

# AgrAbility e·Note

**June 2022**

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2023 NTW! Planning has started for the 2023 NTW to be held in Spokane, WA. Staff members are currently in the process of negotiating the contract, and the projected dates are March 20-23, 2023. If you would like to join the planning committee, which is currently meeting by Zoom on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m., let Tess know at [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org) or 585.447.9015.



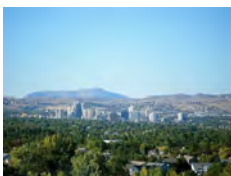
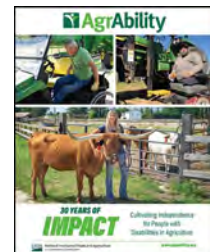
Remember to participate in the all-staff virtual meeting next Thursday, June 23 at 3:00 p.m. ET. Look for details in an email soon.



Don't forget to register for the regional workshop in Columbus, OH, which will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn Columbus Easton from June 28th - 30th. The room block has closed, but you can still register until June 19th. [More](#)

The NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ENCORE WEBINARS, beginning next Thursday, June 23, will feature 10 presentations from some of the most requested sessions of the 2022 in-person National Training Workshop. Session descriptions and registration info is available at [www.agrability.org/ntw-encore](http://www.agrability.org/ntw-encore).

National AgrAbility is pleased to present *AgrAbility: 30 Years of Impact*. This publication is designed to raise awareness of AgrAbility among customers and key stakeholders, including legislators, VR counselors, and other professionals in agriculture and rehabilitation. [It can be downloaded here](#), and an email will be sent concerning print copies.



**CORRECTION:** Save the NEW dates November 29th-December 1st for the regional workshop in Reno, NV. More information to come. If you have any questions or are interested in hosting a regional workshop, contact Tess McKeel at [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org) or 585-447-9015

The AgrAbility/North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center webinar " Veterans, Agriculture, and Stress" is now archived at [www.agrability.org/online-training/archived/webinar-series](http://www.agrability.org/online-training/archived/webinar-series). Approximately 100 people attended the live event.

Carey Portell hosted an AgriSafe "Talking Total Farmer Health" Podcast on mental health Sunday, May 1. The podcast may be listened to [HERE](#).



## Toolbox Spotlight



Although weighing only around 20 pounds, the remote-controlled **Battery-Powered Portable Winch** can assist with many pulling/lifting tasks not only around the farmstead, but also out in the field and/or woodlot. Its brushless electric motor, which runs off a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, reportedly generates 1,000 to 2,200 pounds of pulling force at speeds of 5 to 25 feet per minute (depending on make/model).

## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### Alaska

Things are heating up in more ways than one in Alaska presently. With red flag warnings in several locations around the state, the temperatures this season are seeing record numbers. [More](#)

While the spruce beetles are preparing to fly, the AKAgrAbility team is working to attend outreach events and take advantage of more face-to-face opportunities. Tori Gringas & DeShana York attended a VA veteran women's fair on May 21st in Anchorage. Assistive technology tools were displayed and demonstrated for attendees.



Art Nash hosted Scott Sanford, emeritus faculty from University of Wisconsin (UWM) Madison, in May to provide expertise in several communities regarding fresh produce storage and greenhouse heat applications. [More](#)

### California

California AgrAbility team member Mauricio Guerrero-Villanueva has been working to facilitate a project in ag communities to coordinate gardening and mental health events. Community members were invited to participate in a community talk, called *Pláticas Comunitarias*, held in Spanish both virtually and in-person. [More](#)

During the month of May, the California AgrAbility team visited a local produce farm to share information about the AgrAbility program and services available within the community. [More](#)



California AgrAbility's Esme Mandujano was interviewed by a local



web TV program, *Escucha y Hazle La Lucha* (Listen and Persevere), to talk about the California AgrAbility Program. [More](#)

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## Colorado

In early April, Candy Leathers had the opportunity to travel to Albuquerque to network with the New Mexico AgrAbility project. It was two days of sharing ideas, service delivery strategies, and building on providing a comprehensive AgrAbility program. [More](#)



May brought several invitations for the project to attend community events around Colorado. Keefe Memorial Hospital in Cheyenne Wells, in partnership with the Colorado Cancer Coalition, held the 2022 Cheyenne County Health Fair and Hospital Week. [More](#)

The Lincoln County health community held a health fair in Limon, Colorado. The Colorado AgrAbility Project was invited to attend this event. The fair was led by the Lincoln County Extension service, [More](#)



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## Georgia



On May 19, Georgia AgrAbility staff had a booth and attended the 2022 Farm Stress Summit in Tifton, Georgia. The summit was a productive time to learn from other professionals, connect communities with existing resources, and establish partnerships across organizations in regard to rural stress issues. [More](#)

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## Indiana

On May 13, Ed Sheldon, Indiana Extension outreach coordinator, joined Purdue Extension-Benton County staff in renovating raised garden beds at the Oxford, Indiana, Community Wellness Program. [More](#)



Ed Sheldon represented Indiana AgrAbility at the May 14 Indiana Black Loam Conference held at the historic Madam CJ Walker Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. [More](#)

Chuck Baldwin staffed an AgrAbility booth at the disABILITIES Expo in Fort Wayne, IN, Saturday, May 14. This was the first disABILITIES Expo following a two-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [More](#)



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## Kansas

Kansas AgrAbility staff connected with potential clients at the Four State Farm Show in Pittsburg, Kansas, and enjoyed an extra special boost with Life Essentials joining the exhibit. [More](#)

Carla Wilhite, Ph.D., and Clayton Lange, Ph.D., conducted a dynamic workshop for rehabilitation professionals titled



"Improving Occupational Performance of Kansas Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities." [More](#)

## Maine

The Boots-2-Bushels class visited [King Hill Farm](#) in Penobscot, ME, on May 2 to learn about harvest and storage methods. The farm co-owner and military veteran, Paul Schultz, gave an excellent overview of their diversified and organic farm operations. These farms tours are also open to new Maine farmers participating in the Maine New Farmers project supported by the USDA.



On May 11, staff provided AgrAbility resources and presented "Gardening & Ergonomics" to 37 Bucksport Maine Garden Club members. [More](#)

Readers may remember Dillon Foley; he and his mom Kelly attended the 2019 NTW in Lincoln NE. Now a senior in high school Dillon was featured in his local high school paper: [The Windham Eagle Newspaper highlights a student's capstone project which focuses on self-sufficiency and benefits others.](#)



On Friday May 6, Maine AgrAbility launched the first Yoga for Sea Harvesters/Farmers event at Eros Oysters in Georgetown, ME. This yoga session included breathing practices and a series of standing movements designed to unwind your body after a day of lumping shellfish or seaweed. [More](#)

For more yoga and stretching ideas, check out the most recent blog post: [This is Awkward.](#) [More](#)

## Missouri

MU Extension campus and field faculty worked to increase the likelihood that individuals, including veterans, social disadvantaged, women in agriculture, and their families engaged in production (AgrAbility customers) will become successful and prevent secondary injuries by providing: [More](#)

Lincoln Universities Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program (ISFOP), in collaboration with the MU Extension, facilitated the following: [More](#)



4-H Save Your Brain Program, in partnership with Missouri AgrAbility, was featured in the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) Connections Newsletter spring 2022 issue. [More](#)

Maureen Cunningham, BIA-MO executive director, shared information about Missouri AgrAbility with members of TOPs, an O'Fallon, Missouri community group, including farmers.



Missouri AgrAbility was a featured resource on the BIA-MO/Missouri AgrAbility exhibit at the L. Keeley Companies Health and Safety Fair on May 12. Approximately 100 company employees from St. Louis and surrounding rural counties learned about Missouri AgrAbility services for farmers with disabilities.



## Nebraska

Staff educated Extension personnel from across Nebraska about AgrAbility and working in agriculture with various health conditions. The dean of Nebraska Extension, Charlie Stoltenour, attempted to pick up bolts with a "vision impairment" at Nebraska Extension's Amplify Engagement Conference on UNL campus.



Nebraska AgrAbility has partnered with Nebraska Extension to have a paid intern for the summer of 2022. Leah Schmidt will be joining the team to help with social media, educational booth planning, and new fact sheets to share statewide. [More](#)

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## New Mexico

Mandy's Farm, the New Mexico AgrAbility Program non-profit partner, is hosting agricultural apprentices and public-school students who will be transitioning from school to community services. [More](#)

New Mexico AgrAbility staff were invited speakers at the AgriFuture Conference, May 18 - 19 in Albuquerque, hosted by the NM Department of Agriculture. [More](#)

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## North Carolina

NC AgrAbility partner NCATP is hosting weekly sessions on "Accessibility 4 All Demonstrations." Interested parties can join every Thursday from 11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1606908810?pwd=SHNja1VoWC8wMTFSMVNzbTlhQ2p3Zz>.

Meeting ID: 160 690 8810

Passcode: 155475

Sessions are open to all and have ASL interpreters.

NC AgrAbility at NCA&T is working under an MOU with Methodist University. Mary I. Dunn, an OT doctoral student who participated in the NTW, is working on expanding education and services to farmworkers in North Carolina.

NC AgrAbility and the NC Agromedicine Institute worked with Lauren Rainone under an MOU with MGH Institution last spring. Lauren obtained her doctorate degree as an occupational therapist in May. She developed a research study on farmers with spinal cord injuries in North Carolina.

NC AgrAbility Project Manager Betty Rodriguez won the Outstanding Work in Supporting County Programs Award at the NC Association of Cooperative Extension Specialists (NCACES) Spring Awards Meeting held on May 20.

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## Ohio

Dee Jepsen (program director) and Laura Akgerman (disability services coordinator) collaborated with Karen Funkenbusch from Missouri AgrAbility, Jessie Calero from New Mexico AgrAbility, and Heather Kelejian from North Carolina Cooperative Extension to write "Accessibility and Inclusion as an Approach to Enhancing Local Extension Programs," which will be published in the *Journal of Human Science and Extension*. [More](#)

Ohio AgrAbility staff participated in a tractor in-service for new agriculture and natural resources Extension educators. Topics included safe operation of tractors, skid loaders,

lawn mowers, and utility vehicles, [More](#)

Laura Akgerman presented "Gardening as We Age: Ideas for Adapting" to 125 Master Gardener volunteers in Columbus. The audience was very engaged, and a few people shared ideas at the end of the presentation.



## Pennsylvania

Project staff members Linda Fetzer and Abbie Spackman began working with the Penn State Extension Master Gardener Program to collaborate on creating accessible community garden spaces, recommend gardening assistive technology (AT), and educate on ergonomic gardening practices. This project will be an ongoing effort across the state.



Project Director Suzanna Windon and graduate assistant Carolyn Henzi Plaza have translated into Spanish several articles on farmer stress for use with AgrAbility farmers. The three-part toolbox series has articles 1 and 2 completed and posted online:

<https://extension.psu.edu/herramientas-para-el-manejo-del-estres-del-agricultor-parte-1>

<https://extension.psu.edu/herramientas-para-el-manejo-del-estres-del-agricultor-parte-2>

Lights! Camera! Action! AgrAbility staff member Kendra Martin spent time in May interviewing farmers for a success stories video project. The interviews and testimonials will be used in several ways: online, in social media, and at outreach events. Stay tuned - the videos will be released this summer, including an overall anthemic video.



## Tennessee

The Tennessee AgrAbility Project recognized May as "Mental Health Awareness Month." The AgrAbility team is working with partners across the state and nation to develop the capacity to help connect mental health providers with farm families in need of their services.

The first Tuesday of each quarter in 2022, Tennessee AgrAbility hosts Assistive Technology Tuesdays. May featured Chad Reznicek. He is the behavioral health specialist with the Colorado AgrAbility Project and is committed to helping expand and improve behavioral health support and resources in rural communities. [More](#)

AgrAbility participated in the AgriStress Network national "Think Tank" style virtual meeting through the AgriStress Response Network. [More](#)



TN AgrAbility participated in the Haywood County Safety Day for 4th graders. Fourteen student groups experienced having a physical and/or learning challenge at the Disability Awareness Station.

TN AgrAbility joined in the informative virtual forum on farm stress "Sustainable Livelihoods and Behavioral Health: Strategies to Address Farm Stress and Suicide" hosted by U.S. Department of Agriculture. [More](#)



TN AgrAbility and UT Gardens hosted a Veterans Therapeutic Horticulture Workshop for Frontline Gardens and Master Gardeners in May. Dr. Derrick Stowell designed this workshop for veterans or law enforcement personnel who have received a garden from FrontLine Gardens. [More](#)

## Texas



Texas AgrAbility staff conducted an assessment for a veteran client who produces blueberries, hay, and timber. The staff is working collaboratively with Texas Vocational Rehab to ensure the client's needs are met.

A Texas AgrAbility client received his Action Track Chair.

BattleGround to Breaking Ground Farm Manager Heidi Barber conducted a "Sheep & Goat 101" workshop for participants. This hands-on course provided an introduction to raising sheep & goats.



BattleGround to Breaking Ground Farm Manager Doug Havemann, in partnership with Dr. Ken Mix from Texas State University and Alex from NRCS, conducted a hands-on training for cover cropping.

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## Utah

The AgrAbility of Utah staff was excited to train and explain the AgrAbility program to the Eastern Utah Vocational Rehabilitation District office on May 24. The eastern district is based in Price, UT, and the meeting was attended by over 20 staff.

On May 25, the AgrAbility of Utah staff trained the Southern Utah Vocational Rehabilitation District office and explained how AgrAbility works to their staff of 18. The Southern Utah District is in St. George, UT.

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## Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia is currently working with 23 open farmer client cases at various levels of engagement and need, including a veteran and beginning farmer in Goochland.

The AgrAbility Virginia Network has launched; more details available at the link [HERE](#).

AgrAbility Virginia program coordinator has now updated our Farmer Client Highlights on our website to include more client stories; read them [HERE](#).

AgrAbility Virginia staff members attended the LIFE Project/AgrAbility 1890's Workshop at Tennessee State University June 7-8.

AgrAbility Virginia staff and advisory group members met virtually on May 31st to review updates and gather input on how to improve programing.

AgrAbility Virginia staff are starting to plan for a Virginia Cooperative Extension in-service training on AgrAbility for Extension agents and specialists this summer.

AgrAbility Virginia sent their spring eNewsletter out in May. Two eNewsletters go out each year - once in spring and once in fall. To sign up to receive the eNewsletter or review past eNewsletters, visit the website [HERE](#).

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## Washington

Washington State AgrAbility Project had an on-farm AT demonstration at the Skagit

County Viva Farms location. Various farmers met one-on-one with staff, tried out AT, and learned about AgrAbility. A workshop, as well as an on-farm AT demonstration, is scheduled for the Woodinville Viva Farm location in July.

WSAP attended the Spokane Junior Livestock Show May 4-7 by exhibiting at the event and demonstrating AT that may be helpful for farmers and ranchers.

WSU Skagit County Extension is turning 100 years old and celebrated June 4th with an open house that includes displays of current programs, including a table about AgrAbility, as well as recognizing past and present achievements.

WSAP exhibited at the Puget Sound Junior Livestock Show June 3-4th in Lynden, Washington, where AT was demonstrated that would be helpful when handling livestock and/or doing farm chores.

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## Staff Changes and Recognition

### Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility is excited to announce that Justin Miller has joined our team as the veteran agricultural liaison. Justin will be working on both the AgrAbility project and the southern region FRSAN project. He served 20 years in the United States Army. He has been very involved with a non-profit group in Georgia known as Project Something Outta Nothing, where he helped create awareness of military veterans' mental health issues. In his new role with us, he will be connecting with veterans around the state, developing a resource directory on mental health services for veterans, and teaching a variety of mental health trainings.



Evann Rowland has taken a new position at the University of Georgia as a farm manager for the College of Veterinarian Medicine. We know that she will do great in this new role and are thankful for her time serving the farmers of Georgia AgrAbility.

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### Nebraska

Team member Susan Harris will be leaving the team July 1 and is looking forward to many travels and some grandbaby fun. She will serve on the NTW planning committee and as a volunteer for Nebraska AgrAbility going forward.

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### North Carolina

Kelsey Kilgore, NC AgrAbility field agent, has big life changes now and won't be able to continue with NC AgrAbility after June 14.

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### Texas



Congratulations to Kelby Kosel for graduating with her B.S. in bioinformatics. She will be attending medical school at Sam Houston State University in the fall! Kelby has been with Texas AgrAbility for three years and was just promoted to program aide. We are so proud and fortunate to have her on our team!



# Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia Community Outreach Specialist Liza Dobson left their position at the end of May to focus full-time on their growing flower farm in Meadows of Dan, Virginia.

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## AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [A 'second career of service'](#) (Texas AgrAbility)
  - [WASHINGTON STATE AGRABILITY: BUILDING A NEW EXTENSION PROGRAM DURING COVID-19](#) (Washington State AgrAbility Project, National AgrAbility Project)
  - [Combating the negative stigma of mental health in rural communities](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
  - [Nonprofit organization called "Farm Rescue" is helping farmers and ranchers in crisis](#) (Kansas AgrAbility Project)
  - [Matt Garrett: AgriLife Extension veteran agriculture program to expand](#) (Texas AgrAbility)
  - [Program planning and evaluation frameworks for programs serving farmers with disabilities: Lessons learned from AgrAbility](#) (AgrAbility - 14 Projects and 2 Affiliates)
  - [Exhibit will help farmers with disabilities find ways to keep farming](#) (Ohio AgrAbility)
  - [Homer Grown: Gardening is for every body](#) (Alaska AgrAbility Project)
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## Other News

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

- [Lakota gardening initiative becomes oasis in multi-county food desert in South Dakota](#)
  - [Illinois farm couple confronts loss, aims to break mental health stigma](#)
  - [Farmer Veteran Coalition Announces 2022 Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund Awardees](#)
  - [Family tells their story to prevent future farm tragedies](#)
  - [USDA To Provide Approximately \\$6 Billion To Commodity, Specialty Crop Producers Impacted By 2020, 2021 Natural Disasters](#)
  - [USDA is accepting applications to reimburse organic certification costs](#)
  - [USDA to Invest up to \\$65 Million in Pilot Program to Strengthen Food Supply Chain](#)
  - [The positive effects of gardening on mental health](#)
  - [Garden Weasel tool line for gardeners! Practical solutions to home gardening as well as a weed puller that is a back saver](#) (Shared by Washington State AgrAbility Project)
  - [Expo en Español returns to World Dairy Expo](#)
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## Upcoming Events

[Click here for professional development events related to AgrAbility.](#)

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



June 2022

## National AgrAbility Project



Don't forget to register for the regional workshop in Columbus, OH which will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn Columbus Easton from June 28th - 30th. The room block has closed, but you can still register until June 19th.

This workshop will focus on urban agriculture, working with vocational rehabilitation, prescription medication safety, assistive technology in agriculture, farming with a developmental disability, business planning, and work/life balance. On June 28th and 29th, there will be speakers from the National AgrAbility Project, Ohio AgrAbility Project, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (VR), The Ohio State University Extension, H.A.R.D. Acre Farm, LifeLyfts, Farm Service Agency, and others.

There will also be a day of Agricultural Tours on Thursday, June 30th. You can find more information and get the link to registration [HERE](#).

Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes

June 2022

## Alaska

Things are heating up in more ways than one in Alaska presently. With red flag warnings in several locations around the state, the temperatures this season are seeing record numbers. Fire danger is often a concern in Alaska during the summer months. With many areas of the state seeing the effects of forest devastation due to the [spruce bark beetle](#), the low level of precipitation is of concern. So, while the winter was long, staff are hoping for some periodic rain to assist with extremely dry conditions.



Art Nash hosted Scott Sanford, emeritus faculty from University of Wisconsin (UWM) Madison, in May to provide expertise in several communities regarding fresh produce storage and greenhouse heat applications. Sessions were delivered in a variety of communities in southeast and south-central Alaska. These offerings were open to the public at large as well as AKAgrAbility clientele. The sessions were well-attended in-person and in hybrid formats with a Zoom component added as well. With supply chain shortages and shifting climates, produce storage and infrastructure around storage has

become an important topic in the state. Thanks to Scott for sharing his expertise and recommendations. (<https://learningstore.extension.wisc.edu/products/on-farm-cold-storage-of-fall-harvested-fruit-and-vegetable-crops-planning-design-and-operation-printed-spiral-bound-p1779>)

Submitted by DeShana York



June 2022

## California

California AgrAbility team member Mauricio Guerrero-Villanueva has been working to facilitate a project in ag communities to coordinate gardening and mental health events. Community members were invited to participate in a community talk, called *Pláticas Comunitarias*, held in Spanish both virtually and in-person. The goal of the talk was to hear firsthand from community members to learn about mental health concerns and the extent to which appropriate services exist, to understand what they would like to see at a mental health and gardening event, and to serve as a supportive space where they could gather and build a community bond. Throughout the talk, participants were given tools and tips to support their mental health and wellbeing.



During the month of May, the California AgrAbility team visited a local produce farm to share information about the AgrAbility program and services available within the community. Team members also conducted outreach at local migrant centers with community partner Migrant Education to provide farmworkers with educational and informational AgrAbility materials. At the migrant center, the team was joined by a local dental office distributing dental hygiene supplies.



California AgrAbility's Esme Mandujano was interviewed by a local web TV program, *Escucha y Hazle La Lucha* (Listen and Persevere), to talk about the California AgrAbility Program. Esme and host Juan Manuel Garcia discussed the services and resources the program provides to agricultural workers throughout the state, as well as outreach initiatives and educational tools, such as the diabetes and farming novela. [Click here](#) to watch the recorded interview in Spanish.

Submitted by California AgrAbility Project

June 2022

## Colorado

In early April, Candy Leathers had the opportunity to travel to Albuquerque to network with the New Mexico AgrAbility project. It was two days of sharing ideas, service delivery strategies, and building on providing a comprehensive AgrAbility program. The New Mexico staff was welcoming and made the visit so enjoyable. A special thank-you to Sonja Koukel, Tracey Agiovlasis, and Robert Hagevoort for this invite to visit their project in our sister state of New Mexico. Colorado AgrAbility wishes them the best in their continued service delivery.



May brought several invitations for the project to attend community events around Colorado. Keefe Memorial Hospital in Cheyenne Wells, in partnership with the Colorado Cancer Coalition, held the 2022 Cheyenne County Health Fair and Hospital Week. They had an excellent turnout, and AgrAbility had the opportunity to present to the attendees about the project and to host an assistive technology table for all to visit

and discuss the numerous AT examples.

The Lincoln County health community held a health fair in Limon, Colorado. The Colorado AgrAbility Project was invited to attend this event. The fair was led by the Lincoln County Extension service, and Colorado AgrAbility extends a special thank you to Christine Schinzel, CSU 4-H program assistant, for inviting them to be a part of this activity. They appreciate collaborating with their community partners to share information about the project and services.



Submitted by Jim Craig

June 2022

## Georgia



On May 19, Georgia AgrAbility staff had a booth and attended the 2022 Farm Stress Summit in Tifton, Georgia. The summit was a productive time to learn from other professionals, connect communities with existing resources, and establish partnerships across organizations in regard to rural stress issues. AgrAbility has a large role to play in helping to reduce farmer stress by allowing farmers to remain productive after an injury or health condition impacts the farming operation. The summit was

funded through the FRSAN Georgia Department of Agriculture and Regional Center grants.

Submitted by AgrAbility In Georgia

June 2022

## Indiana

On May 13, Ed Sheldon, Indiana Extension Outreach Coordinator, joined Purdue Extension-Benton County staff in renovating raised garden beds at the Oxford, Indiana, Community Wellness Program. The gardens are used for demonstration and educational purposes for children and adults who use the facility. Several of the beds were constructed to be accessible. The effort was led by Veronica Jalomo, Purdue Extension Community Wellness Coordinator and member of the Indiana AgrAbility Advisory Team.



Ed Sheldon represented Indiana AgrAbility at the May 14, 2022, Indiana Black Loam Conference held at the historic Madame CJ Walker Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. Ed presented about AgrAbility's services to underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, distributed AgrAbility resources, and visited with conference participants as they browsed the exhibit area.

To date five Indiana Black Loam Conference programs have been held in urban centers throughout Indiana in 2022: Evansville, Fort Wayne, Gary, Bloomington, and Indianapolis. . These workshops are specifically targeted toward BIPOC and socially disadvantaged farmers, with most participants being from urban areas. The programs are hosted by the Legacy Farming and Health Group, based in Lyles Station, Indiana, and the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative, a collaboration of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and Purdue University.



The Indiana Black Loam Conferences have been a great opportunity to share AgrAbility's services with underserved audiences who typically would not participate in programs targeted to "traditional" agricultural producers. AgrAbility has been involved with all five workshops.

Submitted by Ed Sheldon



Chuck Baldwin staffed an AgrAbility booth at the disABILITIES Expo in Fort Wayne, IN, Saturday, May 14. This was the first disABILITIES Expo following a two-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Expo is the region's premier disabilities expo for services and products exclusively for people with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities.

Over 110 vendors participated in the Expo, teaching, giving, and selling products to all in attendance. More than 1,000 attendees took in the event. Some good contacts were made, including a contact that showed interest in working with [Life Lyfts by Life Essentials](#).

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin





June 2022

## Kansas

Kansas AgrAbility staff connected with potential clients at the Four State Farm in Pittsburg, Kansas, and enjoyed an extra special boost with Life Essentials joining the exhibit. Marty Cotterman with Life Essential brought a utility tractor with a lift inside the exhibit hall and provided truck-bed lift demonstrations outside. KAP staff shared information on solutions for arthritis, memory, and vision supports for farmers and ranchers. Over 10,000 people attended the farm show from Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas.



Carla Wilhite, Ph.D., and Clayton Lange, Ph.D., conducted a dynamic workshop for rehabilitation professionals titled "Improving Occupational Performance of Kansas Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities." KAP offered this important workshop to increase the knowledge of occupational therapists, physical therapists, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and AT specialists. Rehabilitation professionals are a referral source for all SRAPs and the more they understand what challenges farmers and ranchers face, the more likely they are to contact an AgrAbility project to assist their clients. KAP offered 5.5 CEUs for occupational therapists at no cost to attendees. Twenty-eight rehabilitation professionals attended the workshop.

Submitted by Sheila Simmons

June 2022

## Maine

On May 11, staff provided AgrAbility resources and presented "Gardening & Ergonomics" to 37 Bucksport Maine Garden Club members. During OT week at Kennebec Valley Community College, AgrAbility's Kelley Spencer talked about assistive technology (AT) and farming, and Ketra Crosson shared information about adaptive driving and how similar techniques can be used to safely operate tractors and heavy equipment also.



On Friday May 6, Maine AgrAbility launched the first Yoga for Sea Harvesters/Farmers event at [Eros Oysters](#) in Georgetown, ME. This yoga session included breathing practices and a series of standing movements designed to unwind your body after a day of lumping shellfish or seaweed. This event was offered by Antonia (Toni) Small of Ice House Oysters in Port Clyde in collaboration with her teaching studio, Oryx Worx, the

University of Maine Cooperative Extension's FishAbility Project, and the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association.

For more yoga and stretching ideas, check out the most recent blog post: [This is Awkward](#). That moment when you are trying to counterbalance your body against boat, gear, weather, and tide! This is the third month of featuring stretches to counter strains on the body during normal work routines. FishAbility's most recent article has been published in the Commercial Fisheries News using the term "Industrial Athletes." This is a relatively recent term that refers to workers in physically demanding jobs outside of sports. [Fishermen are Industrial Athletes Too](#).

Submitted by Lani Carlson

June 2022

## Missouri

MU Extension campus and field faculty worked to increase the likelihood that individuals, including veterans, social disadvantaged, women in agriculture, and their families engaged in production (AgrAbility customers) will become successful and prevent secondary injuries by providing:

- Education and assistance to accommodate disability in farming to 10 individuals with disabilities who engaged in farming and farm-related occupations.
- Twenty-five on-the-farm technical advice interventions concerning the design, fabrication, and use of agricultural and related equipment, machinery, and tools.
- Specialized materials for the early identification of farm and rural families who need services, resources, and referral to various community-based social service agencies from stakeholders and health care professionals, including MU Extension regional specialists and LUCE ISFOP outreach specialists.
- Five AgrAbility programs to enhance the professional competencies of rural agricultural professionals, rehabilitation and health care providers, vocational counselors, and other service providers.
- Missouri AgrAbility social media efforts on Mental Health Awareness using the MU Extension and Missouri Department of Agriculture [Mental Health Awareness Month Promotional Toolkit](#). If you are not already, make sure to like and follow Missouri AgrAbility, @MOAgrAbility, on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

Submitted by: Joni Harper, Travis Harper, Brenda Schreck, Willard Downs, Tevin Uthlaut, and Karen Funkenbusch

Lincoln Universities Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program (ISFOP), in collaboration with the MU Extension, facilitated the following:

- Dr. Clement Akotsen-Mensah, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension, Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (LUCE ISFOP) state director and Missouri AgrAbility co-PI, hosted a professional development training at Lincoln University Carver Farms for ISFOP farm outreach workers. Specialists from around the state attended and learned about Missouri AgrAbility from State Project Director Karen Funkenbusch.
- Mary Bolling, farm outreach worker, attended a three-day advanced grazing school at Green Pastures Farm. Mary will share information learned at future workshops in collaboration with her local NRCS office.
- Farm outreach workers Angela Brattin and Na Lee Yang collaborated with MU Extension's Patrick Byers to host a blackberry workshop for local growers including Missouri AgrAbility customers. Workshop series events were supported by funds from the Missouri Department of Agriculture.
- Lincoln University and MU Extension collaborated to host the 5th Annual Missouri Tomato School. Several ISFOP farm outreach workers along with Missouri







AgrAbility customers participated in the training.

Submitted by: Dr. Clement Akotsen-Mensah, Susan Jaster, and Mary Bolling

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4-H Save Your Brain Program, in partnership with Missouri AgrAbility, was featured in the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) Connections Newsletter spring 2022 issue. The article highlighted the six-session curriculum that challenges youth to think about how to prevent brain injuries. The curriculum also includes a session on how to befriend individuals with brain injury. The hands-on curriculum helps 4-H members better understand brain injury and what they can do to prevent a brain injury.

Submitted by: Maureen Cunningham

June 2022

## Nebraska



Nebraska AgrAbility has partnered with Nebraska Extension to have a paid intern for the summer of 2022. Leah Schmidt will be joining the team to help with social media, educational booth planning, and new fact sheets to share statewide. She will also be spending a few days shadowing rehab specialists as they work with AgrAbility clients. Leah stated, "I have grown up around agriculture my whole life and I have had family members and family friends impacted by agriculture-related accidents. I am starting occupational therapy school in the fall and thought this internship would give me hands-on experience for how Nebraska AgrAbility is helping individuals get back to farming and agriculture as I hope to help farmers and ranchers after I complete occupational therapy school."

Submitted by Susan Harris

June 2022

## New Mexico

Mandy's Farm, the New Mexico AgrAbility Program non-profit partner, is hosting agricultural apprentices and public-school students who will be transitioning from school to community services. These hosted apprentices will learn about food-growing activities with the dedicated staff at Mandy's Farm. Occupational therapy students from the University of New Mexico will support Mandy's farm and the agricultural apprentices through assistive technology assessments and trials.

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New Mexico AgrAbility staff were invited speakers at the [AgriFuture Conference](#), May 18 -19 in Albuquerque, hosted by the NM Department of Agriculture. The presentation, "An Introduction to AgrAbility," was delivered by Dr. Sonja Koukel (PI) and Ms. Tracy Agiovlasis, project partner and NM Technology Assistance Program director. About 150 attendees participating in the two-day conference that included military veterans and families, NM tribal members, ag producers, mentors, students, and more.

Submitted by New Mexico AgrAbility Project

June 2022

## Ohio

Dee Jepsen (program director) and Laura Akgerman (disability services coordinator) collaborated with Karen Funkenbusch from Missouri AgrAbility, Jessie Calero from New Mexico AgrAbility, and Heather Kelejian from North Carolina Cooperative Extension to write "Accessibility and Inclusion as an Approach to Enhancing Local Extension Programs," which will be published in the *Journal of Human Science and Extension*. The authors gave overviews of their accessible agriculture and horticulture projects with a focus on urban agriculture. The expertise and creativity of our AgrAbility and Extension colleagues never ceases to leave staff grateful to work with such collaborative and talented people.

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Ohio AgrAbility staff participated in a tractor in-service for new agriculture and natural resources Extension educators. Topics included safe operation of tractors, skid loaders, lawn mowers, and utility vehicles, and Rachel Jarman (rural rehabilitation coordinator) and Laura Akgerman gave an overview of Ohio AgrAbility services, tractor modifications, workshops, and educational programs. It was exciting to meet new educators and share Ohio AgrAbility services and educational workshop information with them.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman



June 2022

## Tennessee

The first Tuesday of each quarter in 2022, Tennessee AgrAbility hosts Assistive Technology Tuesdays. May featured Chad Reznicek. He is the behavioral health specialist with the Colorado AgrAbility Project and is committed to helping expand and improve behavioral health support and resources in rural communities. He has 20 years of experience as a licensed therapist with special focus in suicide prevention, trauma, mood disorders, and substance abuse. He was raised in a small farming community in central Nebraska with a deep respect for agriculture as the heart of our rural communities.

Reznicek states "Farmers and ranchers are uniquely vulnerable to mental health challenges for a number of reasons." He also added, "(Agricultural culture) is about picking yourself up by your bootstraps; you work until the job is done. You're quick to help other people, but you don't want to burden anyone yourself; all those things are really resilient and positive qualities, but the downside is it makes it really hard to ask for help."

Chad emphasized the need to understand the impact of agriculture's unique challenges on the human brain. In better understanding this, the question can be changed from "What's wrong with me?" to "What's happening to me?" This will help with the steps taken to manage stress.

Read more about [Chad's work with Colorado AgrAbility](#) to help others with mental/behavioral health issues. The webinar recording can be found on the [Tennessee AgrAbility website here](#).

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AgrAbility participated in the AgriStress Network national "Think Tank" style virtual meeting through the AgriStress Response Network. The objective of the monthly meetings is to engage innovative ideas and strategies to serve the farming and ranching community in the area of mental health.

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TN AgrAbility joined in the informative virtual forum on farm stress "Sustainable Livelihoods and Behavioral Health: Strategies to Address Farm Stress and Suicide" hosted by [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#). America's farmers and ranchers are resilient, but this does not always shield them from farm stress. Powerful start to the conference with Erin Kimbrough (Texas AgrAbility) and her husband John (Marine veteran and first responder) sharing their personal story and struggles on "Growing on Faith Farm" and working to help other farmer veterans thru the Texas Battleground to Breaking Ground transition program. The panel discussions included Dale Dobson, KY Department of Ag and AgrAbility friend who has always been a strong voice for farmers and first responders plus an advocate for farm safety and now farmer mental health, who shared the impactful value of a handshake. Find more information [HERE](#).



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TN AgrAbility and UT Gardens hosted a Veterans Therapeutic Horticulture Workshop for Frontline Gardens and Master Gardeners in May. Dr. Derrick Stowell designed this workshop for veterans or law enforcement personnel who have received a garden from FrontLine Gardens. Research shows that exposure to nature and gardening can improve mental health outcomes for veterans. This workshop

explores 1) The therapeutic benefits of gardening; 2) Career options for veterans and opportunities to learn how TN AgrAbility Project can assist veterans and farmers with disabilities; 3) Opportunities to network with other veterans with similar interests and 4) Connections with a Master Gardener who can provide garden education throughout the growing season. Learn more at <https://frontlinegardens.org/>.

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

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June 2022

## Upcoming Events

**Name** ATV-UTV Safety for Women

**Dates** June 27, 2022, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT

**City, State** Webinar Online

**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_5tIDjrfpQwO9tJleHjge8A](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5tIDjrfpQwO9tJleHjge8A)

**Name** New Battleground to Breaking Ground Phase 1 Course

**Dates** Rolling admission

**City, State** Online

**Contact Info/Web link** <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/new-phase-1-battleground-to-breaking-ground/01t4x000002ciNKAAY>

**Name** BattleGround to Breaking Ground-Application

**Dates** Fall Application open until July 11th v

**City, State** Online, with in-person requirement in Nixon, TX, August 25-27, 2022

**Contact Info/Web link** <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/application-battleground-to-breaking-ground/01t4x000002ciPrAAI>

**Name** Phase 2-C12- BattleGround to Breaking Ground (Ag business planning course)

**Dates** Enrollment closes August 22, 2022

**City, State** Online

**Contact Info/Web link** <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/phase-2-c12-battleground-to-breaking-ground/01t4x000004PArTAAG>

**Name** Appropriate PPE for Women in Agriculture

**Dates** June 28, 2022, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT

**City, State** Webinar Online

**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ApfDM0dYQimTpOSh\\_AgR-](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ApfDM0dYQimTpOSh_AgR-)

**Name** AgrAbility Regional Training Workshop - Ohio

**Dates** June 28-30, 2022

**City, State** Columbus, Ohio

**Contact Info/Web link** <http://www.agrability.org/trainings/>

**Name** Women and Heat Stress

**Dates** June 29, 2022, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT

**City, State** Webinar Online

**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_z7tH318eR8GYpB7I60fYDQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_z7tH318eR8GYpB7I60fYDQ)

**Name** Implementing Community-Led Interventions with Gulf Coast Seafood Workers

**Dates** June 29, 2022 at 2:30 p.m. EDT

**City, State** Webinar Online

**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_trJw3doiR5WnR9oP\\_ZXpRw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_trJw3doiR5WnR9oP_ZXpRw)

**Name** More than Milk: Strong Bones and Injury Prevention for Aging Women in Ag

**Dates** June 30, 2022, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT

**City, State** Webinar Online

**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_vURdtVtVQ\\_qmkYp9996\\_wg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vURdtVtVQ_qmkYp9996_wg)

**Name** Zoonotic Disease and Pregnancy: A Deeper Dive

**Dates** July 1, 2022, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT

**City, State** Webinar Online

**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_dPAtn\\_9eRuag3KBCrX7Ytg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dPAtn_9eRuag3KBCrX7Ytg)

**Name** North American Manure Expo

**Dates** July 13-14, 2022

**City, State** Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.manureexpo.ca/>

**Name** AgrileadHER™ Women's Agriculture Conference

**Dates** August 17-18, 2022

**City, State** Virtual Conference

**Contact** [www.agrileadHER.com](http://www.agrileadHER.com)

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** 2022 international workshop on agritourism

**Dates** August 30 - September 1, 2022

**City, State** Burlington, Vermont

**Contact** <https://tinyurl.com/4a5v6n24>

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** 2022 Angus Convention

**Dates** November 4-7, 2022

**City, State** Salt Lake City, Utah

**Contact** <https://angusconvention.com/>

**Info/Web  
link**