferable to be at Farm Science Review in person, it was nice to have staff from SRAPs and NAP attend the events. Presentations included Fitness for Farm Life: Safe Lifting and Stretches; Accessible Agritourism; Universal Design for Buildings and facilities; Universal Design for Equipment and Vehicles; and Gardening through the Ages.



Submitted by Laura Akgerman

October 2020

Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA staff has resumed fully-on-site farm assessments for new farmers (with added health and safety precautions due to COVID-19). Staff have been following up with clients who have recently received assistive technology. One farmer purchased a pre-owned, side-entry skid steer with a low-interest loan through the state's alternative financing program, Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF). He was very excited about this purchase and the ease of access the side entry provides. He is very eager to share his experience with other farmers about the resources and assistance he received through AgrAbility! Watch for more of his story in upcoming publications.

Whether rain or shine, the AgrAbility PA staff works through it. Abbie Spackman met with a client to ensure his assistive technology was implemented and meeting his needs. This included testing out the Life Essentials Lift that was recently installed on his combine. (View the [video here](#).) During this time, some new needs were assessed and the discussion focused on preventing secondary injuries while using assistive technology.

Submitted by Abbie Spackman

October 2020

Tennessee



"I have one excited papa!" - This is a quote that came via text along with pictures that a TN AgrAbility staff member received from a customer's daughter. TN AgrAbility had helped a 46-year-old farmer with back issues that had resulted in back surgery, neuropathy/foot drop, and arthritis. He is a livestock producer, and sitting in the tractor seat for long periods of time wore him out.

With his neuropathy/foot drop, the tractor's steps were a hazard for him. With the assistance of K & M's knowledge of steps and seats, this farmer has a new seat and steps with handrail for his John Deere tractor. The TN farmer said, "I know the seat will save what is left of my back. The steps will keep me from falling and messing something else up. It was a pain in the tail with these leg braces, trying to step up and twist sideways. Now I can just walk straight up."



"Every Farmer Counts" - This was the theme for the 2020 National Farm Health and Safety week. TNAP staff promoted and participated in the informational webinars from Agri-Safe Network, The National Education Center for Ag Safety, and Progressive Agriculture Safety Days. Thank you for the very informative VA AgrAbility webinar, "Spotlight on the Farm Safety, Health, and Wellness Toolkit for Managing Farm Stress and Mental Health." Progressive Agriculture Safety Days focused attention on disability awareness. Did you know that often the biggest barriers people with disabilities encounter are other people? Watch this "[Daily Learning Drop](#)" share ways to educate youth about this topic during Progressive Agriculture Safety Days. Progressive Agriculture Safety Days also featured a "story hour" each night during National Farm Health and Safety Week. These are very good to watch with younger children. Another resource that was promoted by TNAP was the safety online materials at [Agricenter International](#).

TN AgrAbility participated in the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) 2020 virtual conference. Staff are proud of their partners with TN State University presenting and making national finalist in the "Search for Excellence Young, Beginning or Small Farmers" with its "Slow Your Roll workshop series" by Iris Cui, UT MANAGE specialist and Karla Kean, TN State University Small Farm programs. Several TNAP clients who are veterans with disabilities participate in this wonderful beginning farmer education series in Clarksville.

Tennessee AgrAbility staff promoted the new TN Master Farm Manager Program, which will be held online beginning October 13 and continuing every Tuesday night through December 1, 2020. This is an outstanding new program that was pilot tested this past winter with excellent results. Online registration (\$100) and additional information is available at <http://masterfarmmanager.tennessee.edu/>.

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

October 2020

Texas

- Battleground to Breaking Ground Cohort 9 application will be on the [Texas AgrAbility website](#) later this October.
- Battleground to Breaking Ground Cohort 9 Spring 2021 applicant webinar will be held October 30, 2020, from 2:00-3:30 p.m. Within this webinar, they will be discussing "how-to" and the best practices from selected past Battleground application.
- The deadline for Battleground to Breaking Ground will be November 20, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Then Notifications of acceptance into the Battleground to Breaking Ground will be sent out December 18, 2020.
- Basic Training for Cohort 9 will be held from January 14-16, 2021, at Farmer's Education & Training Center in Gatesville, TX.

Submitted by Nancy Vasquez

October 2020

Utah

AgrAbility of Utah provided online training for two Vocational Rehabilitation districts in the state. The first was on Sept. 8 for the South Valley district and was attended by 15 counselors and staff. The second was on Sept. 23 for the West Valley district and was attended by 21 counselors and staff.

On Sept. 28, AgrAbility of Utah staff attended the Cache Interagency Council meeting and met with non-profits in the community. The Cache Interagency Council meets monthly and their mission is to unite non-profits and community service organizations in sharing ideas, upcoming events, and ongoing services, thus producing a spirit of unity and cooperation among the participating organizations.

Submitted by Randall Bagley

October 2020

Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia has been a key partner in the Farm Safety, Health, & Wellness Initiative, which has produced a significant number of publications, webinars, and resources. Many of these materials were highlighted in a webinar September 16 titled "Farm Safety, Health & Wellness: Spotlight on Managing Farm Financial Stress and Mental Health." The materials and recording are available on the [AgrAbility Virginia website](#).

New resources developed in the last month include: [Best Practices to Managing Farm Financial Health and Wellbeing](#) and [Farmer Financial Health and Wellbeing Assessment: A Tool for Fostering Supportive Financial Conversations](#). A compendium document that details each of the resources developed over the course of the initiative is forthcoming.

Submitted by Virginia AgrAbility Project

July 2020

Washington

Washington State AgrAbility Program (WSAP) participated in two mask/hand sanitizer giveaways with Washington Farm Bureau on September 10 and 16. Events were held practicing social guidelines with drive-by service where 48 farming operations were given information on AgrAbility and suicide prevention.

Washington State AgrAbility Project has been proud to partner with the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network when providing outreach to farmers and ranchers in Washington state. Based out of the same office at WSU Skagit county extension, the Western Region FRSAN team is excited to announce their successful application for continued funding. This will allow suicide prevention efforts to expand into the 13 states and four territories in the western region of the US.

A cornerstone of the program activity builds on the groundwork of stress management resources developed by the National AgrAbility Project and SRAPs. The Western Regional Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network has partnered with NAP and all SRAPs within the region. A big thanks to everyone for committing to health and safety for farmers both physically and mentally. For more information, [click here](#).

Submitted by Kristen Hinton-Vanvalkenburg

October 2020

AgrAbility for Africa

Following the easing of targeted sector lockdown restrictions due to COVID 19, the AgrAbility for Africa staff are beginning to renew farm visits to assess the impact to farmers. The re-connection is meant to guide intervention programs and activities to ensure effective project implementation by analyzing potential barriers and farmer needs caused by the pandemic. The situation has certainly had negative effects on the health, social, and economic aspects of their lives. It is essential to have clients be a part of the solution by actively engaging them in strategies that are geared towards improving their quality of life and boosting their productivity



Among the first farm visits was one to a thriving Lake Victoria waterfront mulberry farm owned by Mr. Arthur Blick, Senior. Despite being confined to a wheelchair since 1983 following a bike racing accident, Mr. Blick has remained positive, and has recently started adding value to his mulberry fruit by producing wine. To date, he has been using his bare hands, but is looking at mechanizing the process in the future to accommodate



increased fruit production and to meet certification requirements for his sweet and dry mulberry brands. Due to Africa's meteorological cycles, the crop has five agricultural cycles when grown in Uganda, as opposed to one or two agriculture cycles when farmed in Europe and other parts of the world.



Finding unconventional solutions and interventions has helped the AgrAbility for Africa staff create new ideas and solutions to enhance the quality of life of farmers, ranchers, and children in Uganda, and has helped farmers faced with disabilities rebuild and return to a fairly independent lifestyle that is more flexible and meaningful. That success is largely credited to collaborations and the ability to make complex tasks simple - benefits unlocked by scaling low-cost assistive technology solutions to farmers with disabilities. AgrAbility for Africa staff, realizing the benefits, have sought the expertise of Dr Therese Willkomm, "Assistive Technology MacGyver," of the Assistive Technology in New Hampshire program, to deepen their knowledge in creating and fabricating these solutions. As part of the process, AgrAbility for Africa has received donations of her publications *Assistive Technology Solutions in Minutes*, to support the skill and capacity development of their entire team, and to help in increasing client satisfaction. By ensuring quicker solutions to farmers' challenges, AgrAbility for Africa will help alleviate the problem faced by clients of having to wait too long for significant aid.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

October 2020

Upcoming Events

- 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** 93rd National FFA Convention & Expo
Dates October 27-29, 2020
City, State Virtual - Online and on RFD TV
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.morningagclips.com/tune-into-the-93rd-national-ffa-convention-expo/>
- Name** 2020 Angus Convention simplified to 137th Annual Meeting
Dates November 8-9, 2020
City, State Kansas City, Missouri, and online
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.morningagclips.com/2020-angus-convention-simplified-to-137th-annual-meeting/>
- Name** Communicating with Farmers Under Stress
Dates November 10, 2020
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link go.unl.edu/stress2020
- Name** DCRC (Dairy Cattle Reproduction Council)
Dates November 10-12, 2020
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.morningagclips.com/dcrc-pivots-from-in-person-to-virtual-conference/>
- Name** 2020 Farmer Veteran Stakeholders Conference
Dates November 18-19, 2020
City, State Virtual event online (Any Town, USA)
Contact <https://conference.farmvetco.org/>

**Info/Web
link**

Name Virtual Forum for Migrant and Community Health

Dates March 22-26, 2021

City, State Virtual event online

**Contact
Info/Web
link** <https://mailchi.mp/12ddb945d478/2021-virtual-forum-for-migrant-and-community-health?e=0e8b3c09a1>

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