

# AgrAbility e·Note

December 2020 / January 2021

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

### **Save the dates!!! The 2020-2021 NTW is going virtual.**

We all know that the 2020 NTW had to be cancelled, and with the uncertainty of the current pandemic, staff have chosen not to try to schedule an in-person 2021 NTW. In place of both of those, the planning committee has chosen to do weekly educational sessions on Tuesdays at 1 p.m. ET from February 2- August 30, 2021. Some of the sessions will run an hour and some will run 1.5 hours to model the sessions at the NTW. These sessions will be presented over Zoom and will be open to anyone interested. A schedule for the first two months and a registration link will be available on the NTW tab of the NAP website [HERE](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Tess [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org) or JoBeth [jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org).

Staff are looking forward and would like to plan an in-person Regional Workshop or two, possibly for late Spring or Summer 2021. Depending on what is happening with the Covid-19 virus at that time, everyone may have to adjust, but staff are hoping that smaller, in-person events will be possible by then. 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).

The webinar: "An Overview of the USDA/NIFA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) with Focus on the North Central Region" is now archived at <http://www.agrability.org/online-training/archived/webinar-series/>.

NAP partner Goodwill of the Finger Lakes conducted its first virtual regional workshop on December 1, 3, and 4 with focus on focus on AgrAbility, farm stress, and mental health. Special thanks to Abbie Spackman of AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians for her presentation on agricultural worksite assessments. Workshop archives should be available soon.

The National Black Farmers Association (NBFA) held their annual conference on a farm outside of Boydton, Virginia, October 31 - November 1, 2020. This year, the National AgrAbility Project (NAP) sent two staff members - Ed Sheldon, NAP farmer veteran job coach and engagement coordinator, and Chuck Baldwin, NAP underserved populations outreach coordinator. [More](#)



## Toolbox Spotlight



modestly than similar products.

The twin-lever-steered, electric-powered [Not-A-Wheelchair Off-Road Mobility Vehicle](#), which is designed to navigate most any terrain, reportedly has a maximum speed of 12 mph and travel range of 10-20 miles (if one battery) and 25-35 (if two). It's designed to be lightweight and small enough (5 feet long, 32 inches wide) to fit in a pickup or van. At \$4,750, it's priced more

## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### Alaska

During the week of December 7, partner agency ATLA (Assistive Technology of Alaska) hosted a virtual lunch and learn series with a wide variety of assistive technology topics including, but not limited to, Navigating ATLA Programs, AT for Everyday Independence, and AT for Improving Mental Health and Reducing Isolation. Each webinar had real-time captions and a sign language interpreter to increase the accessibility for all participants. There was a total of 75 participants throughout the week.



Some AgrAbility staff attended the 2020 Intertribal Agriculture Virtual Conference.

In January, some AgrAbility staff attended the 2021 Virtual American Farm Bureau Convention.

### California



California AgrAbility hosted and presented at the Promotores Virtual Meeting, an online event presenting essential resources in times of COVID-19 for community grassroots leaders. [More](#)

Staff joined the webinar hosted by Colorado AgrAbility titled "Biological Factors Associated with Farm and Ranch Stress and Suicide Risk." Dr. Stallones spoke of the stress diathesis model of suicide. [More](#)

California AgrAbility joined the overview webinar for the USDA/NIFA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) with Focus on the North Central Region. Brent Elrod from USDA spoke about farm stress and the need for this new FRSAN project. [More](#)

California AgrAbility participated in the monthly Health Window providers' meeting hosted by the Health Education Council (HEC). The meeting started with the introduction of HEC's new executive, Nicamer Tolentino. Through binational health celebrations, the Health Window helped coordinate agencies to promote their respective health events for this campaign. [More](#)



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Staff joined the monthly Ability Tools meeting. The meeting began with the presentation of CFILC (CA Foundation for Independent



Living Centers) and the Digital Access Project. The project targets individuals who do not have digital skills and provides them with the right to internet access. [More](#)

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## Colorado

This has been a strange year for all. For most of the year, AgrAbility staff have been restricted from performing on-farm visits due to COVID-19 protocols. [More](#)

Other than that, Colorado staff spent many hours learning as much as they could about virtual meeting platforms and webinars in preparation for the new format to be used with their Winter Workshops.

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## Georgia

AgrAbility in Georgia and North Carolina recently collaborated on assisting a farmer. [More](#)

Georgia AgrAbility has had several new referrals, and field staff have been busy conducting site visits.

Three FarmAgain staff members attended the virtual "Veterans Farming Through Adversity", the sixth national Farmer Veteran Stakeholders Conference hosted by Farmer Veteran Coalition. [More](#)



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## Kansas

Kansas Rehabilitation Services continued its collaboration with Kansas AgrAbility (KAP) in training new vocational rehabilitation counselors. [More](#)

Although Kansas AgrAbility's home is at Kansas State University, they also work with the University of Kansas through SKIL, their non-profit partner. [More](#)

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## Maine

Kelly Smith and Lani Carlson presented an AgrAbility 101 workshop for Vocational Rehabilitation counselors in the Augusta regional office, as well as a webinar as part of the Department of Health and Human Services disability awareness month activities.

Maine AgrAbility is excited to have launched registration for the 2021 Boots to Bushels (B2B) programming. [More](#)

Maine AgrAbility is continuing to develop new tools for outreach and education. One project is developing a pain management and assessment tool for farmers to use, and a video to illustrate the concept. [More](#)

Be sure to check out Maine AgrAbility's most recent news and blog posts: [More](#)

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## Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility is honored to serve those who served. Jed Welder, army ranger veteran, served tours in Iraq and Iran. After retiring from the military, he returned home to the family farm to raise corn, soybeans, and



wheat. Pivoting to watch operations going on behind the tractor or combine was becoming increasingly more difficult and painful. [More](#)

The Michigan AgrAbility [2020 Year-In-Review newsletter](#) was distributed the first week of December. [More](#)

The Michigan AgrAbility Farmer Panel met on December 3 to review Michigan AgrAbility's 2020 activities and offer comments and encouragement to Michigan AgrAbility staff to continue the "good work they do" to assist farmers in Michigan.

MSU Mechanical Engineering seniors take part in a capstone project each semester. Michigan AgrAbility sponsored two design teams for the Fall 2020 semester. One designed a spring system for pulling the cord on a small engine to make it easier to start for workers with shoulder injuries. [More](#)



The second team sponsored by Michigan AgrAbility designed a man-lift swing arm with a seat to safely assist farmers getting into their tractor cabs. As many of you know, farmers are an innovative group, and many have built their own man-lifts to provide easy access to their equipment. [More](#)

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## Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility co-sponsored "Pixels of Production," an online conference for women in agriculture, November 5, 10, 12 and 17. [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility staff members attended the 2020 Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Virtual Conference, "Rising to New Challenges," November 17-20. [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility continues to lay the foundation for the Heroes to Hives first state chapter. [More](#)

Staff members from MU Extension were involved with facilitating MO AgrAbility client farmers focus group meetings and engagement activities with agriculture-related stakeholders and social service agencies to share programmatic impacts and outcomes. [More](#)

The "Heroes to Hives" collaborative beekeeping program with Michigan State University continues to make inroads. [More](#)

Karen Funkenbusch was a panelist for the MU Extension Creating Our Culture of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Fireside Conversation, "University of Missouri Disability and Differently Abled Individuals." [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility focused its social media efforts on promoting programs and resources from their partner programs and organizations that support clients. [More](#)

Pharm to Farm, a Missouri AgrAbility partner, and UMKC School of Pharmacy have developed and are finalizing educational brochures for Missouri AgrAbility clients to educate about safe use of medicine on the farm. [More](#)

The Missouri AgrAbility Project (MAP) and the Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program (ISFOP) spoke to the Southwest Missouri Veterans Coalition via Zoom on November 6, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. [More](#)

Mr. Nahshon Bishop and Mrs. Karen Funkenbusch have been developing drone curriculum for farmers with disabilities. [More](#)

Maureen Cunningham with the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) reminded individuals about the Missouri AgrAbility Project and highlighted the Heroes to Hives program during a BIA-MO support group meeting in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, November 2.

The Heroes to Hives Missouri Chapter and upcoming class were also a highlight of the BIA-MO Networking Coffee for Professionals in Springfield, Missouri, November 19 and in St. Louis December 1, 2020. [More](#)

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## Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility staff continues to attend continuing education sessions one to two times a week. [More](#)

Staff members contributed to MRASH (Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health) conference sessions, one leading a 15-minute stretching session for attendees. [More](#)

Staff offered the "Communicating with Farmers Under Stress" virtual workshop in three sessions during November: one for the public, one for USDA enumerators, and one for Department of Health and Human Services Nebraska Strong Recovery Project employees.

Beginning February, Nebraska AgrAbility will be participating in a doctoral capstone experience with an occupational therapy student from Drake University.

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## North Carolina

NC AgrAbility hosted the "AgrAbility/LIFE Project 1890 Land Grant Institutions Virtual Workshop." Two 1-hour educational sessions were offered each day November 2, 5, 9, and 12. [More](#)

NC AgrAbility Partnership participated as an exhibitor at the Sustainable Agriculture Conference on November 4-8. [More](#)

November 18-19, NC AgrAbility Partnership participated as a virtual exhibitor at the Farmer Veteran Coalition Conference.

Beatriz Rodriguez presented at the NC Commerce Agricultural Services Annual Conference held on November 16, 18 and 20. [More](#)

On December 3 in Greensboro, NC., NCA&T SU Agribusiness and Food Industry Management undergraduate students under the leadership of Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore presented projects. The students worked during the semester on two case studies for two NC AgrAbility farmers. [More](#)



NC AgrAbility participated at the Ag Expo Conference in Wilmington, NC, on December 5-7 facilitated by the NC Agribusiness Council. Dr. Crystal Kyle presented "Farm Safety and Health: Mental Health, working with farmers with disabilities, and using technology on farms." [More](#)

On December 6, Beatriz Rodriguez provided a lecture to the NCSU bio engineering students for their ag safety class. [More](#)

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## Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility has been featured in two cover story magazine

articles this fall - one in the Ohio Rural Electric Cooperative magazine, and one in AgMag, written by Rural Rehabilitation Coordinator Rachel Jarman and Makenzie Thomas from Texas AgrAbility. [More](#)



OAP held the bi-annual advisory committee meeting November 16. OAP staff shared accomplishments from 2020, and were proud to see that the number of presentations (webinars, workshops, coffee and conversations) were the same in 2020 as in 2019 [More](#)

OAP staff presented a short overview of Fitness for Farm Life at the OSU Extension Annual Conference, and continues to develop resources and videos for the Fitness for Farm Life train-the-trainer program.

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## Pennsylvania



Milder weather in the Mid-Atlantic region continued into the months of November and December - allowing AgrAbility PA to continue with its scheduled farm assessments. Abbie Spackman, project assistant, visited a farmer who recently received a Life Essentials AG platform lift that will enable him to access his combine. [More](#)

AgrAbility PA participated in a number of online and virtual opportunities to network and raise awareness about the project, including the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Annual Conference, Farmer Veteran Coalition conference, and a presentation to NRCS field staff about AgrAbility, disability awareness, person-first language, and working with farmers who have disabilities.

AgrAbility PA has added new, educational articles written specifically for farmers and agricultural workers with a disability or long-term health condition who are working in production agriculture. [More](#)



Wishing everyone a safe, healthy 2021!

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## Tennessee

Thanksgiving 2020, TN AgrAbility was grateful for every day they assisted a farmer with a disability adapt and overcome their disability, live an independent life, and continue farming!

After participating in the first virtual National Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) Stakeholders meeting, "2020 Veterans Farming Through Adversity," TNAP left energized to continue helping veterans with disabilities. [More](#)

The Trosts are one of TN AgrAbility's families who are making a difference for other veterans impacted by disability! Stephanie and Michael are a wealth of knowledge about veteran programs and always a call away to help another veteran family! [More](#)

December 2020 for the TNAP team was filled with emails, Zooms, phone conversations, texts, brainstorming, and editing for the 2021-2025 RFA Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disability (AgrAbility) proposal.

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## Texas

Texas AgrAbility staff conducted two farm assessments in the Panhandle. An engineer from West Texas A&M University assisted with the assessment and will be coordinating students to assist with



modifications to equipment.

Texas AgrAbility staff collaborated with the Texas A&M nutrition department to explore possibilities of adapting food handler training for individuals with disabilities. The training is being planned for high school students with disabilities transitioning into the workforce in agriculture and food sector occupations.

Texas AgrAbility published a blog post titled "Farm Stress During the Holidays." The post shares tips and resources for managing stress during the holiday season. Check out the post [here](#).



Twenty-six military veterans and beginning farmers & ranchers were admitted to the ninth cohort of the BattleGround to Breaking Ground program. Participants will gain 16 weeks of online business planning education followed by 100 hours of hands-on training and production agriculture courses.

Texas AgrAbility and BattleGround to Breaking Ground will be hosting a virtual workshop series starting in March titled "Funding the Farm." The workshop series will highlight farm and ranch funding resources such as USDA, Texas Department of Agriculture, and much more. Details will be coming soon!



Texas AgrAbility staff revised the project advisory committee for 2021. The 14-member committee is composed of clients, past participants, agriculture field representatives, disability service providers, migrant and Hispanic farmworker personnel, and military veteran agencies. The committee will advise the project on current goals, communities served, and future program opportunities.

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## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah was able to do AgrAbility training for the Northern Utah Vocational Rehabilitation District on Nov. 2 in Logan, UT. [More](#)

On Nov. 2, AgrAbility of Utah attended the Cache Interagency Council's monthly meeting and gave a brief description of the AgrAbility program. [More](#)

AgrAbility of Utah is preparing and looking forward to its annual Advisory Board meeting on Dec. 1. This year's meeting will be virtual and will include several new members.

AgrAbility of Utah held its first-ever virtual Advisory Board meeting on Dec. 1. The meeting went very well, and AgrAbility of Utah appreciates the 18 board members who attended and gave valuable insight and advice for our program.

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## Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia is actively working with eight farmer clients at various levels of engagement and need, including a beginning farmer in southwest Virginia who is pursuing a diversified enterprise that may include cut flowers and poultry.

AgrAbility Virginia participated in the Virginia Chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition virtual conference November 12 and the Brain Injury Association of Virginia virtual conference November 14.

AgrAbility Virginia partners at Virginia Tech have published the *Farm Safety, Health, & Wellness Toolkit*. The toolkit and additional resources are available [here](#).

AgrAbility Virginia's *Fall 2020 eNewsletter* has been published [here](#). Sign up to receive eNewsletters [here](#).

The Partnership for Innovation, which includes AgrAbility Virginia partners at Virginia Tech, has received IRB approval to begin testing knee and back support technologies with farmers.

AgrAbility Virginia is a sponsor for the Virginia Forage and Grasslands Council virtual 2021 Winter Forage Conference in January.

AgrAbility Virginia staff have provided input on revised evaluation methods for 2020 clients and organizational partners. Updated survey and interview questions will be submitted to IRB early January. The comprehensive program evaluation will begin in the spring following IRB approval.

Dr. Kim Niewolny, Garland Mason, and Liza Dobson presented to staff at the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services to strengthen the existing partnership and determine new ways of collaboration.

Program Coordinator Garland Mason was interviewed by On the Farm Radio for a program which should be aired in January.

AgrAbility Virginia staff are organizing an injury prevention webinar with a panel of healthcare workers including an orthopedic surgeon, a nurse practitioner, and a physical therapist.

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## Wisconsin

Happy 2021 from Wisconsin!

AgrAbility of Wisconsin hosted its annual advisory council meeting mid-November. [More](#)

In early December, staff hosted a webinar, "The 'Upside-Down' Pyramid of Safety in Agriculture". [More](#)

AgrAbility of Wisconsin's next webinar will feature the WI NRCS Disability Emphasis Program Manager, Lizzy Dawson. This will be held January 28. Look for the link to come soon.

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## International AgrAbility Network News

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### AgrAbility for Africa



On November 25, the AgrAbility for Africa staff attended the presentation of the "Social Protection Sector Review" document by the Ministry of Labor, Gender and Social Development of the government of Uganda for the purpose of analyzing the critical component of the government's national development strategy for supporting human capital development and inclusive growth. [More](#)

On December 3, AgrAbility for Africa staff joined the rest of the world to celebrate diversity amongst us in a show of support



toward a society that embraces diversity. Staff continue to challenge everyone to build networks and infrastructure to support people faced with disabilities. [More](#)



## Staff Changes and Recognition

### Alaska

The Alaska AgrAbility program is excited to add Erin Main, OTD, OTR/L, as the AgrAbility service administrator to our team. Erin will work part-time and assist with program development to include work with partnerships and community stakeholders. She will be developing the relationship with the AgrAbility program and UAA students in the professional doctor of occupational therapy (OTD) program. She will also be working with the team to continue to expand outreach to build understanding around occupations, health, disabilities and agriculture. [More](#)

### Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility is saying goodbye to Deb Chester at MSU. Deb is retiring from MSU at the end of 2020. Thanks, Deb, for your dedication and commitment to serving our farming community.

### National AgrAbility Project



After more than 20 years of service to AgrAbility clients, staff, and a multitude of other professionals and consumers, Steve Swain officially retired on December 31. The NAP and Indiana AgrAbility teams wish Steve the best in his life after AgrAbility. You can read his farewell here if you missed it. [More](#)

### Virginia

2020 Computing Innovation Fellow Dr. Brianna Posadas has joined the AgrAbility Virginia team through her work with Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture, Leadership, and Community Education. Read more [here](#).

## AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [How AgrAbility is Creating Opportunities for Farmer's Living with Disabilities](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [Maine AgrAbility coordinator Carlson recognized by national association](#) (Maine AgrAbility)
- [Crystal Kyle: Former Army sergeant helps veterans discover the mental benefits of agriculture](#) (North Carolina AgrAbility)
- [Agriculture deeply imprinted on Computing Innovation Fellow in Virginia](#) (AgrAbility Virginia)
- [Staying in the game](#) (Ohio AgrAbility)
- [MU Extension to help expand mental health resources in rural areas](#) (Missouri)

- AgrAbility Project)
  - [Guest opinion: Military veterans – grow with agriculture](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
  - [AgrAbility](#) (Ohio AgrAbility, Texas AgrAbility, AgrAbility)
  - [First state chapter of Heroes to Hives beekeeping program begins at MU](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
  - [UMaine Extension offers farmer and gardener boot camp](#) (Maine AgrAbility)
  - [Largest agriculture training program for military service members in U.S. continues expansion](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
  - [Colorado State University emphasizes suicide prevention work in agricultural communities](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
  - [Missouri AgrAbility Project/Missouri Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program – Heroes to Hives](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
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## OtherNews

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

- [1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program](#) - Application Deadline: January 31, 2021
  - [USDA announces 2021 Lincoln Leaders Fellowship opportunities](#) - Application Deadline: March 1, 2021
  - [Improving land access for young farmers & farmers of color](#)
  - [Wounded Warrior Project expands support in 2021](#)
  - [Agricultural safety conference shares life-saving research](#)
  - [AGI SureTrack-Compass Education offers free curriculum](#)
  - [USDA launches AskUSDA to improve customer experience](#)
  - [Returning the 'three sisters' – corn, beans and squash – to Native American farms nourishes people, land and cultures](#)
  - [NFU on Justice for Black Farmers Act](#)
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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)

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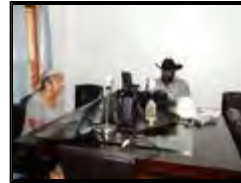
January 2021

## National AgrAbility Project

The National Black Farmers Association (NBFA) held their annual conference on a farm outside of Boydton, Virginia, October 31 - November 1, 2020. This year, the National AgrAbility Project (NAP) sent two staff members - Ed Sheldon, NAP farmer veteran job coach and engagement coordinator, and Chuck Baldwin, NAP underserved populations outreach coordinator. Ed and Chuck were joined by John Jamerson, African American farmer from the historic Lyles Station community in southwest Indiana. Jamerson leads the LIFE (Legacy Innovation Farming Economics) Project, a USDA 2501 grant to help socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, and veterans, in which the National AgrAbility Project is a partner.



While past NBFA conferences have welcomed in excess of 600 attendees in a hotel setting, this year's event, due to COVID-19, was hosted on a 1,000-acre farm belonging to NBFA Founder/President Dr. John Boyd and his wife, Kara, who is co-founder and president of the Association of



American Indian Farmers. Storms along the eastern seaboard grounded flights for Native Americans coming in from western states, so in-person attendance was limited to about 50. However, all of the conference sessions were broadcast live via Zoom, so a wider audience was reached.



The small attendance gave more opportunities for the NAP and LIFE Project team to develop close relationships with others at the conference and particularly with hosts John and Kara Boyd. The conversations held over the two-day event were eye-opening as many of the black farmers in attendance shared current-day stories of financial and physical mistreatment, unequal access to loans, discrimination in the markets, and

sometimes violence or property damage due to racist attitudes. The plea that was heard the most was not for any kind of hand-out, but for an equal opportunity to work hard as a farmer and to reap the benefits of that labor in equal measure. Both John and Kara expressed again their appreciation for the open collaboration with Purdue's AgrAbility Project and the services AgrAbility has rendered to Black and Native American farmers for several years.

Among the attendees was a local Viet Nam veteran with whom Ed was able to share a copy of "The Next Mission" and some AgrAbility/LIFE Project brochures. John, Ed, and Chuck were able to share information about AgrAbility and the LIFE Project during a one-hour session, both in-person and via Zoom.



The NAP/LIFE Project team was welcomed by the Boyd's/NBFA in true Southern style and hospitality and made to feel as if they were truly family.

For Ed and Chuck, the biggest take-away was the close-up relationship-building that



was done across racial, political, and social lines - both the giving and the receiving. "An amazing experience!"

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin

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## Staff Changes and Recognition



After more than 20 years of service to AgrAbility clients, staff, and a multitude of other professionals and consumers, Steve Swain officially retired on December 31. The NAP and Indiana AgrAbility teams wish Steve the best in his life after AgrAbility. You can read his farewell here if you missed it.

"A couple of months ago I did not expect to be writing this e-mail. I begin retirement from AgrAbility and Purdue tomorrow, December 31, 2020. Covid-19 has changed a lot of things this year. One of those is the incentive package to retire offered by the dean of the College of Agriculture at Purdue. It was an offer I could not refuse. My wife has been after me to retire but I told her it wasn't time yet. God hit me over the head with a 2x4 saying it is time. I have no definite plans going forward but have options as well as jobs at home. I will still be part of AgrAbility in different ways in the future.

I am very grateful to Dr. Bill Field and Paul Jones for taking a chance on me and being patient with me for over 20 years. Paul Jones and Ed Sheldon will pick up my responsibilities and can be reached at the toll-free phone number.

I will still have my Purdue e-mail if you have any questions and can be reached at my personal phone number: 219-604-1244." Steve Swain

Submitted by Paul Jones

January 2021

## Alaska

### Staff Changes and Recognition

The Alaska AgrAbility program is excited to add Erin Main, OTD, OTR/L, as the AgrAbility service administrator to our team. Erin will work part-time and assist with program development to include work with partnerships and community stakeholders. She will be developing the relationship with the AgrAbility program and UAA students in the professional doctor of occupational therapy (OTD) program. She will also be working with the team to continue to expand outreach to build understanding around occupations, health, disabilities and agriculture.



Erin is a pediatric occupational therapist at Southcentral Foundation in Anchorage in the child and family developmental services department. She holds a Bachelor of Science in business management from Johnson & Wales University and a doctorate of occupational therapy from Creighton University. Erin has a strong interest in rural health, relationship-based care, autism, sensory processing disorders, childhood trauma, and the impact of the natural world on human growth and development. Previously, she taught leadership, outdoor education, and wilderness skills. She was born and raised on a family farm in rural Nebraska and is a former 4-H'er.

Submitted by DeShana York

January 2021

## California



California AgrAbility hosted and presented at the Promotores Virtual Meeting, an online event presenting essential resources in times of COVID-19 for community grassroots leaders. This event was the third in a webinar series and featured presentations on occupational health and safety, AgrAbility services, and travel advisories and safety during these times for seasonal workers. Presenters included representatives from Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety, Department of Industrial Relations, California AgrAbility, and the Health Window from Health Education Council. AgrAbility staff also led a section of gentle movements and stretches to help break up the two-hour webinar.

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Staff joined the webinar hosted by Colorado AgrAbility titled "Biological Factors Associated with Farm and Ranch Stress and Suicide Risk." Dr. Stallones spoke of the stress diathesis model of suicide. The model is used to describe the underlying predisposition to complete suicide. Epigenetic modifications (extra portions of DNA) can be transmitted from generation to generation. Stress and trauma are triggering events. Dr. Stallones also spoke of the two methods that have shown to have an impact on suicide prevention: educating primary care physicians about the recognition of depression (now they ask more) and restriction to access to lethal means. Sleep disturbances and poor diet were discussed as two areas where intervention is possible. Diet is one of the factors that a person may be able to target without stigma.

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California AgrAbility joined the overview webinar for the USDA/NIFA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) with Focus on the North Central Region. Brent Elrod from USDA spoke about farm stress and the need for this new FRSAN project. Though the pandemic will continue for some time, there are other stressors in agriculture. Farmers and ranchers have experienced more than a 50% reduction in net farm income since 2013 (Farm Bureau, 2013). Farmworkers have greater risk of poor physical health, and those producers who have mental health issues are less likely to look for help. The North Central Region FRSAN project is operating as the North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center.

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California AgrAbility participated in the monthly Health Window providers' meeting hosted by the Health Education Council (HEC). The meeting started with the introduction of HEC's new executive, Nicamer Tolentino. Through binational health celebrations, the Health Window helped coordinate agencies to promote their respective health events for this campaign. The Mexican Consulate held 11 sessions on mental health through its Healthy Mind, Healthy Life program, and this online series has had over 33,000 views via Facebook. In 2021, California AgrAbility Program will be collaborating with the Healthy Mind, Healthy Life program to reach farmworkers in the 24 California counties served by the HEC.



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California AgrAbility joined the regional workshop on stress and mental health presented by National AgrAbility. The workshop introduced five essential steps to develop self-care practices. CalAgrAbility staff were presented with several activities that can promote and increase a healthy mind. The training also provided an overview of the importance of self-care and the belief that, as a person, one can

impact others as well.



Staff joined the monthly Ability Tools meeting. The meeting began with the presentation of CFILC (CA Foundation for Independent Living Centers) and the Digital Access Project. The project targets individuals who do not have digital skills and provides them with the right to internet access. Furthermore, Center for Independence of Individuals with Disabilities in San

Mateo presented an opportunity to be part of testing accessible bags that would be created by [Timbuk2](#). The accessible bags would be built to not tear and be comfortable for anyone and any activity.

Submitted by Sara Wat

January 2021

## Colorado

This has been a strange year for all. For most of the year, AgrAbility staff have been restricted from performing on-farm visits due to COVID-19 protocols. It can be very difficult to serve clients without actually being on the ground. So, when Colorado AgrAbility staff were finally able to get out, they took stock of their backlog and set up the visits. As always, they needed to plan around snow because they must drive over 12,000 ft mountain passes. In a single week, one of their specialists drive nearly 2,000 miles and visited 13 clients.

Submitted by Jim Craig



January 2021

## Georgia

AgrAbility in Georgia and North Carolina recently collaborated on assisting a farmer. The farmer is currently a patient at Shepherd Center in Atlanta, which is Georgia AgrAbility's non-profit partner. Shepherd Center specializes in medical treatment, research, and rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury, brain injury, stroke, multiple sclerosis, spine and chronic pain, and other neuromuscular conditions. Utilizing Microsoft Teams, staff members were able to meet with the farmer and start work on his transition back home to North Carolina.

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Three FarmAgain staff members attended the virtual "Veterans Farming Through Adversity", the sixth national Farmer Veteran Stakeholders Conference hosted by Farmer Veteran Coalition. The conference featured two days of education, workshops, distinguished speakers, guest panels, networking and more.

Submitted by Georgia AgrAbility Project

January 2021

## Kansas

Kansas Rehabilitation Services continued its collaboration with Kansas AgrAbility (KAP) in training new vocational rehabilitation counselors. Due to Covid-19, the four-hour presentation was conducted via Microsoft Teams. Sixteen new VR counselors were the core of the training, but a total of 64 VR staff opted to participate, creating some concern about bandwidth for the KAP team members! The training highlighted successful solutions for employment and reinforced the role of agriculture and agribusiness in highlighted cases; focused on a range of assistive technology devices that included agribusiness applications; and included interactive activities for VR staff to practice planning assistive and rehabilitation technology plans for clients with KAP staff. The discussion was lively, and the staff was pleased to discover one-fourth of the VR participants had experience in agribusiness or grew up on a farm. Staff also provided trivia related to assistive technology for the counselors, who were surprisingly competitive with their co-workers for KAP promo items. Since the virtual training, 11 VR counselors have followed up with questions and KAP and VR staff are discussing two new cases involving farmers. KAP anticipates three to four trainings with VR each year based on past experience. Additionally, staff at two of the Kansas Workforce Centers requested information about accessible agribusinesses and employment based on recent discussions with VR staff this past week.

Submitted by Sheila Simmons

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Although Kansas AgrAbility's home is at Kansas State University, they also work with the University of Kansas through SKIL, their non-profit partner. Last fall, Karin Rasmussen, AT Ag Specialist with KAP, submitted a proposal to KU's BREAK (Biomedical and Rehabilitation Engineering Advancement in Kansas) program that through the engineering capstone design course gives senior engineering students the opportunity to design custom assistive devices and systems to benefit Kansans. The program focuses on tools, rehab, or assistive technology which are not currently available but would be a support to individuals with special needs.

Rasmussen's customer from west central Kansas operates a 150-head cow/calf operation with his father. During the winter months, the livestock are on stubble ground grazing on fallen corn and milo. Routinely during the week, the customer needs to take water out to the cattle since there is not a water source nearby. Due to a spinal cord injury, the customer is not able to open the gates, or get out of his truck to lower the nozzle from the large watering tank to the watering trough. Currently, the customer's 74-year-old father fills the troughs. The customer wants to be able to fill the trough independently, realizing that his father will not always be around to assist.

Rasmussen's proposal was accepted by BREAK, and next steps include a Zoom call with the customer, engineering students and professors, and Rasmussen. The students secured additional photos of the customer's truck and trailer with the watering tank and inquired about hand controls, truck wiring, tank, and trailer. The engineering team is working toward a solution for the KAP customer and hopes to have a solution this spring. KAP will continue to follow up with their client and share BREAK's solution when available.

Readers can visit the [BREAK website](#) for more information on the BREAK program and find past solutions, including Accessible Milk Barn Design.

Submitted by Tawnie Larson

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January 2021

## Maine

Maine AgrAbility is excited to have launched registration for the 2021 Boots to Bushels (B2B) programming. B2B is a nine-month comprehensive, hands-on education and training program that begins with online learning and includes using that knowledge base to grow on a 1/2-acre field and in a high tunnel, starting in the spring.

Twenty veterans and veteran family members have signed up for Boots-2-Bushels 2021, which begins with online classes in January. The majority are beginning farmers with less than three years of farming experience. Staff are excited about the new group of motivated and dedicated veterans, some with disabilities, who are intent on being a part of the food revolution!

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Maine AgrAbility is continuing to develop new tools for outreach and education. One project is developing a pain management and assessment tool for farmers to use, and a video to illustrate the concept. Staff are scheduled to present virtual workshops to regional VR offices as part of their 'Lunch-n-Learn' events discussing AgrAbility and employment in production agriculture.

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Be sure to check out Maine AgrAbility's most recent news and blog posts:

- Maine's veteran outreach coordinator posted an article to celebrate the [Marine Corps Birthday](#).
- [Small Bites](#) are short informational articles with practical ideas. This month was focused on using this time of year to reflect on the past season, survey efforts, and plan for next year: [Goodbye till spring](#).
- ['Gotta Lotta Living to Do](#), a blog series that deals with issues surrounding aging, farming, and quality of life.
- December's posts focus on military veterans farming in Maine and their experience with B2B 2020. Read about [B2B](#) and veteran farmer [Clayton](#).
- Ellen Gibson has started a [recipe swap through her blog](#) posts and a new [Facebook group](#) to try and reach new audiences.

Submitted by Lani Carlson

January 2021

## Michigan



Michigan AgrAbility is honored to serve those who served. Jed Welder, army ranger veteran, served tours in Iraq and Iran. After retiring from the military, he returned home to the family farm to raise corn, soybeans, and wheat. Pivoting to watch operations going on behind the tractor or combine was becoming increasingly more difficult and painful. A mailbox and road sign have all been casualties of his mobility limitations. Michigan AgrAbility assisted Jed with purchasing and installing back-up



cameras in both the combine and a tractor to help save function in his back and neck. It should also be a tool in maintaining good relationships with neighbors and the township! Thank you for your service, Jed. Thank you to all the veterans Michigan AgrAbility serves. Thank you to all American veterans!

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The Michigan AgrAbility [2020 Year-In-Review](#) newsletter was distributed the first week of December. A shout-out and thank you to Michigan AgrAbility's Bev Berens for coordinating the procurement of articles from staff and her meticulous proofreading and our partner, Michigan Farm Bureau for formatting the articles into such a polished publication. Here's a story from it about a [capstone project for Caleb Brown](#).

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MSU Mechanical Engineering seniors take part in a capstone project each semester. Michigan AgrAbility sponsored two design teams for the Fall 2020 semester. One designed a spring system for pulling the cord on a small engine to make it easier to start for workers with shoulder injuries. Many farms use small engine equipment such as chainsaws, lawnmowers, and string trimmers, which require a pull-cord to start. These pull-cord engines require a quick "jerk" motion to start them, which can be difficult to achieve if the user has upper extremity impairments. To help in such instances, the team was tasked with designing a fully mechanical device that allows the user to start the pull-cord engines with their foot, rather than their arm. Despite calling for the design to integrate some sort of motion that is carried out by the foot, with the permission of Michigan AgrAbility, the team came up with a design that limits any sort of quick motion, whether that be via the arm or leg. The design uses a tension spring in order to build up and store potential energy, which is then transformed into kinetic energy through the release of the spring. This quick release of the spring mimics the quick "jerk" motion necessary to start the pull-cord engine, in turn starting the engine without any exhausting physical exertion to the user. The design included easily accessible parts and a step-by-step build guide. It was designed carefully and thoughtfully so that any farmer can create the device in the comfort of their own home. Not only is the device easy to assemble, but it is also universal in that it can start all sorts of small engine equipment besides just chainsaws. Michigan AgrAbility thanks the team members (left to right, top to bottom) Andrew Scott, Tyler Davis, David Demeo, Austin Smith, Collin Lynch, and their academic advisor, Dr. Sara Roccabianca, for their work in assisting the farming community!



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The second team sponsored by Michigan AgrAbility designed a man-lift swing arm with a seat to safely assist farmers getting into their tractor cabs. As many of you know, farmers are an innovative group, and many have built their own man-lifts to

provide easy access to their equipment. These homemade manlifts often have both safety and exertion issues during the farmer's transition from the lift to the seat of their equipment due to the gap existing between the farmer's lifted position and the seat of their equipment. The team designed an affordable and re-creatable powered swing-arm to maximize the safety and minimize the exertion issues. The swing-arm consists of two rotational joints to provide a greater field of motion, capable of transporting the farmer from his/her wheelchair to the lift, from the lift to the seat of their equipment, and around any equipment obstacles, e.g., vehicle door. Michigan AgrAbility thanks the design team for their efforts to assist farmers with disabilities: (from left to right, top to bottom) Alexis French, Rylan Huss, Alison Reinhold, Zachary Myers, Noah Dudley, and their faculty advisor, Dr. Norbert



Mueller.

Submitted by Deb Chester

January 2021

## Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility co-sponsored "Pixels of Production," an online conference for women in agriculture, November 5, 10, 12 and 17. The online conference was a great opportunity for 105 women of all ages to connect with other women in agriculture, and it featured notable keynote speakers each night, along with three sessions on practical tips led by professional women in the agriculture industry. Missouri AgrAbility sponsored keynote speakers Dr. Temple Grandin and Amberly Snyder, as well as one-hour program sessions led by Karen Funkenbusch and Brenda Schreck presenting on the physical and mental stressors of vegetable growers. Kendra Graham and Rachel Hopkins presented "Freeze Branding" and "Tool Talk for Women Livestock Producers."

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Missouri AgrAbility staff members attended the 2020 Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Virtual Conference, "Rising to New Challenges," November 17-20. The first-ever Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference offered participants with online platforms such as a virtual MRASH Conference landing page, sponsors and exhibitors, live-streamed sessions, prerecorded presentations and roundtables, posters, and opportunities to earn CEUs. Karen Funkenbusch, Missouri AgrAbility, and Linda Fetzer, Pennsylvania AgrAbility, presented two posters. "Women in Ag: Safe Animal Handling Resource through AgrAbility and eXtension" was presented November 10. On November 11 both Funkenbusch and Fetzer presented "Missouri & Pennsylvania AgrAbility Assist Diverse Farm & Ranch Populations to Promote Self-Employment Opportunities in Ag."

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Missouri AgrAbility continues to lay the foundation for the Heroes to Hives first state chapter. In Missouri, H2H veteran students will have the opportunity to engage in hands-on training at University of Central Missouri's Mitchell Street Farm in Warrensburg, Missouri, and will receive region-specific management education by University of Missouri Extension's beekeeping experts. The Heroes to Hives program also provide H2H veteran students with in-state support, networking opportunities with regional beekeeping organizations like the Eastern Missouri Beekeepers Association, and direct connection to service providers like the Missouri AgrAbility program.

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Staff members from MU Extension were involved with facilitating MO AgrAbility client farmers focus group meetings and engagement activities with agriculture-related stakeholders and social service agencies to share programmatic impacts and outcomes. Engagement meetings were also used as a platform to discuss the current needs of client farmers and the future of AgrAbility in Missouri.

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The "Heroes to Hives" collaborative beekeeping program with Michigan State University continues to make inroads. The Missouri chapter of "Heroes to Hives" program supports veterans who want to learn beekeeping. The program is open to all veterans and military dependents and the free online certification class will begin in March 2021 and run through November 2021. You can Like and follow Heroes to Hives Missouri at <https://www.facebook.com/HeroestoHivesMO/>.

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Karen Funkenbusch was a panelist for the MU Extension Creating Our Culture of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Fireside Conversation, "University of Missouri Disability and Differently Abled Individuals." Karen shared background information

about the history of AgrAbility, USDA NIFA core AgrAbility services, and how Missouri AgrAbility assists client farmers in Missouri and engages Extension state and regional faculty. Eighty-one Extension users participated during the livestream with another six views of the recording after the event.

Submitted by Karen Funkenbusch

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Missouri AgrAbility focused its social media efforts on promoting programs and resources from their partner programs and organizations that support clients. They are also in the final phases of editing videos to be launched through Missouri AgrAbility YouTube.

Submitted by Tevin Uthlaut

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Pharm to Farm, a Missouri AgrAbility partner, and UMKC School of Pharmacy have developed and are finalizing educational brochures for Missouri AgrAbility clients to educate about safe use of medicine on the farm. The flyers address safety considerations with blood thinners on the farm and the importance of inhalers for farmers with respiratory conditions.

Submitted by Kelly Cochran

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The Missouri AgrAbility Project (MAP) and the Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program (ISFOP) spoke to the Southwest Missouri Veterans Coalition via Zoom on November 6, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. The purpose of meeting was to introduce AgrAbility to veterans' associations and veteran members active in Southwest Missouri. The presentation highlighted the University of Missouri, Lincoln University, and MAP programming and office staff.

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Mr. Nahshon Bishop and Mrs. Karen Funkenbusch have been developing drone curriculum for farmers with disabilities. Their SMART Farm educational outreach endeavor will take place both in person and online as a video series. Missouri's Outreach effort will cover:

- What is AgrAbility and how can it help you?
- Types of Drones and safety consideration
- How to use a drone for your specific operation.

Submitted by Nahshon Bishop

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The Heroes to Hives Missouri Chapter and upcoming class were also a highlight of the BIA-MO Networking Coffee for Professionals in Springfield, Missouri, November 19 and in St. Louis December 1, 2020. The participants at both AgrAbility marketing events discussed the great opportunity the Heroes to Hives program offers for Missouri veterans.

Submitted by Maureen Cunningham



January 2021

## Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility staff continues to attend continuing education sessions one to two times a week. Programs vary in nature, but some from this month were on dynamic funding, aquaponics, farming with cognitive impairments, mental health and resilience, and one on Tech 2 Connect. Each session helps to find new ways to help AgrAbility's clients, as well as think about future programs for the AgrAbility project. Here are a couple of sites offering continuing ed:  
[http://www.uwyo.edu/wycoa/educational\\_and\\_training\\_opportunities/index.html](http://www.uwyo.edu/wycoa/educational_and_training_opportunities/index.html)  
<https://www.uwyo.edu/wind/watr/>

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Staff members contributed to MRASH (Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health) conference sessions, one leading a 15-minute stretching session for attendees. There were about 10 emails after the session to say thanks and that most plan to incorporate the stretching handout into their daily routines. Find it [here](#).

Submitted by Susan Harris

January 2021

## North Carolina

NC AgrAbility hosted the "AgrAbility/LIFE Project 1890 Land Grant Institutions Virtual Workshop." Two 1-hour educational sessions were offered each day November 2, 5, 9, and 12. Due to the event switching to a virtual platform this year, the focus was national, with participants including farmers with disabilities and those who serve them in the agricultural, medical, rehabilitation, and engineering fields. The workshop was attended by more than 100 participants who received information and resources on how to manage limitations in agriculture and how to succeed in production agriculture. The event was sponsored by the National AgrAbility Project, the LIFE Project (a collaboration involving the National AgrAbility Project, Legacy Farming and Health Group, and Peoples Foundation), and the NC AgrAbility Partnership. Other partners involved in the event included Legacy Taste of the Garden, Chef Joseph's Kicksauce, and Pangea Farms.

NC AgrAbility Partnership participated as an exhibitor at the Sustainable Agriculture Conference on November 4-8. Being an exhibitor in the virtual world was a new and exciting challenge for the NC AgrAbility staff who learned to develop tools to reach out to almost 700 participants at this event.

Beatriz Rodriguez presented at the NC Commerce Agricultural Services Annual Conference held on November 16, 18 and 20. This conference provided resources to farmers who hire foreign, seasonal, and migrant farmworkers, to help them increase awareness of services available in the community to improve the wellbeing of farmworkers.

On December 3 in Greensboro, NC., NCA&T SU Agribusiness and Food Industry Management undergraduate students under the leadership of Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore presented projects. The students worked during the semester on two case studies for two NC AgrAbility farmers. They presented a marketing plan proposal as their final project. Farmers, NCA&T professors, and NC AgrAbility staff served as judges for the projects. The students received a stipend from NC AgrAbility as an incentive for their work with NC AgrAbility farmers.



NC AgrAbility participated at the Ag Expo Conference in Wilmington, NC, on December 5-7 facilitated by the NC Agribusiness Council. Dr. Crystal Kyle presented "Farm Safety and Health: Mental Health, working with farmers with disabilities, and using technology on farms." Farmers and service providers had the chance to learn about the program and how to apply for services.

On December 6, Beatriz Rodriguez provided a lecture to the NCSU bio engineering students for their ag safety class. The lecture was about the NC AgrAbility program and "How to Prevent Injuries in the Ag Workplace." Eleven students participated at this interactive session.

Submitted by Beatriz (Betty) Rodriguez



January 2021

## Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility has been featured in two cover story magazine articles this fall - one in the *Ohio Rural Electric Cooperative* magazine, and one in *AgMag*, written by Rural Rehabilitation Coordinator Rachel Jarman and Makenzie Thomas from Texas AgrAbility. Farmers and stakeholders from across Ohio have contacted OAP staff with questions and praise about the articles, and OAP staff are actively looking for other magazines and media outlets to collaborate with for more opportunities to share information about Ohio AgrAbility services.



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OAP held the bi-annual advisory committee meeting November 16. OAP staff shared accomplishments from 2020, and were proud to see that the number of presentations (webinars, workshops, coffee and conversations) were the same in 2020 as in 2019 - restricted travel has not stopped Ohio AgrAbility from education and outreach, and has even offered opportunities to collaborate with other groups and reach a broader audience than in a typical year. Attendance was very high at the committee meeting and several committee members expressed that it is much easier to attend virtually than to drive a few hours to get to Columbus. The committee was divided into breakout rooms and OAP staff collected great feedback and ideas about education, collaboration, and opportunities in 2021 and beyond.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

January 2021

## Pennsylvania



Milder weather in the Mid-Atlantic region continued into the months of November and December - allowing AgrAbility PA to continue with its scheduled farm assessments. Abbie Spackman, project assistant, visited a farmer who recently received a Life Essentials AG platform lift that will enable him to access his combine. This lift was obtained with financial assistance provided by the state's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). AgrAbility PA continues to have a great working relationship with OVR and the project is grateful for their support. Watch the video of Abbie trying out the lift [here](#).

AgrAbility PA has added new, educational articles written specifically for farmers and agricultural workers with a disability or long-term health condition who are working in production agriculture. More articles are planned for the year ahead as the staff focuses on broadening the topics and available formats, including videos. For more information, [click here](#).



Submitted by Kendra Martin

January 2021

## Tennessee

After participating in the first virtual National Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) Stakeholders meeting, "2020 Veterans Farming Through Adversity," TNAP left energized to continue helping veterans with disabilities. FVC of TN became an official chapter in 2020 and TNAP team is proud to be part of it. Now TN can move forward with plans and keep growing the memberships. Staff would encourage all AgrAbility states to partner with their local FVC chapter or contact National FVC or National AgrAbility/Cindy Chastain to get more involved in helping veterans with disabilities who want to farm.

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The Trosts are one of TN AgrAbility's families who are making a difference for other veterans impacted by disability! Stephanie and Michael are a wealth of knowledge about veteran programs and always a call away to help another veteran family! Now the Trosts are working to launch a new non-profit, Front Line Gardens. Their mission will be to help veterans and police officers dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) through a garden therapy program. They will be offering customized raised-bed gardens at the participant's residence, and will be building gardens at veteran locations such as vet centers and VA locations that offer counseling. In 2020, Front Line Gardens had their first two projects underway: helping a veteran in Chattanooga and a VA counseling center for vets. The vet center will use the garden for a group counseling program. 2021 plans for two more projects, one at the VA hospital in Johnson City and one for the veteran center in Monroe County. TNAP is helping promote and set up meetings regionally with Master Gardeners, police officers, and veterans - especially with FVC of TN meetings to invite people with PTSD to learn more information. TNAP will help Front Line Gardens with referrals and work to help veterans with the wounds of war that are visible and invisible. TNAP believes this therapy program will introduce folks to the benefits of gardening and farming and will fill a void in reaching veterans and police officers with PTSD. VA is offering the counseling expertise and participants must be enrolled in a VA therapy program. The VA veteran center has created a therapy program that will be offered through garden therapy. TNAP staff will keep you posted as the program grows!

Submitted by TN AgrAbility

January 2021

## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah was able to do AgrAbility training for the Northern Utah Vocational Rehabilitation District on Nov. 2 in Logan, UT. The training was attended by 12 VR counselors and staff members. The Northern Utah District includes Cache, Box Elder, and Rich counties.

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On Nov. 2, AgrAbility of Utah attended the Cache Interagency Council's monthly meeting and gave a brief description of the AgrAbility program. The mission of the Cache Interagency Council 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

January 2021

## Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin hosted its annual advisory council meeting mid-November. Although this year's meeting was held virtually, they still had great attendance and discussion. Staff was able to share with their advisory council members what they accomplished throughout the year, and what changes they made to adapt to the challenging times.

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In early December, staff hosted a webinar, "The 'Upside-Down' Pyramid of Safety in Agriculture". Production agriculture remains a highly dangerous industry with a fatality rate at least seven times greater than all other industries combined. "Farm safety" efforts are not new - yet they have been only marginally effective. Information about, and illustrations of, applications of the "safety hierarchy" were shared in this session. For many in AgrAbility roles, this may have been a new way of framing workplace safety and health promotion efforts in ways more likely to be impactful, hopefully resulting in less risk, fewer injuries, and healthier farmers, workers, and family members. Dr. John Shutske, Professor and Extension Specialist at UW-Madison, presented. The recording is available on AgrAbility of Wisconsin's website at <https://bit.ly/3oAgEpG>.

Submitted by Amanda Harguth



January 2021

## AgrAbility for Africa



On November 25, the AgrAbility for Africa staff attended the presentation of the "Social Protection Sector Review" document by the Ministry of Labor, Gender and Social Development of the government of Uganda for the purpose of analyzing the critical component of the government's national development strategy for supporting human capital development and inclusive growth. The AgrAbility for Africa team's focus was to assess the nature of support extended to persons with disabilities in the farming industry under the social protection services extension. This was done to increase their understanding of the systems and tools available to support services for farmers, ranchers, and their children when faced with disabilities.

Following the evaluation of the social sector services report, staff began engaging with different sectors, including academia and government, to push and build a narrative infrastructure that advocates for issues necessary for farmers with disabilities to achieve equitable access to assistive technologies and other support services, enabling them to remain productive much longer while living independently.

Issues under discussion are farmers' challenges of accessibility to diagnostics services brought about by the nonexistence of accessible transportation, exacerbated rural isolation of many farmers, the cost of assistive technologies, access to farming extension services and rehabilitation experts, the need for development of a low-cost assistive technology lab, and a campaign to transform Ugandan national care to ensure capacities and tools are in place that both reflect and reinforce support for the underserved people.

On December 3, AgrAbility for Africa staff joined the rest of the world to celebrate diversity amongst us in a show of support toward a society that embraces diversity. Staff continue to challenge everyone to build networks and infrastructure to support people faced with disabilities. Only through collective ability and understanding will societies change to positively engage, with love and empathy, those who are different.



Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

January 2021

## Upcoming Events

**Name** FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management) Quick Convos: Workforce Development  
**Dates** January 20, 2021, 1:00 p.m. EST  
**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://nationaldairyfarm.com/what-is-farm/farm-quick-convos/>

**Name** Rest, Refocus & Recharge-Health & Wellness Series (University of Alaska Fairbanks)  
**Dates** January 21 - March 18, 2021  
**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://news.uaf.edu/health-and-wellness-series-begins-jan-14/>  
Sessions being offered in collaboration with the CES Anchorage Outreach Center

**Name** IPPE (International Production & Processing Expo) Marketplace  
**Dates** January 25-29, 2021  
**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://ippexpo.org/>

**Name** No-till on the Plains 25th Annual Winter Conference  
**Dates** January 26, 2021  
**City, State** Wichita, Kansas - in-person and virtual attendance available  
**Contact Info/Web link** <http://www.notill.org/events/25th-annual-winter-conference>

**Name** Pesticide Certification Workshop (University of Alaska Fairbanks)  
**Dates** January 26, 2021  
**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://news.uaf.edu/pesticide-applicator-training-scheduled-2/>

**Name** 2021 Alaska Forum on the Environment Conference (University of Alaska Fairbanks)  
**Dates** February 8-11, 2021

**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://akforum.org/alaska-forum-on-the-environment/virtual-exhibitor-booths/>  
Alaska AgrAbility will be staffing a virtual booth and providing resources.

**Name** WORLD AG EXPO ONLINE  
**Dates** February 9-11, 2021  
**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.worldagexpo.com/>

**Name** 2021 Women Managing the Farm Conference  
**Dates** February 10-12, 2021  
**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <http://womenmanagingthefarm.com/>

**Name** The 42nd Annual Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association Conference  
**Dates** February 10-15, 2021  
**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://conference.oeffa.org/>

**Name** Respite and Caregiver needs: Creating your respite plan  
**Dates** February 17, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. EST  
**City, State** Free Zoom webinar  
**Contact Info/Web link** Website: <https://agrability.osu.edu/caregiver-support-network/2021-caregiver-workshops>  
Registration: [go.osu.edu/caregiver2021](https://go.osu.edu/caregiver2021)

**Name** Sharing respite experiences and resources: Where do I start?  
**Dates** February 17, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. EST  
**City, State** Free Zoom webinar  
**Contact Info/Web link** Website: <https://agrability.osu.edu/caregiver-support-network/2021-caregiver-workshops>  
Registration: [go.osu.edu/caregiver2021](https://go.osu.edu/caregiver2021)

**Name** USDA's 97th Agricultural Outlook Forum  
**Dates** February 18-19, 2021  
**City, State** Virtual event online  
**Contact** <https://www.usda.gov/oce/ag-outlook-forum>

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** Virtual Forum for Migrant and Community Health

**Dates** March 22-26, 2021

**City, State** Virtual event online

**Contact** <http://www.ncfh.org/virtual-forum.html>

**Info/Web  
link**

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