

AgrAbility e·Note

December 2021

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

National AgrAbility Project News

Applications for 2022 state AgrAbility Project grants are due January 13. See <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/agrability-assistive-technology-program-farmers-disabilities>

NTW Updates

- Registration is open for the 2022 NTW in Madison, WI! [Click HERE](#) to go to the NTW website where more detailed information, the registration link, and the link to reserve a hotel room are found. Don't wait until the last minute: register and reserve a room now, so as not to miss out.
- Please continue reaching out to anyone that might want to be an exhibitor or sponsor, or send Tess their information. Here is the link to the [Exhibitor-Sponsor Google form](#). For a printable copy of this form, it is available on the NAP website on the [NTW page](#) and on the [Sponsor](#) and [Exhibitor](#) tabs of the NTW website
- Don't forget about state raffle baskets and auction items. Both of these activities help bring farmer clients to the NTW.
- For any questions about the NTW, contact Tess at tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org.



The November 29 all-staff meeting has been archived and is available at www.agrability.org/extranet/staff-resources.



The Regional Workshop in Manhattan, Kansas, on November 16-18 was a success. There were 36 attendees discussing topics on suicide prevention, help for farmers in crisis, veterans, VR, business planning, and tips for working while using less muscle. [More](#)

Dates have been set for the regional workshop with OH AgrAbility - June 28-30, 2022, in Columbus, OH, at the Hilton Garden Inn Columbus Easton. More information to come. Anyone interested in hosting a regional workshop in conjunction with Goodwill and NAP please contact Tess tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org or JoBeth jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org.

The NAP's Veteran Outreach Coordinator, Cindy Chastain, attended and presented at the Regional Farmer Veteran Coalition Conference in Knoxville, TN, on the 18th of November.

[More](#)

Ed Sheldon and Chuck Baldwin represented the National AgrAbility Project at the National Black Farmers Conference in Boydton, VA, November 5-6. The annual NBFA conference includes both the NBFA and the Association of American Indian Farmers (AAIA). The theme of this year's conference was "ReClaiming, ReGaining & ReGenerating Our Farms." [More](#)



Approximate 160 people participated in the AgrAbility/North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center webinar "Strategies for Preventing Farm/Ranch Suicides and for Assisting Those Left Behind." The archived session is available at www.agrability.org/online-training/archived/webinar-series.

Toolbox Spotlight



For those who have difficulty climbing vertical combine ladders, [Combine Cab-Access Stairs](#) are a relatively inexpensive alternative vs. a powered lift. Bolted to the machine's deck-plate, the stairs slope at a 45 degree angle behind the drive tire to facilitate ascending/descending. With handrails on each side, it usually has seven steps, the bottom two or three being retractable for proper ground clearance.

State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

Alaska

The Alaska AgrAbility team was busy in November assisting with the first annual 2021 Alaska Farm Bureau Convention & Trade Show in conjunction with the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) conference. The event took place on November 12-14 in Anchorage at the Egan Center. [More](#)



The team also gave presentations at many other meetings and conferences in November. [More](#)

California



California AgrAbility staff hosted the Puentes Network virtual Spanish event for community members and agency representatives. UC Davis Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (WCAHS) representative Teresa Andrews offered "Recognizing Our Individual Worth," a presentation focused on personal care. [More](#)

California AgrAbility staff attended the "Supporting Mental Wellbeing of Farmers and their Families" webinar hosted by the Colorado AgrAbility Project. The webinar provided suicide awareness training for therapists and service providers (e.g., AgrAbility staff). [More](#)



California AgrAbility graduate student intern Mauricio Guerrero-Villanueva received his Mental Health First Aid certification from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. [More](#)

Colorado



This November, the Colorado AgrAbility Project (CAP) had the opportunity to join Colorado State University's Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity (AGR) in a service-connected project with a CAP client Vijay Viswanathan. In 2003, Vijay was injured in a rock-climbing accident where he incurred a T5 spinal cord injury resulting in paraplegia. [More](#)

Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility was thrilled to be invited by Tennessee AgrAbility to the Farmer Veteran Coalition conference in Knoxville on November 17th - 19th. It was great to see the other AgrAbility states and connect with farmer veterans from across the U.S. Staff brought the mobile learning lab to display assistive technology. Thanks to Eileen in Tennessee for all of her hard work in organizing the conference.



AgrAbility staff attended the Troup County Ag Day for the grand opening of the Troup County Agriculture Center on November 6th. The Mobile Learning Lab and the live demonstrations were a big success.

Indiana

The new Indiana AgrAbility Project met with their partners and advisory team to set the groundwork for the next four years. The group reviewed the work plan and how each partner fit into it. [More](#)



Indiana AgrAbility is again sponsoring the Bridging Horizons Community Service Contest, which challenges organizations to complete service projects to assist people with disabilities in their communities. The staff mailed brochures to every FFA chapter in Indiana and is exploring avenues for promoting the contest to other groups.

Kansas

The National AgrAbility Project regional workshop held in Manhattan, Kansas, on November 16-18 was a success with participants from Ohio, Denmark, and across Kansas. [More](#)



Kansas AgrAbility friend and Poet Lariat, Ron Wilson from Lazy T Ranch, provided the gift of one of his unique poems, "AgrAbility." [Ron Wilson Lazy T Ranch AgrAbility Poem.pdf \(k-state.edu\)](#) and [FB Video of Ron Wilson delivering poem](#) (Video credit to Tess McKeel.)

Maine

Maine AgrAbility is excited to have launched registration for the 2022 Boots-2-Bushels: Boot Camp for Market Gardeners and Farmers. This class teaches how to go from seed to salary for all beginning farmers of all abilities interested in growing and selling their own farm produce. [More](#)



Staff are continuing to develop new tools for outreach and education. The popular poster with [Yoga Stretches For Farmers](#) is evolving into new resources specific to fishermen and forest workers. [More](#)

Be sure to check out Maine AgrAbility's [most recent news posts](#) for farmers, fishermen, and forest workers.

Michigan

Carhartt has partnered with Michigan AgrAbility to help distribute prototype wheelchair aprons! The aprons are a part of Carhartt's research and development to provide work attire that assists tradespeople who are working from a wheelchair. The tradespeople who received prototype aprons will be providing feedback for continued development of the apron.



Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility focused their social media efforts on program promotion for MU Extension & partner program and new resources for AgrAbility clients. Additionally, Missouri AgrAbility continues to capture soundbites, photos, and videos of Missouri farmers and agriculture to build their media database.

Missouri AgrAbility campus and field specialists delivered five education-based AgrAbility programs reaching 100 participants, networked with 225 stakeholders, developed three new farmers with disabilities resource guides and facilitated four direct onsite farmstead services to AgrAbility farmers and their families.

Emily Doosing, county engagement specialist in 4-H youth development, MU Extension in Shannon County, presented her "Unintentional Discrimination: Promoting Ability Awareness and Accommodation in Extension Education" program at the 2021 ESP National Conference,... [More](#)



Missouri AgrAbility marketing reached more than 400 special education and classroom teachers at the Missouri State Teachers Association Conference on November 18 and 19, 2021. [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility was discussed as a resource during the Networking Coffee for Professionals - Springfield that was attended by rehabilitation and community support providers. [More](#)

Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility was represented at the Ag-Ceptional Women's conference in Norfolk, and while it wasn't as well attended as in past years, conversations regarding how lack of sleep can lead to farming accidents and poor health were beneficial. [More](#)

Staff members are excited to finally attend a large farm expo in Lincoln that has been unavailable in past years due to popularity. Staff will also present formally to educate about AgrAbility. Also on the schedule is the [Nebraska Cattlemen's Convention and Trade Show](#).

Jackie Allenbrand from P.H.A.R.M. Dog USA has been a long-time partner of Nebraska AgrAbility. Her book titled *Four-Legged Farm Hand: A P.H.A.R.M. Dog USA Tale*, was released and can be purchased at most bookstores and [Amazon.com](#). [More](#)

Last but not least, congratulations to the newly married couple, team member Emily and A.J. Jacobson!



North Carolina

On November 4, NC Assistive Technology Program presented the Accessible to All demo. The special guests were Timothy and Carrie Martin, owners of Footprints in the Garden (a Mt. Olive based farm). [More](#)

NC AgrAbility participated as an exhibitor and presenter at the 2021 Sustainable Agriculture Conference from November 5-15. [More](#)

Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility Project (OAP) staff presented information about AgrAbility services and successes to a group of counselors and supervisors from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), Ohio's vocational rehabilitation agency. Topics presented included an overview of farming with a disability, modifications, success stories about OAP/OOD clients, and resources to learn more about AgrAbility.

OAP Disability Services Coordinator Laura Akgerman attended the Kansas regional workshop, and enjoyed networking with colleagues, learning more about Kansas AgrAbility, Kansas Wheat Innovation Center, the Lazy T Ranch, and the Flint Hills of Kansas.

Pennsylvania



November was a busy month for AgrAbility PA staff members. A highlight was the return of an in-person event: Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's 71st Annual Meeting. Dr. Suzanna Windon and Linda Fetzer both presented sessions at the conference, [More](#)

Tennessee

The TN AgrAbility staff is reminded of all the wonderful, dedicated people they are thankful to work with every day who bring hope to farmers with disabilities!

Great visiting with Farm Again Georgia, National AgrAbility Project, North Carolina AgrAbility, Texas AgrAbility, and Virginia AgrAbility, who all came to TN. Reach out to the National FVC to learn about veterans who want to farm in your state!



TN AgrAbility can finally officially announce that the STAR Center is TN AgrAbility's new non-profit disability partner on its new NIFA/USDA grant. The STAR Center was awarded the TN State Vocational Rehabilitation services contract and went from a regional provider to a statewide provider of assistive technology resources starting this October 1st. [More](#)

TNAP honored its veteran farmers with disabilities on Veterans Day with several ceremonies. One example is Todd Bentley of Cheatham County, TN, who is a Homegrown by Hero certified, TN farmer veteran. [More](#)

In November, TN hosted the Farmer Veteran Coalition Regional Stakeholders Meeting in Knoxville, TN. It was great meeting and networking with 180 participants from across the USA. TN hosted 70 folks on three diverse farm tours. [More](#)



Texas

Texas AgrAbility hosted a webinar with the Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living titled "Promoting Independent Living in Rural Communities." [More](#)



Texas AgrAbility visited Hope Farms in Houston, Texas. Hope Farms was established as a training farm to supply the local underserved community with locally grown, healthy foods. Staff explored options for teaching future classes for both clients and service providers.

The BattleGround to Breaking Ground program received a grant to expand the current training program to offer a career skills program for active-duty military. The program will allow active-duty military members to attend a training program during their last 180 days of service. [More](#)



Utah

AgrAbility of Utah attended the Beaver Watershed Tour and Pesticide Training Workshop on November 19 and gave a presentation on AgrAbility services. The workshop and tour were attended by over 100 farmers and ranchers from southwestern Utah.

On November 22, AgrAbility of Utah was able to present to 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 28 farmer clients at various levels of engagement and need.

AgrAbility Virginia Marketing Coordinator Liza Dobson traveled to Roanoke, Virginia, on November 6th to exhibit at the Brain Injury Association of Virginia Making Headway Conference.

Dobson and Field Staff and Veteran Coordinator Tony Edwards traveled to Knoxville, Tennessee, November 17 & 18, to exhibit at the Eastern Regional Farmer Veteran Coalition Conference.

Edwards then attended the VSU Small Farms Conference in Roanoke, Virginia, November 19 & 20 to exhibit AgrAbility Virginia. He was then scheduled to join other AgrAbility Virginia staff in Williamsburg, Virginia, November 29-December 2 for the Virginia Farm Bureau Convention.

AgrAbility Virginia staff are looking at additional conferences for 2022 to showcase program offerings.

Washington



In November, Washington State AgrAbility Project (WSAP) hit the road to reach out at in-person conferences (following COVID protocols) which had been cancelled in 2020. WSAP exhibited at the Spokane Farm and Food Symposium (Spokane, WA) and both exhibited and held workshops at... [More](#)

WSAP partner Northwest Access Fund held a webinar "Tools for Managing Medical Debt" with a focus on farmers and farmworkers with an injury or disability. The webinar recording can be accessed [here](#).

WSAP is also working with Cherry Creek Media to run a native ad campaign. In the month of November, unique AgrAbility main page views tripled from October.

WSAP and Northwest Access Fund began working on a series of four webinars to launch in March with unique topic interests to drive AgrAbility awareness and potential clients.

Wisconsin

Happy Holidays from the AgrAbility of Wisconsin Staff! The staff hope you and your families are happy and healthy.

AgrAbility of Wisconsin finished November with its annual advisory council meeting where they were able to meet in-person and discuss all things related to Wisconsin AgrAbility.

In early December, AgrAbility of Wisconsin will be attending the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's annual meeting and trade show. Staff are looking forward to connecting with their Wisconsin farmers.

International AgrAbility Network News

AgrAbility for Africa

AgrAbility for Africa held a meeting on November 30 with Ghost Network and engineers in adhesives, polymers, plastics, rehabilitation, and assistive technology, with the mission of increasing access to rehabilitation care and assistive technologies to enhance quality of life for rural communities in Uganda. [More](#)



Staff Changes and Recognition

Georgia

We are excited to have Evann Rowland join Georgia AgrAbility. She recently graduated from the University of Georgia with a Masters of Science in Animal Science. She will be working with our farmers in North Georgia.



AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [National AgrAbility Project Regional Workshop includes QPR info for suicide prevention](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [NIFA Invests in Research to Accommodate People with Disabilities Working in Agriculture](#) (AgrAbility)
- [Happy Veterans Day! How NIFA Supports Our Veterans](#) (AgrAbility)
- [UMaine Extension market gardener and farmer training begins Jan. 11](#) (Maine AgrAbility)
- [AgrAbility of Wisconsin helps keep injured, disabled farmers working](#) (AgrAbility of Wisconsin)
- [AgrAbility helps farmers overcome health conditions to continue farming](#) (AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians, National AgrAbility Project)
- [30 Years and Counting: AgrAbility Continues to Help Farmers, Ranchers with Disabilities](#) (National AgrAbility Project, Kansas AgrAbility Project, Indiana AgrAbility Project, Ohio AgrAbility Project, AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians, Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [Colorado's AgrAbility Project's Effects on KASA and Practice Changes with Agricultural Producers and Professionals](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [AgrAbility Australia - Farming with disabilities](#) (AgrAbility Australia)

Other News

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

- [Agriculture and Interior Departments Take Action to Strengthen Tribal Co-Stewardship of Public Lands and Waters](#)
- [At White House Tribal Leaders Summit, USDA Announces New Initiatives Serving Indian Country](#)
- [USDA Opens 2022 Signup for Dairy Margin Coverage, Expands Program for Supplemental Production](#)
- [USDA Launches Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative](#)
- [USDA Invests \\$86 Million to Improve Equitable Access to Jobs, Business Opportunities, Education, Health Care and Housing for Rural People](#)
- [USDA Announces American Rescue Plan Technical Assistance Partnerships Focused on Underserved Producers](#)
- [Funding Opportunity - Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program \(FRTEP\)](#)
- [Farm Parents sought for Research Study "Do news reports about farm injuries to children affect parents' knowledge, attitude and behavior toward child safety on farms?"](#)
- [Students celebrate at the 94th National FFA Convention & Expo](#)
- [Farm estate planning](#)

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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December 2021

National AgrAbility Project

AgrAbility Regional Workshops



The Regional Workshop in Manhattan, Kansas, on November 16-18 was a success. There were 36 attendees discussing topics on suicide prevention, help for farmers in crisis, veterans, VR, business planning, and tips for working while using less muscle.

Twenty-one attendees toured the Wheat Innovation Center on the K-State campus, took a hayride, ate lunch, heard a poem about AgrAbility at Lazy T Ranch, and then toured the K-State Konza Prairie Biological Station. Check out the [video of the poem being read](#).

Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes

The NAP's Veteran Outreach Coordinator, Cindy Chastain, attended and presented at the Regional Farmer Veteran Coalition Conference in Knoxville, TN, on the 18th of November. AgrAbility was a strong supporter of this conference; Eileen Legault of Tennessee AgrAbility was on the organizing committee, as was the FVC of TN staff. Virginia and Texas AgrAbility were also well-represented. Approximately 150 veterans and stakeholders were in attendance. The Regional FVC Conference scheduled for Tacoma, WA, for Dec 19th was canceled.

Submitted by Cindy Chastain



Ed Sheldon and Chuck Baldwin represented the National AgrAbility Project at the National Black Farmers Conference in Boydton, VA, November 5-6. The annual NBFA conference includes both the NBFA and the Association of American Indian Farmers (AAIA). The theme of this year's conference was "ReClaiming, ReGaining & ReGenerating Our

Farms". Approximately 50 people attended the conference in-person, but all of the conference sessions on Friday and on Saturday morning were transmitted via Zoom to a much wider audience.



Ed and Chuck presented an intro to AgrAbility's services and shared their 55 minutes of Zoom time with NAP's partners in a 2501 grant, the LIFE (Legacy Innovation Farming Economics) Project, represented by John Jamerson (Legacy Farming and Health Group) and Tameka Peoples (Peoples Foundation).



For the second year in a row, the conference was held on Dr. John Boyd's farm and the Saturday activities included a hog roast and concert with performances by a local church choir, blues music by DeiDra and the Ruff Pro Band, and a special appearance by KJ Skippa Mak Marley, the grandson of the late Bob Marley.

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin

December 2021

Alaska



The Alaska Agrability team was busy in November assisting with the first annual 2021 Alaska Farm Bureau Convention & Trade Show in conjunction with the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Conference. The event took place on November 12-14 in Anchorage at the Egan Center. Normally the Farm Bureau has a one-day annual meeting, but this year that was



combined with several other activities to create the first-ever comprehensive agriculture convention. SARE was a major partner with the event this year, assisting with logistics and workshop coordination. DeShana York was on the planning committee and assisted with workshop coordination. AKAgrAbility had a vendor booth and provided a few workshops, and Erin Main, OT, provided a 'Functional Fitness' break sponsored by AKAgrAbility to kick-off day two. Ned Stoller provided a virtual presentation on 'Managing Joint Pain on the Farm', and Art Nash provided a hands-on demonstration during a 'Gardening for Life' session. Mike Williams, Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) pacific advisory panel representative and Alaskan peony farmer, shared information about the benefits of being a member and an overview of the FVC.



Approximately 100 people participated in-person and a small group attended virtually for workshops that were live-streamed. The event consisted of opening ceremonies and four tracks of workshops all day on Friday & Saturday with simultaneous youth activities, 20 trade show vendor booths, and presentations on a trade show stage.

Evening engagements were planned as well, with the annual Farm Bureau banquet and live auction. Farmstock kicked off Saturday evening with music by Heath Wright followed by Alaska's own Ken Peltier Band in a live concert and fundraiser attended by approximately 150 people. Many Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Extension (IANRE) faculty and staff participated in helping coordinate parts of this event, providing educational workshops or other presentations, and staffing vendor booths. This event was a huge success for the first of its kind! Evidence of that is the fact that the Alaska Farm Bureau board voted to spearhead this event for three more years in Anchorage! Thank you to all who participated in this event in some way! This event is sure to grow and expand awareness, advocacy, and education of the agriculture industry in the future. Mark your calendars now for November 2022!

The team also gave presentations at many other meetings and conferences in November:

- On the 2nd, the University of Alaska Disability Services Annual Conference brought together professors and administrators from Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau to learn about assistive technology for students as they navigate their chosen careers.
- Staff presented at Care Coordination Resource of Alaska staff meeting and Statewide Vocational Rehabilitation Assistive Technology Committee on the 3rd and 4th, respectively.

On the 9th, staff presented solutions for aging in place for the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center Home Safety Month.

- Later in the month, staff presented for Creighton University Student Occupational Therapy Association and at the Providence Therapy Department Meeting.
- Lastly, staff hosted an informal technology hour for attendees to ask an AT Specialist about solutions or services that may benefit them or their loved ones. November's technology hour focused on solutions for agriculture workers.

Submitted by DeShana York

December 2021

California



California AgrAbility staff hosted the Puentes Network virtual Spanish event for community members and agency representatives. UC Davis Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (WCAHS) representative Teresa Andrews offered "Recognizing Our Individual Worth," a presentation focused on personal care. Yolo Hospice representative Liz Romero discussed the importance of end-of-life planning and services available to Latino families in Yolo County. Agency representatives from Yolo County, Dignity Health, CommuniCare, Winters Healthcare, California AgrAbility, and the Mexican Consulate shared updates about their programs and activities.

California AgrAbility staff attended the "Supporting Mental Wellbeing of Farmers and their Families" webinar hosted by the Colorado AgrAbility Project. The webinar provided suicide awareness training for therapists and service providers (e.g., AgrAbility staff). Keynote speaker Dr. Andrew McLean explained that health is more than the absence of disease and described the eight dimensions that compose wellness. He explained that rural culture is not homogenous and has its own traditions, customs, geography, and service providers who are also community members who often serve dual roles. The webinar reviewed resources to support farm families and highlighted challenges brought on by the pandemic, but also opportunities for rural communities to access services such as healthcare.



California AgrAbility graduate student intern Mauricio Guerrero-Villanueva received his Mental Health First Aid certification from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. Mauricio has recently joined the California AgrAbility team with the goal of coordinating garden and mental health outreach events, measuring the impact of each event, and delivering his findings to Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP) partners.

Submitted by California AgrAbility Project

December 2021

Colorado



This November, the Colorado AgrAbility Project (CAP) had the opportunity to join Colorado State University's Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity (AGR) in a service-connected project with a CAP client Vijay Viswanathan. In 2003, Vijay was injured in a rock-climbing accident where he incurred a T5 spinal cord injury resulting in paraplegia. Being paralyzed from the waist down has made his dream of entering farming difficult.

AgrAbility conducted an on-site assessment of his farm/ranch infrastructure and necessary work tasks, then made recommendations on the services, adaptations, modifications, equipment, and providers that could assist his agricultural goals. When he obtained his property, it was peppered with different types of construction and agricultural debris, which are next to impossible for him to gather, sort, and arrange so that the property presents better and is safer for him to traverse using his manual wheelchair. It was also unsafe for the introduction of livestock. He requested AgrAbility's aid in securing volunteers to perform tasks such as cutting, splitting, and stacking wood for this upcoming winter. In addition, he had plans to turn a small outbuilding currently in a state of disrepair into a fully functioning chicken coop. Having help from a few able-bodied folks who could organize and provide the manpower to secure this building would be a real game changer for Vijay. And who better to help mend and repair several fences to aid in livestock and property security than the young men from AGR who have both experience and skills to help this beginning farmer.

Alpha Gamma Rho is a fraternity sharing a common bond within a dynamic, global agricultural community to foster the highest values, and providing every brother with superior, lifelong personal development and professional success. They are dedicated to service, and Anthony Nomina, philanthropy chair, was eager to assist AgrAbility and Vijay by provided 18 brothers and himself to help with the day-long task of cleanup and repair.

Vijay was extremely grateful for the assistance, and addressed the AGR group, sharing his appreciation by stating, "If you or someone you know has a disability, AgrAbility is a very special program that I strongly recommend, and I encourage you to contact them for their services. It could change your way of life. They are always there to lend an ear, whether you need advice or simply encouragement."

Colorado AgrAbility is part of a national program designed to help farmers, ranchers, and their family members remain in agriculture when facing limitations due to aging, disease, injury, illness, or other disability. AgrAbility specialists analyze each situation and recommend practical solutions to restructure work tasks, modify agricultural operations, coordinate community and state resources, and customize a plan to meet individual and family needs for farmers or ranchers.

The project is a USDA-funded program that partners Colorado State University, Colorado State Extension, and Goodwill of Colorado. Since 1998 Colorado AgrAbility has helped over 612 farm and ranch clients.

Submitted by Jim Craig

December 2021

Indiana

The new Indiana AgrAbility Project met with their partners and advisory team to set the groundwork for the next four years. The group reviewed the work plan and how each partner fit into it. The team from Easterseals Crossroads, Indiana AgrAbility's new non-profit partner, introduced themselves and talked about their services and work plan for Indiana AgrAbility. Others represented organizations included Life Essentials, Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the L.I.F.E. Project, and Indiana AgVets.



Submitted by Steve Swain

December 2021

Kansas



The National AgrAbility Project regional workshop held in Manhattan, Kansas, on November 16-18 was a success with participants from Ohio, Denmark, and across Kansas. The workshop began with Tess McKeel from National AgrAbility presenting QPR training, a suicide prevention program much like CPR that gives a person skills to assist someone in crisis. The QPR training was followed by Jason Walker with the Kansas

Department of Agriculture sharing how they are utilizing grant funds from the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) on State Department of Agriculture (SDA) projects. Wednesday's programming included an AgrAbility overview by Tess McKeel; "Farming with Less Muscle" by Lucinda Stuenkel from Sunny Day Farms; "SAVE Farm, a Veteran Ranch" presented by Tod Bunting; "Insider Tips for Getting the Most from Vocational Rehabilitation" by Dennis Ford; "Farm Rescue" with Lynne Henrichsen; "Business Planning" offered by NE KS Frontier Farm Credit; and "Working with Veterans" presented by Ft Riley Solider Recovery Unit's OT, Jill Sump. Farm tours wrapped up the conference on Thursday with visits to the Wheat Innovation Center, Lazy T Ranch, and a Konza Prairie bison tour.



Kansas AgrAbility friend and Poet Lariat, Ron Wilson from Lazy T Ranch, provided the gift of one of his unique poems, "AgrAbility." [Ron Wilson Lazy T Ranch AgrAbility Poem.pdf \(k-state.edu\)](#) and [FB Video of Ron Wilson delivering poem](#) (Video credit to Tess McKeel.)

Submitted by Tawnie Larson

December 2021

Maine

Maine AgrAbility is excited to have launched registration for the 2022 Boots-2-Bushels: Boot Camp for Market Gardeners and Farmers. This class teaches how to go from seed to salary for all beginning farmers of all abilities interested in growing and selling their own farm produce.

Registration is open to veterans, family members, and all beginning farmers with disabilities. B2B is a collaborative effort of AgrAbility and an Extension Risk Management Education (ERME) project.



Staff are continuing to develop new tools for outreach and education. The popular poster with [Yoga Stretches For Farmers](#) is evolving into new resources specific to fishermen and forest workers. Maine AgrAbility's partner OT, Brie Weisman, has been busy talking to fishermen about this tool and asking them to practice and model the stretches. Keep your eyes peeled for Maine AgrAbility's newest posters being



developed this winter!

Submitted by Lani Carlson

December 2021

Missouri

Emily Doosing, county engagement specialist in 4-H youth development, MU Extension in Shannon County, presented her "Unintentional Discrimination: Promoting Ability Awareness and Accommodation in Extension Education" program at the 2021 ESP National Conference, Extension Professionals' Organization, Epsilon Sigma Phi, Missouri - Alpha Tau (North Central). Her 4-H disability awareness program was partially funded by the USDA NIFA Missouri AgrAbility and Brain Injury Association of Missouri.



Make sure to like and follow Missouri AgrAbility (@MOAgrAbility) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#), and the Missouri AgrAbility collaborative partners on Facebook: [Missouri Beginning Farmers & Ranchers Program](#), [Heroes to Hives of Missouri](#), and [Show-Me Strong Farm Families](#).

Submitted by Tevin Uthlaut and Karen Funkenbusch



Missouri AgrAbility marketing reached more than 400 special education and classroom teachers at the Missouri State Teachers Association Conference on November 18 and 19, 2021. The Brain Injury Association of Missouri exhibit highlighted Missouri AgrAbility and its services for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Missouri AgrAbility was discussed as a resource during the Networking Coffee for Professionals - Springfield that was attended by rehabilitation and community support providers. This Missouri AgrAbility marketing included Shon Bishop of Lincoln University sharing information on the Lincoln University Small Farm Program to help Missouri AgrAbility clients be successful. Maureen Cunningham with the Brain Injury Association of Missouri added about the availability of Brain Injury Resource Bags featuring Missouri AgrAbility for farmers or ranchers with brain injury.

Submitted by Maureen Cunningham

December 2021

Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility was represented at the Ag-Ceptional Women's conference in Norfolk, and while it wasn't as well attended as in past years, conversations regarding how lack of sleep can lead to farming accidents and poor health were beneficial. Another expo attended was Gateway Ag Expo in Kearney where there were some visits from clients and several conversations about what AgrAbility offers.

Jackie Allenbrand from P.H.A.R.M. Dog USA has been a long-time partner of Nebraska AgrAbility. Her book titled *Four-Legged Farm Hand: A P.H.A.R.M. Dog USA Tale*, was released and can be purchased at most bookstores and [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Based on a true story, this heart-warming tale, told in Buddy the Border Collie's voice, describes his journey from a wandering stray to a highly trained helper. Discover how patience, kindness, and a can-do attitude bring this very special dog to his very special forever home.

Submitted by Susan Harris

December 2021

North Carolina

On November 4, NC Assistive Technology Program presented the Accessible to All demo. The special guests were Timothy and Carrie Martin, owners of Footprints in the Garden (a Mt. Olive based farm). Timothy Martin is a service-connected disabled veteran who retired from the Army after 20 years of service and deployments in support of Operation Desert Shield, Operation Joint Endeavor, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. Please learn more about Timothy, Carrie, and their farm at: [Timothy Martin - FARMER VETERAN COALITION \(farmvetco.org\)](https://farmvetco.org).

NC AgrAbility participated as an exhibitor and presenter at the 2021 Sustainable Agriculture Conference from November 5-15. The conference had several tabs in a virtual platform with different activities. One of them was the exhibitor room, where NC AgrAbility shared information about the program, uploaded a video showcasing its activities, and shared additional brochures and documents with participants. There was a virtual trade show where exhibitors were available to chat with participants 3.5 hours per day, including Saturdays and Sundays. A contact tab allowed participants to invite attendees to have a conversation. The community wall was where participants shared photos and videos every day. A morning meetup room was a 45-minute space where folks could meet and share experiences. Forty-four participants attended the presentation; many joined the virtual trade show after listening to the webinar, as they wanted to ask questions, share ideas, and apply for direct services. Farm intensives took place on the last day of the event, and it was another great opportunity for NC AgrAbility to share paper brochures and documents and to discuss services.

Submitted by Beatriz (Betty) Rodriguez

December 2021

Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility Project (OAP) staff presented information about AgrAbility services and successes to a group of counselors and supervisors from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), Ohio's vocational rehabilitation agency. Topics presented included an overview of farming with a disability, modifications, success stories about OAP/OOD clients, and resources to learn more about AgrAbility.

OAP Disability Services Coordinator Laura Akgerman attended the Kansas regional workshop, and enjoyed networking with colleagues, learning more about Kansas AgrAbility, Kansas Wheat Innovation Center, the Lazy T Ranch, and the Flint Hills of Kansas.

Submitted by

December 2021

Pennsylvania



November was a busy month for AgrAbility PA staff members. A highlight was the return of an in-person event: Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's 71st Annual Meeting. Dr. Suzanna Windon and Linda Fetzer both presented sessions at the conference, covering topics on mental health and stress in farming as well as leadership strategies in agriculture. AgrAbility PA exhibited at the health fair, which is a great opportunity to connect with current and new clients. Staff also connected with strategic project partners, including the PA's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation, and PSU Ag Safety & Health.



Submitted by Kendra Martin

December 2021

Tennessee



TN AgrAbility can finally officially announce that the STAR Center is TN AgrAbility's new non-profit disability partner on its new NIFA/USDA grant. The STAR Center was awarded the TN State Vocational Rehabilitation services contract and went from a regional provider to a statewide provider of assistive technology resources starting this October 1st. The STAR Center provides assistive technology and employment/educational training for Tennesseans with disabilities, and now also covers all 95 counties in Tennessee. Some valuable new team

resources that the STAR Center brings are new occupational therapists, rehabilitation engineers, and certified assistive technology professionals. Staff are very grateful for Kim Lilley, the TN Technology Access Program executive director, who worked to mainstream AT services statewide and her role in helping TN AgrAbility build new partnerships in 2021. TN AgrAbility is excited about the expansion of services in 2022!

TNAP honored its veteran farmers with disabilities on Veterans Day with several ceremonies. One example is Todd Bentley of Cheatham County, TN, who is a Homegrown by Hero certified, TN farmer veteran. "My time in the Army prepared me in more ways than I realized for starting a farm business," Todd Bentley of Sweeter Days Farm said. "I am grateful for what I learned as a soldier about hard work, discipline, and leadership. I believe that veterans have an opportunity, and responsibility, to take important lessons learned in the military as government employees and bring them back to civilian life to build a better country and community. Agriculture is a meaningful place for veterans to transition after service. Groups like the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and the Farmer Veteran Coalition are great places to look for help getting started."

In November, TN hosted the [Farmer Veteran Coalition Regional Stakeholders Meeting](#) in Knoxville, TN. It was great meeting and networking with 180 participants from across the USA. TN hosted 70 folks on three diverse farm tours. FVC Conference highlights included presentations designed to inform and assist FVC members ranging from service members in the transition process to veterans looking to start or develop their farm business to established farmers looking to improve the ways they get their products to market. Attendees also heard from Homegrown by Heroes and the Veteran Fellowship Fund, a small grant to help new farmers buy equipment they need. Thank you to Cindy Chastain, National AgrAbility, for representing AgrAbility. The majority of FVC members identify as having a service-related disability. The AgrAbility program is the leader in technology-based assistance for veterans who need help accommodating disabilities while farming. The Wounded Warrior Project and AgriSafe both made presentations on resources they offer in the mental health and wellness fields. Thank you to all the speakers and sponsors who made this conference a success. Save the tentative date for the next FVC conference in Tacoma, Washington, next November 16-18.



"Agriculture saved my life." It was a refrain often repeated by attendees of the Farmer Veteran Coalition Conference held recently in Knoxville, TN. More than 200 veterans - some established farmers, some aspiring farmers - gathered for the 7th

annual meeting. They came to learn about ways to better manage their farms and available resources. But they also came to meet with fellow veterans who have found healing, new beginnings, and maybe even success in ag.

See [#veterans](#) and [Farmer Veteran Coalition](#)

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

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December 2021

Texas

Texas AgrAbility hosted a webinar with the Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living titled "Promoting Independent Living in Rural Communities." Topics covered included services provided by centers for independent living (CILs), how to access CIL services, and where to find the CIL that serves you. Watch the recorded webinar [here](#).

The BattleGround to Breaking Ground program received a grant to expand the current training program to offer a career skills program for active-duty military. The program will allow active-duty military members to attend a training program during their last 180 days of service. The program will offer agriculture business planning and hands-on agriculture education to train transitioning military members to be agricultural entrepreneurs. Applications and more information can be found [here](#).



Submitted by Makenzie Thomas

December 2021

Washington



In November, Washington State AgrAbility Project (WSAP) hit the road to reach out at in-person conferences (following COVID protocols) which had been cancelled in 2020. WSAP exhibited at the Spokane Farm and Food Symposium (Spokane, WA) and both exhibited and held workshops at the WA Cattlemen Convention (Kennewick, WA), WA Farm Bureau

Convention (Yakima, WA), and the Tilth Conference (Lynnwood, WA). Presence at these diverse events garnered interest in the program across the state and has already resulted in assistive technology adoption.



Submitted by Kristen Hinton-Vanvalkenburg

December 2021

AgrAbility for Africa

AgrAbility for Africa held a meeting on November 30 with Ghost Network and engineers in adhesives, polymers, plastics, rehabilitation, and assistive technology, with the mission of increasing access to rehabilitation care and assistive technologies to enhance quality of life for rural communities in Uganda. The meeting was to discuss the development of a regional workshop to convert plastic waste into assistive technology such walking canes, toilet seats for pit latrines, and other items corresponding to the needs assessment.



Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

December 2021

Upcoming Events

- Name** Indiana Farm Equipment and Technology Expo
Dates December 14-16, 2021
City, State Westfield, Indiana
Contact Info/Web link <https://indianafarmexpo.com/>
- Name** Online Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program
Dates January 2022
City, State Online
Contact Info/Web link Dr. Derrick Stowell [dstowell@tennessee.edu/](mailto:dstowell@tennessee.edu)
<https://plantsciences.tennessee.edu/horticulturaltherapy.../>
- Name** 2022 Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference
Dates January 6-9, 2022
City, State Savannah, Georgia
Contact Info/Web link Georgia AgrAbility will have a booth at the Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference Hosted by the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association January 6-9, 2022.
<https://seregionalconference.org/>
- Name** American Farm Bureau Convention
Dates January 7-12, 2022
City, State Atlanta, Georgia
Contact Info/Web link Georgia AgrAbility looks forward to the American Farm Bureau Convention, January 7-12, 2022. We will help staff a booth for the National AgrAbility Project to represent all states at the conference.
<https://annualconvention.fb.org>
- Name** MSU AGR Beef Preview Show
Dates February 11-13, 2022
City, State East Lansing, Michigan
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.facebook.com/AgrBeefPreviewShow/>