

AgrAbility e·Note

February 2021

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

National AgrAbility Project News

AgrAbility All-Staff Virtual Meeting: Wednesday, February 24 at 3:00 p.m. ET. This meeting will feature Brad Rein and Lelan Dixon for a “Virtual PI Session,” similar to those held at the NTW. However, **ALL** AgrAbility staff members are welcome and encouraged to participate. Brad and Lelan will share updates, and questions from participants will be welcomed.

2021 AgrAbility National Training Workshop

- The first two NTW virtual session were successes! [More](#)
- If you missed these sessions, they were recorded and archived [HERE](#) .
- If you haven't registered yet, a schedule for the first four months and a registration link is available on the NTW tab of the NAP website [HERE](#).



Staff would like to try to plan an in-person regional workshop or two, possibly for late spring or summer 2021. Interested in hosting? Please contact Tess tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org or JoBeth jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org. [More](#)

Upcoming webinar: "Stressors and Resources for Farm/Ranch Families with Disabilities," Thursday, February 25, 1:00 ET. Stress can have a profound effect on any agricultural producer; however, for those with disabilities, the impacts of stress can be compounded by a variety of additional factors. Featured presenters are Bob Fetsch and Carey Portell [More](#)

Toolbox Spotlight



Believe it or not, spring is just around the corner, and that means severe weather for many parts of the country. An [Above-Ground Storm Shelter](#) is designed to resist high winds, object impact, shifting foundations, flooding, and heavy rains. It's made either of thick steel plates that are bolted together or of pre-cast, steel-reinforced concrete.

State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

Alaska

ATLA Staff gave presentations on assistive technology access and acquisition to groups such as Kiwanis Clubs and Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired Older Blind Group. They also attended the Alaska Public Health Association Summit.

AgrAbility Staff participated in the statewide conference Alaska Forum on the Environment with multiple virtual booth sessions February 8-11.



A series of workshops in collaboration with the Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service (CES) Office were offered on health and wellness in the new year to AgrAbility and CES clientele statewide. [More](#)

Art Nash, AK AgrAbility PI, is teaching a "Universal Design in Alaska for Home and Garden" virtual course for a group of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute clientele. [More](#)

California

California AgrAbility and Washington State University Extension hosted the Western Region Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP) Quarterly Networking Meeting on January 14. [More](#)



California AgrAbility staffed a virtual booth at the 41st Annual EcoFarm Conference January 20-23. The Eco Farm Conference nurtures just and ecologically sustainable farms and food systems through education, alliance building, celebration, and advocacy. [More](#)

Staff attended the RISE Collaborative Meeting of Yolo County. A representative from Empower Yolo presented on human trafficking and how it has affected Yolo County and the Greater Sacramento Region. [More](#)

Staff joined the roundtable inviting attendees to the National Training Workshop webinars occurring every Tuesday for the next several months.

Colorado

The Colorado AgrAbility Project commenced and completed its annual Winter Workshops. For the first time, these were delivered in webinar format. [More](#)

The proliferation of web-based events since COVID has opened up more avenues for training than Colorado AgrAbility has had in the past. [More](#)

Regis University Denver campus has sent two OT interns to Colorado AgrAbility for level-one experiences. [More](#)

Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility staff gave two presentations at the Virtual SE Fruit and Vegetable Conference. [More](#)

On January 8, staff presented "Robotic Cotton Harvesting and Laser Weed Management Update" at the Virtual Beltwide Cotton Conference. The presentation included updates on research to automate harvesting and weed management in cotton.

Staff attended the Southern Center Food Safety Annual Meeting on January 21-22. Staff were able to hear updates from projects across the South and participate in discussions on how to shape the Southern Center over the course of the next several years.

Indiana

Indiana AgrAbility and the Indiana Chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition hosted a full-day in-person workshop for military veterans interested in farming and agriculture on January 29 at Purdue University's Beck Agricultural Center. Special guest U.S. Congressman Jim Baird joined veterans, AgrAbility staff, and speakers for the program. [More](#)



Maine

For a January during a pandemic, Maine AgrAbility has been BUSY!

Boots-2-Bushels 2021 has started. Maine AgrAbility has a great group of veterans and their family members. [More](#)

The 80th Annual Maine Agricultural Trades Show went virtual this month. Staff took full use of the Whova platform and hosted meet-ups, online conversations, requests for stickers, and even a lunchtime watch party of one of their favorite AgrAbility videos - "[On the Farm](#)." [More](#)

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

Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility staff continue their educational outreach efforts by continuing to post assistive technology ideas to make farming jobs easier for their Facebook visitors. Examples include: [More](#)



Each year in January, Michigan AgrAbility mails an annual survey to all Michigan AgrAbility clients who were served in the prior calendar year. [More](#)

Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility focused its social media efforts on promoting programs and resources offered by collaborative partners and cooperative organizations that serve AgrAbility client farmers, youth, and farm families. Missouri continues to create new videos for the [Missouri AgrAbility YouTube Channel](#).

Missouri's state chapter of Heroes to Hives has brought on board Shirin Ghatrehsamani, an agricultural engineer, to assist with developing resources that support 21st century emerging technologies. [More](#)

Lincoln University Cooperative Extension's Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP) in collaboration with the University of Missouri Extension (UME) has hired two videographers and an agricultural engineer, published an eBook and an article on the Jesup Wagon 2.0 method of education, and will be helping Missouri's NC Farm and Ranch

Stress Team members. [More](#)

AgrAbility marketing was part of the outreach for BIA-MO Networking Coffees for Professionals that reached more than 300 professionals in the fields of agriculture, healthcare, rehabilitation, and community supports.

Marketing efforts continue to directly connect BIA-MO Inc. with potential AgrAbility client farmers, youth, and farm families through the distribution of the Brain Injury Association Caregivers Guide with Missouri AgrAbility program details.

Nebraska

For Nebraska AgrAbility, it's one more step to a safer work environment: both on-site specialists have received their first vaccinations and are getting back into the field on client visits! [More](#)

This weekend kicked off the first veteran farmer session hosted by Center for Rural Affairs. Nebraska AgrAbility is connecting with veteran farmers about assistive technology for their operations. [More](#)

North Carolina

NC AgrAbility is participating in the planning committee of the Farmer Veteran Coalition - North Carolina Chapter [Spring Educational Conference](#). This conference will provide a wealth of information to help veterans who are farming and those who want to become farmers. NC AgrAbility, Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation, and the state VR agency will have a panel session at the event.

NC AgrAbility has been preparing staff and collaborators by participating in the AgriSafe Network and AgrAbility webinars.

NC AgrAbility has been providing direct services to their NC farmers with disabilities.

Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility staff have started 2021 with presentations of "Ohio AgrAbility: Assistive Technology to Keep you Farming" on accessible conferences and events. Staff are also preparing for their second Caregiver Support Network workshop on February 17: "[Respite! Respite? Respite....](#)" [More](#)

Pennsylvania

The AgrAbility PA staff kicked off 2021 at the Keystone Farm Show in York, PA, on January 5-7. [More](#)

AgrAbility PA Project Assistant Abbie Spackman joined Pennsylvania's Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding for a Facebook Live panel discussion, "Cultivating Diversity: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Agriculture," on January 14. [More](#)



Tennessee

TN AgrAbility is happy to welcome a new year and has high hopes for 2021! Staff kicked off the year with lots of publicity.

TN AgrAbility was featured in the winter 2021 issue of *Our Tennessee*, the University of TN alumni magazine that has a readership of over 200,000, in the article "Serving Those Who Have Served." [More](#)

TNAP helped promote the Farmer Veteran Coalition Fellowship Fund. [More](#)

Here is some follow-up to a 2020 story on Jason Barber, TN AgrAbility customer who is a legally blind farmer. Jason has been talking with OrCam from Israel to help improve their product to help farmers with visual impairments. [More](#)

Texas



Occupational therapy interns Meghan Skidmore and Faye McGuire visited the FEAT Farm in Gatesville for some hands-on agriculture experience. They met with veteran farm manager Heidi Barber and visited a local sale barn.

Texas AgrAbility hosted a training for farm managers of the Compatible Lands Foundation AgVets grant. Makenzie Thomas presented on AgrAbility services, needs of veteran farmers and ranchers with disabilities, and the referral process.

Texas AgrAbility staff member Makenzie Thomas completed QPR Gatekeeper Training for farmers and farm families. The training, offered through the Southeast Center for Agriculture Health and Injury Prevention, utilized the question, persuade, and refer model, and included additional resources for farmers and farm families.

Factsheets were updated and made accessible for download from the Texas AgrAbility website. You can view and download the [educational factsheets here](#).

Utah

AgrAbility of Utah staff were able to meet online with staff from the Utah Office of Rehabilitation on January 14 to discuss the VR Farm & Ranch, address any issues, and answer questions about each other's organization.

AgrAbility of Utah was able to become a member of the Cache Chamber of Commerce through a CARES grant and was able to present at the chamber's monthly leadership meeting January 19. The event was attended both virtually and in person.

On January 21, AgrAbility of Utah presented virtually to 30 members of the Cache Interagency Council. 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.

Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia is currently working with ten farmer clients at various levels of engagement and need, including a farmer in Louisa County who recently had a stroke.

AgrAbility Virginia is co-hosting a webinar with the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition called "[Injury Prevention for Farmers](#)" on February 16 at 1 p.m. EST. [More](#)

AgrAbility Virginia staff are moving forward with program evaluation efforts for the month of February including hardcopy and electronic surveys to farmers and partner service providers. Follow-up qualitative interviews are also being organized.



The AgrAbility Virginia Advisory Group, which consists of farmers and agriculture professionals, will be meeting virtually on February 8. Staff will update the group on programming and gather feedback.

Virginia Tech graduate students working with AgrAbility Virginia are developing advanced assistive technologies for farmers. A prototype of a knee brace is now ready for testing and a prototype of a glove will be ready by the fall.

Washington

Washington State AgrAbility Project (WSAP) in conjunction with Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WrASAP) presented program information and updates at four Washington Farm Bureau safety workshops across the state where 123 people attended virtually in the month of January.

WSAP and WrASAP also presented their program and updates virtually to the three Skagit County commissions on January 5.

Georgia AgrAbility reached out and offered assistance to WSAP via virtual training on January 11 where they generously shared helpful knowledge, tools, and information.

WSAP hosted a virtual workshop titled "Aching Hands and Stomped on Feet" on January 28, facilitated by Curt Johnson, assistive technology specialist with Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP). Thirty-three people participated from across the state.

Staff met with a local machinery dealership to develop a working relationship for potential clients needing machinery modifications.

WSAP continues to build its lending library based on specific injury sectors and are continuing to update the website with the lending library resources - which are now live! [Click here](#) to view them.

WSAP is dedicated to accessibility and is in the process of translating its website into Spanish so that resources are available to more of Washington's farmers and farmworkers. An [AgrAbility promotional video](#) has been produced and is now available in Spanish!

Staff met with Viva Farms staff and outlined a presentation on AT to prevent injury. Staff will follow up with on-farm demonstrations days.

WSAP is working with DVR and WA Labor & Industries to produce "Pathway to Services," a tool for injured farmers to help navigate the web for existing state resources and determine eligibility.

Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin is off to a great start in 2021. Staff have been able to host their first webinar in late January with WI NRCS Disability Emphasis Program Manager Lizzy Dawson. [More](#)

Staff will be planning a virtual AgrAbility Summit for early April. Watch for more information in the future.

AgrAbility for Africa

Findings by different partners indicate that there are gaps in the social protection systems across parts of Africa that hinder assistive technology access and vocational rehabilitation services extension to rural farming communities. [More](#)

On January 28, AgrAbility for Africa staff joined the Disability Innovation Hub in a webinar on emerging areas of disability innovation for the purpose of developing more knowledge and expertise in the industry. [More](#)



StaffChanges and Recognition

Missouri



Brenda Schreck, a University of Missouri Extension county engagement specialist in livestock and youth development based in Lewis County, located in the Northeast region, joined the MO AgrAbility team. She is an FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Preventative Controls qualified individual, working with elevator firms to ensure they are compliant with USDA quality food regulations and guidelines. Brenda will serve as the Missouri

AgrAbility outreach coordinator for the Northeast region. [More](#)

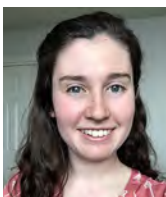
Nebraska

We welcome Whitney Valasec, OT candidate from Drake University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences to our team for the spring semester! Whitney will be working on her doctoral capstone with us to locate more grant funding sources, participate in farm assessment visits, and develop educational materials to support Nebraska AgrAbility. Whitney says, "Earlier this year I chose the quote 'Never stop learning, because life never stops teaching.' (-unknown) to motivate my final stretch to graduation and becoming an OT!"



Texas

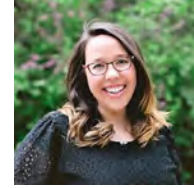
Two occupational therapy doctoral students, Faye McGuire and Meghan Skidmore, joined the Texas AgrAbility and BattleGround to Breaking Ground team as interns for the semester.



Faye McGuire is an occupational therapy doctoral student with MCH Institute of Health Professions in Boston. Her work with the BattleGround to Breaking Ground program will focus on conducting analysis on the transition process from military service to agriculture. [More](#)

Meghan Skidmore is an occupational therapy doctoral student with the

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. Her work with AgrAbility will focus on developing an educational course for rural occupational therapists serving farmers and ranchers. Meghan has also met with AgrAbility clients virtually to conduct occupational therapy assessments. [More](#)



AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [Serving Those Who Have Served Us](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [Bedford County Cattle Farmer Finds Way To Keep Family Farm While Losing Vision](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [Lincoln launches two new initiatives](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
- [Kaltenberg joins Easterseals board of directors](#) (AgrAbility of Wisconsin)
- [Nebraska Extension Almanac Radio: 2021 AgrAbility on Apple Podcasts](#) (Nebraska AgrAbility)
- [Injured? Disabled? There's help to keep farming](#) (Ohio AgrAbility)

Other News

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

- ['We Are Facing Extinction': Black Farmers in Steep Decline](#)
- [Virtual peer-to-peer farmer learning](#)
- [Farmworker turned astronaut Jose Hernandez urges kids not to give up](#)
- [Aid available for producers affected by 2018, 2019 disasters](#)
- [Electrical Safety from Amps to Zap!](#)
- [COVID-19 taking heavy toll on farmers' mental health](#)
- [Farmers gain improved access to small business support](#)
- [Ag safety, health experts document pandemic's hard lessons](#)
- [Three new safety resource booklets to help youth in agriculture work more safely](#)
- [Meet the Navy veteran raising her 21st puppy for Guide Dog Foundation](#)

Upcoming Events

[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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February 2021

National AgrAbility Project

The first two NTW virtual session were successes! On February 2, Ryan Rausch and Kara Beech presented "Teaching Older Adults Technology during COVID: Wyoming's Tech2Connect Project," and on February 9, Abbie Spackman led "Worksite Assessment Networking." If you missed these sessions, they were recorded and archived at www.agrability.org/online-training/archived. If you haven't registered yet, a schedule for the first four months and a registration link is available on the NTW tab of the NAP website [HERE](#). If you already registered, you will use the same Zoom link for any session that you would like to attend. For any questions, please contact Tess tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org or JoBeth jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org.

Staff would like to try 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, adjustments may need to be made, but hopefully, smaller, in-person events will be possible by then. Any SRAP interested in hosting a regional workshop in conjunction with Goodwill and NAP, please contact Tess tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org or JoBeth jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org.

Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes

February 2021

Alaska

A series of workshops in collaboration with the Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service (CES) Office were offered on Health & Wellness in the new year to AgrAbility & CES clientele statewide. Topics in January consisted of: community gardens & health, diabetes prevention & rethink your drink, healthy homes, healthy residents, Indoor air quality & health.

Art Nash, AK AgrAbility PI, is teaching a 'Universal Design in Alaska for Home and Garden' virtual course for a group of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute clientele. He is teaching universal design principles in building dwellings or landscapes that assist residents of any age and any ability to live where they want. Applying those principals can help homeowners or renters make modifications and adaptations so they have the freedom to ambulate, use wheelchairs/walkers, and take care of their daily living needs in their home. These principles also assist in landscaping so that gardens and yards can still be used, no matter the physical limitations present. This course runs for four consecutive weeks on Mondays Feb 8-March 1.

Submitted by DeShana York

February 2021

California

California AgrAbility and Washington State University Extension hosted the Western Region Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP) Quarterly Networking Meeting on January 14. WRASAP is a new USDA-NIFA funded effort to address farm stress. National AgrAbility, California AgrAbility, Colorado AgrAbility, and Washington AgrAbility are all programs directly involved with WRASAP. The Zoom gathering introduced the WRASAP program. Participants were active and demonstrated interest in this important topic for farm families. The meeting also served as the launch for the WRASAP Small Grants Program. Save the date for the next WRASAP Quarterly Networking Meeting, taking place April 8 at 1:00 p.m. PST, 2 p.m. MST, 4 p.m. EST. To learn more visit: farmstress.us.



California AgrAbility staffed a virtual booth at the 41st Annual EcoFarm Conference January 20-23. The Eco Farm Conference nurtures just and ecologically sustainable farms and food systems through education, alliance building, celebration, and advocacy. Other organizations staffing booths were the Center

for Land Based Learning, Alexandre Family Farm, CalFresh, Straus Family Creamery, and Patagonia. The event featured several keynote speeches including the Coalition of Immokalee Workers who presented on their working Campaign for Fair Food which is now recognized as the gold standard for empowering farmworkers to create their own solutions for fair and safe jobs. Successful organic farmers highlighted the idea of being an integral part of our environment and needing to eat from their own crops with unique local nutrients, microbes, and season pollen. The University of California at San Francisco presented on the concept of farming as medicine. The event also included a virtual seed swap luncheon.

Staff attended the RISE Collaborative Meeting of Yolo County. A representative from Empower Yolo presented on human trafficking and how it has affected Yolo County and the Greater Sacramento Region. Human trafficking is the 2nd most profitable criminal enterprise with California as the top destination state. Human trafficking labor can be found everywhere - in hotel hospitality hair salons and even agricultural work. The representative emphasized key aspects of identifying human trafficking, as it is often hidden in plain sight. These key aspects include individuals who are fearful, experiencing deceit, and/or are under duress or threatened.

Submitted by Sara Wat

February 2021

Colorado

The Colorado AgrAbility Project commenced and completed its annual Winter Workshops. For the first time, these were delivered in webinar format. This method permitted staff to deliver the material without the necessity for travel across their rather immense state. While they saved money on the travel budget, they believe they lost the human side of doing these programs. Their referrals for services have, in the past, been largely generated by in-person contacts at these events.

It is unclear whether or not referrals will be generated through the webinar format. Past experience has taught that many clients do not make much use of computers. There is a likelihood that those contacts were missed among the more rural demographics. Time will tell and staff will gather statistics and evaluate the results.

The proliferation of web-based events since COVID has opened up more avenues for training than Colorado AgrAbility has had in the past. The budget for professional education is very limited. So, with the availability of more webinars, staff have been able to enhance their professional education through such programs as Agrisafe and others like it.

Regis University Denver campus has sent two OT interns to Colorado AgrAbility for level-one experiences. Both Candy and Jim will have time with them over the next two months and will be able to have them attend a full day of on-site farm visits and after-visit interaction. Staff look forward to this.

Submitted by Jim Craig

February 2021

Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility staff gave two presentations at the Virtual SE Fruit and Vegetable Conference. The first presentation topic, "Automation in Agriculture," was given January 5 as part of the panel discussion and Q&A period. The presentation was directed to farmers and farm managers interested in incorporating more automation in their fruit and vegetable operations.

The second presentation topic, "Spraying Drones in Agriculture," was directed towards farmers and farm managers interested in using UAV's to spot-spray their crops. The regulations for UAV's and spraying were presented January 6.

Submitted by Georgia AgrAbility Project

February 2021

Indiana

Indiana AgrAbility and the Indiana Chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition hosted a full-day in-person workshop for military veterans interested in farming and agriculture on January 29 at Purdue University's Beck Agricultural Center. Special guest U.S. Congressman Jim Baird joined veterans, AgrAbility staff, and speakers for the program.



The focus of the workshop was "Agricultural Options, Opportunities, and Challenges." Over 25 veterans and guests learned about honeybee production, managing small poultry flocks, outdoor recreation enterprises, small ruminant production, funding sources, and liability issues for small farms.

To highlight the day, Indiana's 4th District Congressman, U.S. Representative Jim Baird, attended the workshop, made brief remarks, and visited personally with veterans over lunch. Representative Baird serves as the Ranking Member of the House Ag Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research, and is himself a disabled veteran and farmer with an extensive agricultural background.



After a year of online workshops and zoom meetings, the chance to get together as a group was appreciated by participants, staff, and speakers alike! The January 29 workshop followed an October 2020 farmer veteran program, also held at Purdue's Beck Center. The next installment of the farmer veteran workshop series is planned for late March in southern Indiana.

Submitted by Ed Sheldon

February 2021

Maine

Boots-2-Bushels 2021 has started. Maine AgrAbility has a great group of veterans and their family members. There are 23 participants, representing 17 veteran farms, and they have even gone international! There is one couple joining from Japan (they are moving to Maine in May), and another veteran joining from Aviano, Italy (he's taking over a high school garden club). Boots-2-Bushels is meeting twice a month via Zoom and participants are planning to start work at the KVCC farm in early May when they will be starting seedlings. This class is very motivated and excited to start growing their food and farm businesses.

The 80th Annual Maine Agricultural Trades Show went virtual this month. Staff took full use of the Whova platform and hosted meet-ups, online conversations, requests for stickers, and even a lunchtime watch party of one of their favorite AgrAbility videos- "[On the Farm](#)." ME AgrAbility offered four live webinars throughout the week on topics such as: AT of the Farm, Stretches & Yoga for Farmers, Veterans & Farming, and What is Maine AgrAbility? Staff will be using these recorded events to promote continued programming and increase their reach across the state.

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

- [Watch Where You're Going!](#)
- [During COVID-19, AgrAbility Continues to Create Opportunities for Farmer's Living with Disabilities](#)
- [When the Going Gets Tough: Reflections of a Caregiver](#)
- [Small Bites: Is 2021 your year for farm coaching?](#)
- [Small Bites - Welcome the New Year and Learn Something for You](#)
- [Goodbye 2020](#)

Submitted by Lani Carlson

February 2021

Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility staff continue their educational outreach efforts by continuing to post assistive technology ideas to make farming jobs easier for their Facebook visitors. Examples include:



A Mobile Solar-Powered Automatic Feeder that is designed to provide the supplemental nutrition needed by livestock on pasture. See <http://www.agrability.org/toolbox/?solution=1240>

- A plastic tubing system for collecting sap that uses gravity to gather sap in a central location, saving the back and knees from moving sap by hand.



MI AgrAbility Facebook visitors can also access and read an article on "[How does a person with a disability buy a car? Thoughtfully](#)".

Each year in January, Michigan AgrAbility mails an annual survey to all Michigan AgrAbility clients who were served in the prior calendar year. Completion of this survey and responses provided by the Michigan AgrAbility clients help to improve the Michigan AgrAbility program and the services provided to Michigan farmers. Staff are looking forward to receiving the completed annual surveys and learning about the Michigan AgrAbility clients' satisfaction with the Michigan AgrAbility program!

Submitted by Joanna Kica

February 2021

Missouri

Missouri's state chapter of Heroes to Hives has brought on board Shirin Ghatrehsamani, an agricultural engineer, to assist with developing resources that support 21st century emerging technologies. Shirin will focus efforts on developing education-based resources and products that support veteran farmers, farm families, and their dependents over 18 years of age. Heroes to Hives Missouri Chapter is supported by Missouri AgrAbility and Missouri's Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development programs. Follow Missouri's Chapter of [Heroes to Hives on Facebook](#).

Submitted by: Tevin Uthlaut, Brenda Schreck and Karen Funkenbusch

The Missouri AgrAbility Project (MAP) has been busy throughout the month of January. Lincoln University Cooperative Extension's Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP) in collaboration with the University of Missouri Extension (UME) has:

- Hired two videographers to highlight success stories and film educational segments to be posted on the Missouri AgrAbility YouTube channel. Social media platforms will be used as contingency for COVID-19 safety guidelines for staff and clientele.
- Hired an agricultural engineer to develop materials that assist farmers with disabilities.
- Published an eBook authored by David Middleton, an ISFOP & Missouri AgrAbility outreach coordinator, about direct marketing beef and about AgrAbility services for farmers with disabilities and their farm families.
- An article highlighting the Jesup Wagon 2.0 method of education and Missouri AgrAbility Program was published in the January edition of the [1890 Association of Extension Administrators \(AEA\) Newsletter](#).
- David Middleton and Susan Jaster, LUCE ISFOP staff members and Missouri AgrAbility outreach coordinators, will help Missouri's NC Farm and Ranch Stress Team members connect with and engage underserved farmers, youth, and farm families about mental health services, resources, and programs available in their rural agricultural communities.

Submitted by: Shon Bishop, David Middleton and Susan Jaster

Staff Changes and Recognition



Brenda Schreck, a University of Missouri Extension county engagement specialist in livestock and youth development based in Lewis County, located in the Northeast region, joined the MO AgrAbility team. She is an FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Preventative Controls qualified individual, working with elevator firms to ensure they are compliant with USDA quality food regulations and guidelines. Brenda will serve as the

Missouri AgrAbility outreach coordinator for the Northeast region. In this position, Schreck will assist with facilitating AgrAbility onsite farmstead assessments, in addition to developing, presenting, and delivering Extension education-based programs on ergonomics, work gloves, emerging technologies, and tools to prevent secondary injuries. In her six years with MU Extension, Brenda's focus has been on the Show-Me-Select

Replacement Heifer program, Northeast Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement Association, the USDA FSMA program, Lewis and Marion County Cattlemen Association, and youth in agriculture program efforts. When she is not at work, Brenda, her husband, and young daughter run a registered Hereford cattle herd.



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February 2021

Nebraska

For Nebraska AgrAbility, it's one more step to a safer work environment: both on-site specialists have received their first vaccinations and are getting back into the field on client visits! One young gentleman has overcome so many obstacles after his farming accident that he will do great things once he has some assistive technology. Staff will be working closely with Nebraska VR to ensure this gentleman has much success in the future.

This weekend kicked off the first veteran farmer session hosted by Center for Rural Affairs. Nebraska AgrAbility is connecting with veteran farmers about assistive technology for their operations. There are lots of great questions so far, and some interest in the AgrAbility program. Many great programs are a part of this, all geared toward helping veteran farmers in Nebraska. For further information, [click here](#).

Submitted by Susan Harris

February 2021

Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility staff have started 2021 with presentations of "Ohio AgrAbility: Assistive Technology to Keep you Farming" on accessible conferences and events. Staff are also preparing for their second Caregiver Support Network workshop on February 17: "[Respite! Respite? Respite....](#)" The enthusiasm for the caregiver workshops has demonstrated how important and timely information around caregiving topics is to Ohio farmers, caregivers, and professionals in Ohio, and has provided a venue to share caregiving, Ohio AgrAbility, and Extension resources to people who may not have been aware of them.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

February 2021

Pennsylvania

The AgrAbility PA staff kicked off 2021 at the Keystone Farm Show in York, PA, on January 5-7. The display included take-away paper information, digital photos and videos of farmers and assistive technology, and QR codes for contactless access to AgrAbility PA materials online using a mobile device. AgrAbility PA is looking forward to staffing events in-person - but until then, the staff will continue to reach farmers and agricultural workers in a safe and healthy way. Check out the AgrAbility booth [here](#).

AgrAbility PA Project Assistant Abbie Spackman joined Pennsylvania's Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding for a Facebook Live panel discussion, "Cultivating Diversity: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Agriculture," on January 14. The panel focused on groups and programs that are working to increase opportunities and remove barriers in agriculture. Panelists included: Feed the Barrel, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), National Young Farmers, and others to discuss "Cultivating Diversity."



"We must feed equality to feed the future. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is committed to combatting injustices that have prevented equal access to opportunity throughout the agriculture industry," said Sec. Redding.

Watch Abbie about 40 minutes into the video (41:45) [here](#).

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

February 2021

Tennessee

TN AgrAbility was featured in the winter 2021 issue of Our Tennessee, the University of TN alumni magazine that has a readership of over 200,000, in the article "[Serving Those Who Have Served.](#)"

The great article featured Frank Beard, a bilateral amputee and two-time TNAP client, plus Dameon Berry who is a Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN member and 2020 FVC Fellowship Fund awardee for his cattle system.

TNAP helped promote the Farmer Veteran Coalition Fellowship Fund. The application was open from January 1 until February 14. FVC of TN has hosted three workshop to help navigate through the process and answer questions to help FVC members succeed. Dameon Berry's wife, Jamie, says, "It is a lot of little things that all add up. For example, the cattle system that TN AgrAbility recommended was funded by the FVC Fellowship fund."

Here is some follow-up to a 2020 story on Jason Barber, TN AgrAbility customer who is a legally blind farmer. Jason has been talking with OrCam from Israel to help improve their product to help farmers with visual impairments. After several experiments with different technology, the STAR Center (TN Assistive Technology Center), recommended the OrCam. Jason is still communicating with people from New Zealand, Israel, California, New York, and beyond! He says "Naturally, the mission is to have me continue to be able to do the things I love to do. However, I am hopeful this will show people who are in a similar situation as I am there is technology there to help you in a variety of ways. You just have to make the right connection!" The TN Human Services/TN State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR) funded the OrCam MyEye for Jason. OrCam is interested in helping other farmers who are blind or visually impaired. OrCam is working to help make their technology more ag useful. Please send email to AgrAbility@tennessee.edu for more information or if you know a farmer with Retinitis pigmentosa (RP) or who is blind. Jason is helping people see some of the benefits of OrCam MyEye 2.0. See the story via [video here](#).

Submitted by TN AgrAbility

February 2021

Texas

STAFF CHANGES

Faye McGuire



Hi, my name is Faye! I am a third-year occupational therapy (OT) student getting my doctorate at MGH Institute of Health Professions in Boston. My background is in public health and psychology, with a concentration in developmental disabilities and human services.

I will be interning with Texas AgrAbility and BattleGround to Breaking Ground for the spring of 2021. I have a passion for working with veterans, coming from a family of military service, but being unable to serve myself due to a disability. My interest in agriculture has blossomed over the past few years as I learn more about the various roles and responsibilities in the agricultural community. Working with BattleGround to Breaking Ground is giving me the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers and challenges faced by individuals in the agricultural community, so that as a future OT I can best serve my clients holistically and truly understand their needs.

[CB1]Paul - I'm just going to include the first three paragraphs here on the main page and then put this entire section on the TX AgrAbility page of the e-Note. I didn't really edit the two OT's comments, since they are in their own words, but if you want to, that's fine.

Meghan Skidmore

I am an occupational therapy doctorate student working on an educational capstone project. This project is geared towards occupational therapy practitioners working with farmers and ranchers with disabilities. The material will guide practitioners to better understand both work and home activities of daily living on a farm or ranch. Educational material consists of video, factsheets, and worksheet resources which will be able to aid practitioners through the Texas AgrAbility website. Resources will help improve the structure of evaluations and client interventions. I am excited to work with the Texas AgrAbility team and clients, growing and learning from each of their experiences and wisdom.



Submitted by Makenzie Thomas

February 2021

Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia is co-hosting a webinar with the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition called "[Injury Prevention for Farmers](#)" on February 16 at 1 p.m. EST. This webinar brings together a panel of healthcare workers including an orthopedic surgeon, a nurse practitioner, and a physical therapist to discuss strategies to prevent injury while farming. The webinar will be recorded and published to the AgrAbility Virginia website. Readers may respond to the [Facebook event here](#).



Submitted by Virginia AgrAbility Project

February 2021

Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin is off to a great start in 2021. Staff have been able to host their first webinar in late January with WI NRCS Disability Emphasis Program Manager Lizzy Dawson. Lizzy shares the history of the Natural Resources Conservation Service and also has examples of farmers who are using the programs they offer. To watch the recording of the presentation on the AgrAbility of Wisconsin website, [click here](#).

Submitted by Amanda Harguth

February 2021

AgrAbility for Africa

Findings by different partners indicate that there are gaps in the social protection systems across parts of Africa that hinder assistive technology access and vocational rehabilitation services extension to rural farming communities. In January, these issues were brought to the attention of various officials in the government of Uganda following the revelations of the grim state of affairs. AgrAbility for Africa staff were invited to two ministries in Uganda: the Ministry of Gender and Social Development and the Ministry of Health to establish a working arrangement meant to expand reach of health services and technologies to people faced with disabilities.



Currently, there is ongoing engagement to formalize the working relationship and explore ways of developing the local AT technology industry. The aim is to meet local assistive technology needs, to coordinate or conduct research consistent with that program, to formulate and implement a comprehensive assistive technology skills development program, and, in the future, to inform the general public on innovation in low cost AT technologies from different parts of the world and other information critical to growing and sustaining the assistive technology industry.

On January 28, AgrAbility for Africa staff joined the Disability Innovation Hub in a webinar on emerging areas of disability innovation for the purpose of developing more knowledge and expertise in the industry. This was geared towards the facilitation and replication of best practices that promote the social engagement of people faced with disabilities. Specific presentations were tailored to address and respond to different rural disability health needs in order to vastly reduce barriers to social inclusion and independent living.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

February 2021

Upcoming Events

- Name** Rest, Refocus & Recharge-Health & Wellness Series (University of Alaska Fairbanks)
Dates February 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** MI Ag Ideas to Grow With
Dates February 15-19, 2021
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link For event information and registration, [click here](#).
- Name** Keeping the Farm Resilient in Uncertain Times
Dates February 15 and 21
City, State Virtual Event Online from 6:30-8:30 p.m. ET
Contact Info/Web link For event information and registration, [click here](#).
- Name** Injury Prevention for Farmers
Dates February 16, 2021
City, State Virtual Zoom event online
Contact Info/Web link [Click here](#) for webinar information, or call: Kim Niewolny, (540) 231-5784
- 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
- 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

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

Name 2021 North American Raspberry & Blackberry Conference
Dates February 22-25, 2021
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.raspberrylblackberry.com/2021-conference/>

Name GROWING STRONGER - Collaborative Conference on Organic & Sustainable Farming
Dates February 22-27, 2021
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link For information and registration, [click here](#).

Name Registration for Special Edition Commodity Classic now open
Dates March 2-5, 2021
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link <https://commodityclassic.com/>

Name 2021 Spring Garden Conference - Seeds of Sanity
Dates March 4-5, 2021
City, State Alaska Botanical Garden Virtual Event Online
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.alaskabg.org/spring-conference-2021.html>

Name The Great Grow Along
Dates March 19-21, 2021
City, State Virtual Event Online
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.greatgrowalong.com/#Tracks>

Name Alaska Women in Agriculture. Strong Then, Strong Now
Dates March 20, 2021
City, State Virtual Event Online
Contact Information [here](#).
Info/Web link Register [here](#).

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