

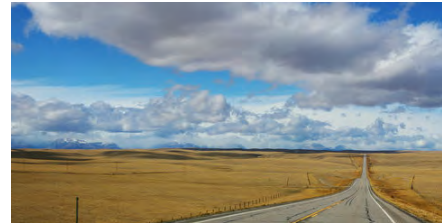
AgrAbility e•Note

April 2021

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

National AgrAbility Project News

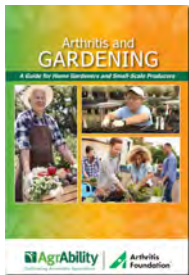
Staff members are currently planning an in-person regional workshop for August 10-11, 2021, in Billings, Montana in cooperation with the Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Network. Depending on what is happening with Covid-19 at that time, adjustments may need to be made, but the hope is that this in-person event 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 or JoBeth jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org.

NAP welcomes Dr. Victoria (Vicki) Finkenstadt as one of the USDA/NIFA leaders for AgrAbility. See the Staff Changes section for more on Vicki.

AgrAbility is three months into the NTW Virtual Sessions. They have been recorded and are available on the NAP website [HERE](#), or one can find them by going to the NAP website via "Online Training," then "Archived Webinars," and then "NEW! 2021 AgrAbility National Training Workshop Virtual Sessions." Our next session is "Safe Livestock Handling and Labor-Saving Devices" on Tuesday, April 20 at 1 pm ET. [More](#)



NAP is planning to reprint several popular publications, including *Arthritis and Gardening*, *Back on the Farm - Back in the Saddle*, and *Plain Facts about Arthritis*, and is planning to print client success stories on Carey Portell (Mo) and Keith Posselt (WI). Look for details in a coming email.

The AgrAbility Marketing and Media Community of Interest is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, April 21 at 1:00 p.m. EDT via Zoom. If you are interested in participating but are not yet on the mailing list for that COI, contact jonesp@purdue.edu.

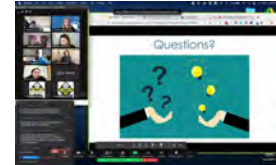
The [Hitchrific Reel-Quik Hitch](#) is designed to allow one to more easily hook up a trailer or towed implement by eliminating the need for exact alignment. It features a retractable arm that extends out rearward and to the left and right until the hitch ball is directly beneath the trailer/implement coupler. Once positioned, the arm is hand-cranked until ball is seated (and locked) into coupler and then reeled back to the hitch.



State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

Alaska

The Alaska Botanical Garden hosted a 2021 spring garden conference March 4-5. This virtual event had speakers discussing a multitude of botanical themes. The Alaska AgrAbility team gave an overview of accessible gardening - environmental considerations, tools, and resources that can benefit all gardeners.



Art Nash taught "Extending the Growing Season with Sustainable Heat," which covered how growers cost-effectively meet energy needs with germinating and matured plants of different varieties. [More](#)

DeShana York was on the planning committee to assist with coordinating the first- ever Alaska Women in Agriculture virtual conference. As a follow-up to the Alaska Women in Ag Conference, registration closed more than two weeks early after 300 people (the maximum number) signed up. [More](#)

California

California AgrAbility staff attended the monthly RISE Collaborative Meeting. Featured spotlight was the Yolo Agricultural Commissioner. [More](#)



California AgrAbility staff participated in a two-part webinar series presented by Maine AgrAbility. The first of the two webinars highlighted farming with assistive technology to improve physical, mental, and business health on the farm. [More](#)

California AgrAbility staff participated in Mississippi State University's "R is for Rural and Resilience" webinar series. Guest speakers Angie and June Provost of Provost Farms shared their story of land loss and personal resilience. They discussed the psychological and physical effect of structural racism in agriculture and the need for reparations and policy change to improve community wealth and improve overall quality of life and health. [More](#)



Colorado

March came and went with little fanfare. Colorado AgrAbility staff were busy with researching assistive technology applications and obtaining quotes for modifications; basically just doing a lot of the mundane daily stuff a rural rehabilitation specialist does. [More](#)

Georgia



Georgia AgrAbility held a virtual board meeting March 26. The board has four new members, including a representative from the Georgia Pecan Growers Association. The board was very impressed with all that AgrAbility has been able to accomplish during the pandemic.

[More](#)

Dr. Glen Rains presented to new agriculture and natural resources Extension agents on farm safety and AgrAbility. Some of the agents are working in counties with AgrAbility clients, and they will now be better prepared to help existing clients and make referrals for new clients.

Georgia presented with AgrAbility staff from Michigan and Colorado at the NTW Session "Are Clients Slipping Through the Cracks?" [More](#)

Staff attended the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services bi-monthly board meeting. The meeting included updates on the VR program and other programs that fall under the agency.

Kansas

Kansas AgrAbility Project (KAP) Coordinator Tawnie Larson presented information about AgrAbility to the Fort Riley Army soldiers in the Warrior Transition Battalion (WTB) for 2021 National Agriculture Day. [More](#)

Bill Begley from Life Essentials made a stop in Manhattan, Kansas, to visit with biological and agricultural engineering students and faculty and to demonstrate his truck-mounted lift system. Bill encouraged students to try out the lift and discussed the engineering behind the lift's ability to raise extreme weight.



KAP staff monthly Zoom meetings include guests that provide state resources available for staff and customers. [More](#)

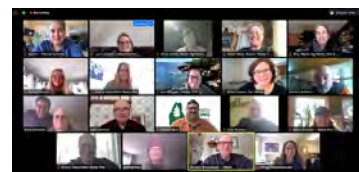
KAP staff attended Dr. Crystal Kyle's AgriSafe webinar, "Addressing Military Needs in Agriculture." Dr. Kyle shared unique challenges that veterans face when returning from service to build a career in agriculture. The webinar is available on-demand by clicking [here](#).

Maine



The Boots-2-Bushels (B2B) program is ramping up for the growing season, spending two days in the field cleaning out the greenhouse and high tunnel.

Maine AgrAbility held its quarterly advisory council meeting in March via Zoom. They welcomed three new members representing different areas: the forestry industry, assistive technology, and a farmer-client. To learn more about their advisory council check out the [advisory council webpage](#).



Ellen Gibson presented "Everyday Ergonomics in the Garden" March 19 via Zoom to 28 Master Gardeners (MGs). This session was part three of March Self-Care Month, a six-part series for Maine MGs organized by Hancock County Maine MG volunteers.

March 23, Kelley Spencer presented "Farming Smarter with Assistive Technology." This webinar focused on how AT can be expanded for use in a farm setting, enabling a farmer to work smarter. The webinar has been archived at: [MaineCite Trainings](#).

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

Michigan

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



Please join Michigan AgrAbility for the first annual Alpha Gamma Rho Golf Outing! In 2020, Alpha Gamma Rho raised \$22,000 for Michigan AgrAbility through their beef preview show. [More](#)

Missouri

MU Extension completed a successful social media campaign with the Brain Injury Association of Missouri, Inc, its nonprofit disability collaborative partner. [More](#)

To address the needs of its customers, Missouri AgrAbility continues to build service capacity across the state through education and networking. With this in mind, during the month of March, Missouri AgrAbility: [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility through its collaborative efforts with the North Central Region Farm and Ranch Stress grant disseminated its behavioral health/mental health tool kit to farm families, agriculture groups, stakeholders and others. [More](#)

During the Mental Health Services for Farmers Briefing, participants heard from an Iowa psychologist and farmer who has spent over 30 years helping farmers get mental health assistance, a pharmacist and farmer who talked about the immediate multiplying pressures that Missouri farmers and ranchers face every day, and Kathy Dothage who is a professor with MU Extension and education director for home and family science. [More](#)



On March 31, Travis Harper, Joni Harper, and Karen Funkenbusch, who all work with the Heroes to Hives (H2H) Missouri State Chapter, facilitated its first online ZOOM class to student participants. [More](#)

Mr. Nahshon Bishop, Mrs. Susan Jaster, Mr. David Middleton, and Ms. Kendra Graham are working on a presentation for the AgrAbility National Training Workshop. [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility Staff have been designing curriculum for farmers with mobility issues using drone technology. [More](#)

Brain Injury Awareness Month featured the "Brain Injury Fact of the Day" sponsored by Missouri AgrAbility during March. [More](#)

Maureen Cunningham with BIA-MO highlighted Missouri AgrAbility during the Networking Coffee for Professionals - St. Louis. [More](#)

Individuals learned about services of Missouri AgrAbility during the BIA-MO Survivor and

Nebraska

Staff attended Niagara University's "Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training (EM DAT)" event in March. [More](#)

Staff served a beginning farmer who was able to get funding from Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation for recommended assistive technology. It is exciting to see him back in action!

The team spent some time creating the perfect elevator pitch for Nebraska AgrAbility with input from board members and many individuals not associated with AgrAbility. The goal was to describe AgrAbility quickly, in a way that creates an understandable introduction to those inside and outside rural culture. [More](#)



North Carolina

On March 16, NC AgrAbility participated as an organizer of the Spring Farmer Veteran Coalition of NC Educational Conference. [More](#)

NC AgrAbility has joined efforts with Maine AgrAbility and AgrAbility of Utah in writing a fact sheet, "Using Checklists to Increase Productivity on the Farm." [More](#)

NC AgrAbility has increased the number of clients applying to the program for direct services. Surprisingly, about 90% of them are veterans who are farming or want to start farming.

NC AgrAbility is proud to be providing support to various groups that will be working with individuals with disabilities through the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Programs in North Carolina.

NC AgrAbility staff and other stakeholders have been attending the NTW webinars by participating as attendees and serving as moderators.

Ohio



AgrAbility does very important work, and the work impacts farmers in ways that staff know but do not always get to see. Ohio AgrAbility Rural Rehabilitation Supervisor Randy Joseph was privileged to be with an Ohio farmer who was able to travel through muddy spring fields and see his cows in the pasture. [More](#)

Ohio AgrAbility staff have co-presented two webinars with the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). The webinars are part of a five-part webinar series, "Everyone can Garden! Gardening with Physical Limitations". [More](#)

Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA staffers Linda Fetzer and Abbie Spackman provided an in-person and virtual presentation to Penn State University Agricultural and Biological Engineering students. The presentation

provided an overview of the AgrAbility project but focused on assistive technology design and utility vehicle selection, and safety, and it utilized interactive questions and quizzes with the online program [MentiMeter](#).



[AgChoice Farm Credit](#) featured AgrAbility PA on their weekly podcast, Field Notes. Staff member Kendra Martin shared about how AgrAbility works with farmers with a disability or long-term health condition. Listen to it [here](#).

Take a look at [AgrAbility PA's spring newsletter](#)! The print publication is mailed to some 3,000 contacts statewide and also appears online. To receive a print copy, contact Kendra Martin at kendra.martin@ucpcentralpa.org



Tennessee

TN AgrAbility is happy spring is here and to be working with more farmers outside doing what they love!

TN AgrAbility hosted a ZOOM in-service for University of TN Extension and TN State University Extension to remind Extension of AgrAbility's services and state partnerships to help farmers with disabilities keep farming. [More](#)



March 23 was National Ag Day! Charley Jordan, UT/TSU Extension veteran to ag consultant and flower farmer, reminds us that "Agriculture is essential and should be celebrated every day of the year. [More](#)

The TN New Farmer Academy is well under way in Central and East TN. TNAP presented for these classes to a total of 133 participants with 10 TN AgrAbility scholarships to support beginning farmers. [More](#)

TN FVC continues in the planning phases with the national Farmer Veteran Coalition. Save the date for November 17-19, 2021, for a regional Farmer Veteran Coalition meeting in Knoxville, TN. [More](#)

The Lower Middle TN Priority Program Team that includes agents from Maury, Lawrence, Hickman, Marshall, Lewis, Perry, Wayne, and Giles Counties held a very special and successful program conducted at the Middle TN Research and Education Center. The team planned and implemented a grain bin safety and rescue training with the help of the TN Association of Rescue Squads, Tennessee AgrAbility, and the TN Department of Agriculture. [More](#)



Texas

Staff met with Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation to start developing a shared protocol for self-employment in agriculture working with Texas AgrAbility. The goal of this collaboration is to reduce barriers to Texas AgrAbility clients utilizing VR services and reduce the time from intake to case closure.

The Texas AgrAbility advisory committee met for its quarterly meeting. Advisory committee members gave advice on the development of protocol for veteran farmers utilizing vocational rehab services. Members also provided guidance on new program development.



A Funding the Farm series is being developed in collaboration with USDA FSA, USDA NRCS, Farm Credit, and Texas Department of Agriculture. Texas AgrAbility staff is partnering with these agencies to create educational videos for funding opportunities for farmers and ranchers. The videos will be available through an online course later this year.

Utah

AgrAbility of Utah staff presented and answered questions virtually at the Urban and Small Farms Conference March 1-2. This was the ninth year of the four-day event, which is presented by Utah State University Extension Diversified Agriculture.

On March 7, AgrAbility of Utah trained (virtually) the staff of Active Re-Entry, one of six independent living centers in the state and which covers the seven most eastern counties of Utah.

The AgrAbility staff was excited to attend the Utah/Arizona Range Livestock Workshop March 30 and 31. Masks and social distancing were enforced at this two-day conference held in Hurricane, UT and Orderville, UT.

A great article on AgrAbility of Utah was featured in Utah Farm Bureau's February Farm & Fork newspaper and also online [here](#).

Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia is currently working with 18 farmer clients at various levels of engagement and need, including a cattle farmer in Bland County who has cerebral palsy.

AgrAbility Virginia is partnering with the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services in four Virginia counties to support five farmers.

Program Coordinator Garland Mason has completed one interview for ongoing AgrAbility Virginia program evaluation with more being scheduled.

AgrAbility Virginia and North Carolina AgrAbility are collaborating to air a weekly radio advertisement throughout April and May during "On the Farm Radio" segments. Both logos are now included on the show's website: <https://www.onthefarmradio.com/>

AgrAbility Virginia has finalized an interactive booth design for the Virginia State University mobile agriculture education unit. The design is being fabricated over the next few weeks.



Washington

Washington State AgrAbility Project (WSAP) began a social media drive on Facebook by implementing a Toolbox Thursday highlight that showcases a different assistive technology tool each Thursday.

WSAP is organizing farm visits with the Department of Veterans Affairs incubator farms throughout the state of Washington. They are scheduled for May to promote AgrAbility, assistive technology, and the lending library system.

WSAP staff had the privilege of speaking about mental health and wellness, including AgrAbility, on the "Art of the Range" podcast organized by Tip Hudson, WSU Kittitas Extension director, on March 8. Tip's podcast has 1300-1500 listeners and is available on

all the major podcasting platforms, iTunes, and Stitcher.

WSAP staff promoted the AgrAbility program and mental health at both the WSU Berry Workshop (19 participants) and the Potato virtual workshop (52 participants) held in March.

Northwest Access Fund (WSAP non-profit partner), the Northwest Agricultural Business Center, and WSAP hosted a webinar titled "Five Lean Principles of Farming through a Pandemic," presented by Ben Hartman. Twenty-six participants in the webinar were eligible for a free one-on-one financial counseling session from Northwest Access Fund representatives.

Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin staff has prepared for its virtual summit with speakers from the National Farm Medicine Center, Wisconsin Farm Center, and UW-Extension. All of the sessions will be recorded and available on AgrAbility of Wisconsin's website after April 15.

Staff are looking forward to summer where they can hopefully get out and see people in person at a few of the upcoming county dairy breakfasts.

International AgrAbility Network News

AgrAbility for Africa



Qode Health Solutions/PQF Group Services enables healthcare organizations to explore uncharted assessment and visual analytics, and it is under its operations and infrastructure that the company provides support towards integrated care systems by engaging patients in their own care, delivering continuous provider monitoring, identifying early symptoms, and enabling prompt response. To learn more about its technology implementation and use, the AgrAbility for

Africa team joined the company in March 2021 to learn more about their distance care support system. [More](#)

Kenya has recently increased restrictions and heightened inspection of Uganda- and Tanzania-produced grain due to high levels of mycotoxins in grain produced by those two countries. [More](#)



Staff Changes and Recognition

USDA/NIFA



Dr. Victoria (Vicki) Finkenstadt joined USDA NIFA on October 1, 2020. Prior to NIFA, she joined USDA Agricultural Research Service in 1998 after she earned her Ph.D. (food science) at Purdue University. Through 22+ years as a research scientist, she published over 85 research publications. Her field of research is polymer chemistry and engineering, chemical engineering, extrusion and injection molding, plastics from renewable carbon sources, utilization of agricultural commodities for value-added

products, sustainability, bioeconomies, and the circular economy. Several of her products can be found in the marketplace: graft copolymers for water management in seed coatings; a bacterial exopolymer coating to inhibit corrosion on steel; compostable plastic food service items; and antimicrobial food packaging. She manages and co-leads several programs for NIFA in service to its stakeholders: SBIR 8.13 Plant Production (Engineering), A1531 Bioprocessing and Bioengineering, A1103 Foundational Knowledge of Plant Products (Metabolites), A9201 Sustainable Agricultural Systems, and AgrAbility.

Personal Note: *I am very pleased and honored to work with the people who make AgrAbility successful. I've been enjoying the NTW webinars. Please feel free to send me invitations to your events; I will try to attend if my schedule is open.*

Warmest Regards,
Vicki

AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [Local workshop educates disabled veterans on agriculture careers](#) (Indiana AgrAbility Project)
- [‘Farming was healing’: Ag career helps woman’s recovery](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
- [Free gardening webinar series geared toward plant lovers with physical limitations](#) (Ohio AgrAbility)
- [Grain silo rescue training is underway in Tennessee](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [Ohio AgrAbility: A bridge between Ohio farmers and their health](#) (Ohio AgrAbility)
- [AgrAbility Shares Summit Details](#) (AgrAbility of Wisconsin)
- [Addressing military needs in agriculture - Resiliency is key](#) (AgrAbility)
- [AgrAbility Helps Farmers Keep Doing What They Love](#) (AgrAbility of Utah)
- [AoR 59: Don McMoran and Kristen Vanvalkenburg. Total Farmer Health](#) (Washington State AgrAbility Project, National AgrAbility Project)
- [Episode 59: AgrAbility Keeps Farmers Farming](#) (AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians)

Other News

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

- [AgrAbility client and NTW keynote Carey Portell publishes book about her experiences: *Facing Life Head On: Healing with Courage, Gratitude, and Attitude*](#)
 - [USDA Announces Reopening of CFAP 2 Signup; Agency Also Announces Funding Available to Organizations to Assist Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers under Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative](#)
 - [1890 Extension Leadership Academy Prepares Future Leaders To Act As Change Agents, Creates Culture of Innovation](#) (Features interview with Mr. Nahshon Bishop of Lincoln University/Missouri AgrAbility)
 - [Calling all women in agriculture: Your input needed](#)
 - [Black Farmer President Testifies Once Again Before Congress on State of Black Farmers in America](#)
 - [Opening Statement of Thomas J. Vilsack Before the House Committee on Agriculture – Remarks as Prepared](#)
 - [USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative announced](#)
 - [Webinar outlines domestic hemp production rules](#)
 - [New tool reveals meat and fish fraud in seconds](#)
 - [Step Inside the Magical World of An Ancient Tradition: Growing Rhubarb by Candlelight](#)
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[Click here for professional development events related to AgrAbility.](#)

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

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April 2021

National AgrAbility Project

NAP is three months into the NTW Virtual Sessions. They have been recorded and are available on the NAP website [HERE](#), or one can find them by going to the NAP website, Online Training, then Archived Webinars, and then "NEW! 2021 AgrAbility National Training Workshop Virtual Sessions." Our next session is "Safe Livestock Handling and Labor-Saving Devices" on Tuesday, April 20 at 1 pm ET. For those who haven't registered yet, a schedule through May and a registration link is available on the NTW tab of the NAP website [HERE](#). If already registered, use the same Zoom link for any session as one does not have to register for each session. For any questions, please contact Tess tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org or JoBeth jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org.

Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes

April 2021

Alaska

Art Nash taught "Extending the Growing Season with Sustainable Heat," which covered how growers cost-effectively meet energy needs with germinating and matured plants of different varieties. Different types of heat and fuels were explored that can be used to get extra months of growth before breakup and after first frost. Classes were taught the evenings of March 25 and 30.

DeShana York was on the planning committee to assist with coordinating the first-ever Alaska Women in Agriculture virtual conference. As a follow-up to the Alaska Women in Ag Conference, registration closed more than two weeks early after 300 people (the maximum number) signed up. The largest number of people who attended the Zoom conference at one time was around 185. At the end of the conference, 160 people were still online. The morning started with a yoga session. A video was shown of the Kenley family, a four-generation farming family in Palmer. A powerful and empowering message was delivered from spoken word artist Dasha Kelly Hamilton. There were three 20-minute "Flash Four" presentations, each having four women in agriculture from across the state. The topics were industry leaders, homesteaders and innovation, and youth in agriculture. A farmer's co-op panel presented on ways to work together differently. Two breakout sessions with approximately 40 rooms with facilitators allowed for networking in various topic or region groups. Senator Lisa Murkowski recorded a video that was played - defining and supporting all of the wonderful things women in Alaska are doing in agriculture. Throughout the conference, chat questions and Zoom polls provided interaction for participants. A video, "Remembering our Roots," was played during the lunch break and the conference ended with giveaways. Feedback from participants has been amazing with 92 completing the post-conference survey. Expectations were surpassed for networking and gathering of information that female farmers are most interested in learning more about through sharing and training. The data shared and collected will be a huge benefit for the AK AgrAbility project to assist with programming needs.

Submitted by DeShana York

April 2021

California

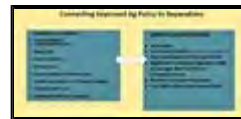
California AgrAbility staff attended the monthly RISE Collaborative Meeting. Featured spotlight was the Yolo Agricultural Commissioner. That office manages commercial and agricultural use of pesticides and chemicals for farm operations. The agricultural commissioner office also does trainings and inspections in relation to pesticide use and reports illness due to pesticide use. California AgrAbility shared news about the Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program. Representatives from the Department of Rehabilitation, Resources for Independent Living, Empower Yolo, Yolo County, RISE Inc., ORALE, and other organizations were present.



California AgrAbility staff participated in a two-part webinar series presented by Maine AgrAbility. The first of the two webinars highlighted farming with assistive technology to improve physical, mental, and business health on the farm. Assistive technology tools and devices presented included wearables such as watches, cameras, motion and light sensors,

and location devices. The second half of the series focused on the importance of assistive technology for farmers with brain injuries and the many benefits of assistive technology for farmers working with disabilities. Assistive technology allows farmers to continue to run their farms safely while helping to minimize stress and enhance their businesses.

California AgrAbility staff participated in Mississippi State University's "R is for Rural and Resilience" webinar series. Guest speakers Angie and June Provost of Provost Farms shared their story of land loss and personal resilience. They discussed the psychological and physical effect of structural racism in agriculture and the need for reparations and policy change to improve community wealth and improve overall quality of life and health. Angie and June emphasized the importance of improved agricultural policies to support asset gains and bridge the gap created over generations. While the Provosts have faced great loss, they continue to fight for fair agricultural policies and are hopeful that new legislation aimed at supporting minority farmers will lead to a healthy and productive farming environment.



Submitted by Sara Wat

April 2021

Colorado

March came and went with little fanfare. Colorado AgrAbility staff were busy with researching assistive technology applications and obtaining quotes for modifications; basically just doing a lot of the mundane daily stuff a rural rehabilitation specialist does. Reports were drafted for DVR and calendars maintained. Staff are seeing clients and did take two OT interns from Creighton University through a Regis Denver pipeline. For April, staff will report on the experience with some nice photos of the interns visiting farms.

Submitted by Jim Craig

April 2021

Georgia



Georgia AgrAbility held a virtual board meeting March 26. The board has four new members, including a representative from the Georgia Pecan Growers Association. The board was very impressed with all that AgrAbility has been able to accomplish during the pandemic. Board members are helping to sell jams, salsa, and marinades to fund items for an assistive technology lending library called The Barn Share.

Georgia presented with AgrAbility staff from Michigan and Colorado at the NTW Session "Are Clients Slipping Through the Cracks?" Staff enjoyed working with Ned Stoller and Candy Leathers on the presentation to show how each of the states are handling client management. It was great to see the best parts of a SRAP's system and how they can help other AgrAbility projects.

Submitted by AgrAbility in Georgia

April 2021

Kansas

Kansas AgrAbility Project (KAP) Coordinator Tawnie Larson presented information about AgrAbility to the Fort Riley Army soldiers in the Warrior Transition Battalion (WTB) for 2021 National Agriculture Day. The presentation is an annual event and included Kansas AgrAbility partner SAVE Farm (Service Member Agricultural Vocational Education). Larson emphasized SRAPs, as most of the WTB members are not from Kansas.

KAP staff monthly Zoom meetings include guests that provide state resources available for staff and customers. March's KAP meeting featured a member of the Kansas State University Farm Financial Analyst team who provided details of their services to Kansas farmers and ranchers. Services include a comprehensive view of a farmer's financials to analyze overall profitability and what changes may be needed going forward. Kansas also has a Farm Management Economist Association that is county-based and works with farm families year-round. Its services include tax planning and preparation. Both programs are part of the agriculture economics department at KSU.

Submitted by Tawnie Larson

April 2021

Maine

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

- [What Does an Occupational Therapist Do?](#)
- [Keep Kids Safe on the Farm with Universal Design](#)
- [Small Bites: Coping with Grief in Times of Loss](#)
- [Small Bites: The true cost of getting distracted and ways to avoid it!](#)
- [Small Bites - Planned Decision Making Reduces Frustration \(and Increases Happiness!\)](#)

Submitted by Lani Carlson

April 2021

Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility staff continue their educational outreach efforts by posting assistive technology ideas to make farming jobs easier for their Facebook visitors. Examples include: 1) A Running Board Lift that makes entry to your truck, SUV or van easier. It can be with or without a seat, and is mountable on driver side, passenger side, or both. 2) A Fold-Up Sprayer Stepladder that allows to more conveniently access a sprayer tank. It is made of two-inch-by-two-inch box tubing and expanded steel. The device consists of a top platform ladder hanging from it. It can be manually raised and lowered and is held in the "up" position for transport by a spring-loaded pin. It is welded to sprayer's rear frame and a two-step ladder.



Please join Michigan AgrAbility for the first annual Alpha Gamma Rho Golf Outing! In 2020, Alpha Gamma Rho raised \$22,000 for Michigan AgrAbility through their beef preview show. This year, their fundraiser is in the form of a golf outing instead of a beef preview show. All proceeds from this outing will go to Michigan AgrAbility to support farmers impacted by disability.

Submitted by Joanna Kica

April 2021

Missouri

MU Extension completed a successful social media campaign with the Brain Injury Association of Missouri, Inc., its nonprofit disability collaborative partner. Each day during the month of March, for Brain Injury Awareness, Missouri AgrAbility used its MU Extension social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to post a brain injury fact of the day, resources, and tool2thrive, or to showcase an ambassador client farmer success story. To learn more about Missouri AgrAbility March Brain Injury Awareness, go to the MU Extension Missouri AgrAbility Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MOAgAbility/>.

To address the needs of its customers, Missouri AgrAbility continues to build service capacity across the state through education and networking. With this in mind, during the month of March, Missouri AgrAbility:

1. provided two direct onsite farmstead assessments to client farmers with disabilities who are engaged in farming or, want to become involved in a farming-related occupation.
2. used marketing activities to direct the public to initiatives in AgrAbility-related education, networking and assistance.
3. facilitated four education programs within the context of production agriculture:
 - safe selection and placement of assistive technologies
 - SMART technologies
 - adapted devices
 - how to use ergonomic principles to teach participants how to work smarter and not harder

How to avoid secondary injuries for farmers with disabilities was also discussed with participants.

Missouri AgrAbility through its collaborative efforts with the North Central Region Farm and Ranch Stress grant disseminated its behavioral health/mental health tool kit to farm families, agriculture groups, stakeholders and others. Behavioral health/mental health resources can be accessed on Missouri AgrAbility's Show-Me Strong Farm Families Facebook page by clicking [here](#) and Missouri AgrAbility's website [here](#).

During the Mental Health Services for Farmers Briefing, participants heard from an Iowa psychologist and farmer who has spent over 30 years helping farmers get mental health assistance, a pharmacist and farmer who talked about the immediate multiplying pressures that Missouri farmers and ranchers face every day, and Kathy Dothage who is a professor with MU Extension and education director for home and family science. Dothage has worked for MU Extension for many years, most of those in the field providing informal classes to the citizens of Missouri, and she is a part of the Missouri AgrAbility program. Professor Dothage presented the MOST Policy Initiative aimed at bringing scientists and policymakers together to improve the livelihoods for people and communities in the Midwest. The Missouri Science & Technology Policy Fellows Program is the core, inaugural program under the umbrella of MOST Policy Initiative. A recording of the briefing is available [here](#).





On March 31, Travis Harper, Joni Harper, and Karen Funkenbusch, who all work with the Heroes to Hives (H2H) Missouri State Chapter, facilitated its first online ZOOM class to student participants. Mr. Harper, the lead instructor for Missouri, informed students that H2H is a unique program offered through Michigan State University Extension that seeks to address financial and personal wellness of veterans through professional training and community development centered around beekeeping. Students will participate in a nine-month comprehensive education program that couples online lectures with hands-on learning in apiaries located in Missouri. Students will receive two to six hours of lecture content every month from March-November that is pre-recorded so that they can learn at their own pace from Michigan State University Extension. Online instruction is then coupled with on-ground training April-October on hive handling, hive inspections, pest and pathogen management, and beekeeping ergonomics. Students who complete the course are eligible to receive a certificate of completion from MSU and can transfer credits to the Great Plains Master Beekeeping Course offered through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. H2H in Missouri is co-sponsored by Missouri AgrAbility, Missouri's Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, and NC Farm and Ranch Stress Alliance programs. More can be learned about H2H Missouri State Chapter by checking out their Facebook page [here](#).

Submitted by Karen Funkenbusch, Kathy Dothage, Travis Harper and Tevin Uthlaut

Mr. Nahshon Bishop, Mrs. Susan Jaster, Mr. David Middleton, and Ms. Kendra Graham are working on a presentation for the AgrAbility National Training Workshop. This virtual event will take place April 20. The presentation will cover:

- Safe livestock handling practices
- Designing safe livestock handling infrastructure
- Hands-on Jesup Wagon 2.0 demonstration

Missouri AgrAbility Staff have been designing curriculum for farmers with mobility issues using drone technology. Outline of video series:

- Review of existing resources
- Identifying locations for video production throughout the state of Missouri.

Submitted by Shon Bishop

Brain Injury Awareness Month featured the "Brain Injury Fact of the Day" sponsored by Missouri AgrAbility during March. A unique Brain Injury Fact was posted each day on numerous agricultural, rural living, weather, brain injury, and healthcare websites and social media sites. This campaign resulted in more than 10,000 impressions, 750 engagements, and increased website visits to learn more about Missouri AgrAbility and the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO).

Maureen Cunningham with BIA-MO highlighted Missouri AgrAbility during the Networking Coffee for Professionals - St. Louis. Fifteen vocational, veteran services, and healthcare professionals who serve AgrAbility clients gained knowledge about the Heroes to Hives program and other Missouri AgrAbility activities.

Individuals learned about services of Missouri AgrAbility during the BIA-MO Survivor and Family Seminar that was hosted online March 20. The event recognition featured Karen Funkenbusch, Missouri AgrAbility Co-PI, detailing services available and how farmers can contact Missouri AgrAbility for assistance.

Submitted by: Maureen Cunningham

April 2021

Nebraska

Staff attended Niagara University's "Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training (EM DAT)" event in March. The intent of this ongoing training is to address Nebraska-specific emergency management needs and develop a program that serves the individuals of the state, including the rural farm/ranch population. Nebraska joined New York as the only states in the country to provide this innovative emergency management disability awareness training that is all-inclusive of people with disabilities, providing appropriate ways to respond to and include persons with disabilities, access, and functional needs.

The team spent some time creating the perfect elevator pitch for Nebraska AgrAbility with input from board members and many individuals not associated with AgrAbility. The goal was to describe AgrAbility quickly, in a way that creates an understandable introduction to those inside and outside rural culture. The final product is:

"Nebraska AgrAbility WORKS" (slogan)

"AgrAbility serves Nebraska farmers and ranchers experiencing an illness or injury that limits their ability to perform routine tasks. We recommend creative solutions to continue working safely. This service provides hope by preserving an agricultural way of life."



Submitted by Susan Harris

April 2021

North Carolina

On March 16, NC AgrAbility participated as an organizer of the Spring Farmer Veteran Coalition of NC Educational Conference. Beatriz Rodriguez moderated the panel "Vocational Rehabilitation for Farmer Veterans" attended by more than 100 veterans in farming and stakeholders. This educational conference was an excellent opportunity for veterans in agriculture to learn about the resources available, gain some ideas on marketing products, pick up great tips on creating a business plan and budget for their farm, and network with other veterans.

NC AgrAbility has joined efforts with Maine AgrAbility and AgrAbility of Utah in writing a fact sheet, "Using Checklists to Increase Productivity on the Farm." This checklist is a tool to help farmers be more time-efficient and can be very useful for individuals who cannot rely on their memory to accomplish daily tasks. On the other hand, this opportunity of devoting time to write with colleagues on topics that we all enjoy has been a great occasion to change the routine and engage in this educational activity.

Submitted by Beatriz (Betty) Rodriguez

April 2021

Ohio

AgrAbility does very important work, and the work impacts farmers in ways that staff know but do not always get to see. Ohio AgrAbility Rural Rehabilitation Supervisor Randy Joseph was privileged to be with an Ohio farmer who was able to travel through muddy spring fields and see his cows in the pasture. He shared the experience with the Ohio AgrAbility team, and it reminded all of them how important everyone's work at AgrAbility is. The work would be very difficult without their colleagues at Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD - state vocation rehabilitation agency).



"Steve received his Trackchair through OOD. He hasn't been able to visit his cattle in a very long time. The first picture is of Steve quietly sitting, watching his cattle. We stood there in silence for about ten minutes. I realized (once again) what an amazing opportunity it is to assist our farmers and witness the life changing event after the life altering event. I just want to

thank our OSU team (and all of AgrAbility) for helping to make these moments possible.... Maybe someday, you will have the opportunity to be there for a "day one" experience."

Ohio AgrAbility staff have co-presented two webinars with the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). The webinars are part of a five-part webinar series, "Everyone can Garden! Gardening with Physical Limitations". This webinar series not only presents information from [Arthritis and Gardening](#), but it also includes information on planning and planting a garden, how to improve soil, manage pests, when and where to plant a garden, harvest, composting, and canning and preserving your harvest. All of the webinars are co-presented by Ohio AgrAbility Disability Services Coordinator Laura Akgerman and an Extension educator (the director and associate director of OSU Master Gardener volunteers are co-presenting four of the webinars), and Family and Consumer Sciences Educator/Area Leader Kathy Tutt is co-presenting "Canning and Preservation Basics." The webinar series runs through August 31, and all webinars will be recorded and posted on the Ohio AgrAbility and CFAES DEI office websites. The webinars have been a great outreach opportunity for Ohio AgrAbility through a brief introduction to AgrAbility at the beginning of the webinar and by driving traffic to the webinar resources page on the [Ohio AgrAbility website](#).

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

April 2021

Tennessee

TN AgrAbility hosted a ZOOM in-service for University of TN Extension and TN State University Extension to remind Extension of AgrAbility's services and state partnerships to help farmers with disabilities keep farming. All of Extension was invited to participate: agricultural, family consumer sciences, and 4-H. Extension brings research-based education to community about agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and resource development to the people of Tennessee where they live and work. The AgrAbility partnership between Cooperative Extension at a land grant university, and the disability community brings the expertise of the two organizations together to better serve the farmer with a disability. Extension is in all 95 counties in TN and is a key partner in helping to reach farmers!



March 23 was National Ag Day! Charley Jordan, UT/TSU Extension veteran to ag consultant and flower farmer, reminds us that "Agriculture is essential and should be celebrated every day of the year. Farming is more than a passion: it's saved my life more than once. No matter my mindset at the time, which unfortunately can go from one extreme to the other, putting my hands in the dirt can instantly change me - taking me away to a happy place while freeing up my mind to enjoy life. As the days get warmer and you enjoy fresh fruits, meats, vegetables, and of course flowers, remember the farmers that brought it to you."

The TN New Farmer Academy is well under way in Central and East TN. TNAP presented for these classes to a total of 133 participants with 10 TN AgrAbility scholarships to support beginning farmers. Fifteen of the 133 were veterans with disabilities. The team will be working with the beginning farmers over the next seven months to help make their dreams reality.

TN FVC continues in the planning phases with the national Farmer Veteran Coalition. Save the date for November 17-19, 2021, for a regional Farmer Veteran Coalition meeting in Knoxville, TN. More details coming soon! Join the farmer veteran community for education and networking. If planning to attend or wanting to present a topic of interest to beginning farmers and veterans with disabilities at the conference, contact staff at agrability@tennessee.edu.

The Lower Middle TN Priority Program Team that includes agents from Maury, Lawrence, Hickman, Marshall, Lewis, Perry, Wayne, and Giles Counties held a very special and successful program conducted at the Middle TN Research and Education Center. The team planned and implemented a grain bin safety and rescue training with the help of the TN Association of Rescue Squads, Tennessee AgrAbility, and the TN Department of Agriculture. This program was the idea of Megan Harris in Wayne County and she, Joetta T. White and Troy Dugger with TN AgrAbility, and the rest of the team spent months meeting, planning, and raising funds to make it happen.

The audience included county rescue squad and emergency personnel, local farmers, farm bureau members, and UT personnel. The goal was to provide grain rescue training for the emergency personnel and include grain farmers so all could understand the process of a grain entrapment rescue. All counties participating in the training received a Great Wall of Rescue and Turtle Tube Grain Rescue Tubes

that can be used in rescues. If you are not familiar with Great Wall of Rescue or Turtle Tube Grain Rescue Tube, please see the links below to learn more. One point learned by all was that there is a need for farmers and emergency personnel to know each other and to understand each other's rolls in an on-farm rescue.

A special shout out to Kevin Thompson and the staff of MTREC who "bent over backwards" to make their facilities available for the training. The main focus of the hands-on training was with the use of a grain filled trailer that was backed into their shop due to rain experienced over the weekend. The setting was perfect for the training as seen in videos and images.



TN Farm Bureau, TN Farmers Cooperator, and UTIA Marketing and Communications were on-hand to film and interview participants, and their participation was greatly appreciated.

As a result, 28 emergency personnel, farmers, and UT employees attended the two-day event, and \$44,186.20 was raised in funding or in-kind support to conduct the training and provide the rescue resources. Sponsor money was used to purchase seven Great Wall Rescue Tubes and 27 Turtle Tubes for each county plus meals.

Kevin Rose, county director and ANR Extension agent UT TSU Extension said, "I have been with UT Extension for more than 33 years and I think this may be the most impactful training I have been a part of. If one life is saved as a result of this program, then UT Extension has had the greatest impact it can have on our clientele."

Submitted by TN AgrAbility Project

April 2021

AgrAbility for Africa



Qode Health Solutions/PQF Group Services enables healthcare organizations to explore uncharted assessment and visual analytics, and it is under its operations and infrastructure that the company provides support towards integrated care systems by engaging patients in their own care, delivering continuous provider monitoring, identifying early symptoms, and enabling prompt response. To learn more about its technology

implementation and use, the AgrAbility for Africa team joined the company in March 2021 to learn more about their distance care support system. This gives the team more knowledge in ways to overcome barriers to health services caused by distance between patients and providers. It also provided a practical means to address the spread of COVID-19 by minimizing client contact while expanding care outreach.

It is through such educational opportunities, that AgrAbility for Africa continuously explores ways to enhance client engagement, care support options, and benefits for medical and behavioral care. This increases its impact by expanding vocational rehabilitation health care access via cost savings strategies and convenience to those in rural farming communities who lack access to health services and information in Uganda and other parts of Africa.

Kenya has recently increased restrictions and heightened inspection of Uganda- and Tanzania-produced grain due to high levels of mycotoxins in grain produced by those two countries. In a related incident, the European Union threatened to ban fresh exports to the Union due to traces of banned pesticides in agriculture products produced in the East Africa region, such as endosulfan that is used by farmers to fight pests, and fungicides to preserve tomatoes.



In response to this ever-increasing problem that has led to loss of markets, the AgrAbility for Africa team is working on a collaboration with Enjojo Wildlife Foundation to promote regenerative agriculture in the western region of the country. The joint effort is aimed at discouraging the buying and application of the dangerous chemicals (banned in both the USA and EU) through education and awareness, and to prevent the use of harmful pesticides that have caused harm to farmers, farm workers, final consumers, and wild game living close to farming communities around Queen Elizabeth National Park.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

April 2021

Upcoming Events

Name Midwest Poultry Federation Virtual Convention
Dates April 18-21, 2021
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link <https://midwestpoultry.com/>

Name ATLA Accessibility Week Workshops
Dates April 19-23, 2021 11:00 a.m.-Noon AKDT (3:00-4:00 p.m. EDT)
City, State Virtual event online

Contact Info/Web link Dive into accessibility with this free webinar series at 11:00 AM each day during the week of April 19th. Bring accessibility to the foundation of content creation during this hands-on instructional training for making social media content, documents, presentations, and PDFs accessible. Interpreting sponsored by Alaska Relay and Closed Captioning will be provided at each webinar.



Register today at <https://www.atlaak.org/home/newsletters-webinars>

Name Expert Panel Discussion on Mediation and How It Can Help the Agricultural Community
Dates April 28, 2021 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kxZLm06oQ96W_OcBAywLuw

Name Southeast Kansas Aging with Attitude Regional Expo
Dates April 29-30, 2021
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.agingexpo.k-state.edu/>

Name Safety Sensitivity of Opioid Use in High Hazardous Industries Such as Agriculture
Dates April 30, 2021
City, State ZOOM event online

Contact Info/Web link For information and registration, [click here](#).

Name NATCON21 - Forward Together (National Council for Behavioral Health)
Dates May 3-5, 2021
City, State Virtual event both live and on-demand all month
Contact Info/Web link <https://tinyurl.com/d3bx938k>

Name What to Expect While Expecting: For Female Producers & Farmworkers in Ag
Dates May 6, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. EDT
City, State Free AgriSafe Webinar - Online
Contact Info/Web link https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7ahUaVk_RXOziT7GHXTmWQ

Name Four State Farm Show
Dates May 21-23, 2021
City, State Pittsburg, Kansas
Contact Info/Web link <https://fourstatefarmshow.com/>

Name Garden Maintenance - Everyone Can Garden! - Vegetable gardening webinar series for people with physical and other limitations
Dates June 1, 2021, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. EST
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link <https://equityandinclusion.cfaes.ohio-state.edu/webinars-and-other-events/2021-gardening-physical-limitations-webinar-series>

Name 2021 World Pork Expo
Dates June 9-11, 2021
City, State Des Moines, Iowa
Contact Info/Web link <https://worldpork.org/>

Name Canning & Preservation Basics - Everyone Can Garden! - Vegetable gardening webinar series for people with physical and other limitations
Dates July 20, 2021, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. EST
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link <https://equityandinclusion.cfaes.ohio-state.edu/webinars-and-other-events/2021-gardening-physical-limitations-webinar-series>

Name Garden Clean-Up & Prep for Next Year - Everyone Can Garden! - Vegetable gardening webinar series for people with physical and other limitations
Dates August 31, 2021, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. EST
City, State Virtual event online
Contact Info/Web link <https://equityandinclusion.cfaes.ohio-state.edu/webinars-and-other-events/2021-gardening-physical-limitations-webinar-series>

Name World Dairy Expo
Dates September 28 - October 2, 2021
City, State Madison, Wisconsin
Contact Info/Web link <https://worlddairyexpo.com/>