

# AgrAbility e·Note

**September 2023**

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

Saturday, September 16 is the last day to reserve a hotel room for the regional workshop, "Malama the Farmer, Caring for Yourself and Each Other," that is taking place at the [Grand Naniolo Hotel](#) in Hawai'i, October 17-18. Hotel reservations can be made by clicking on the hotel name above. [More](#)



AgrAbility All-Staff Virtual Meeting. Please to join the next all-staff virtual meeting October 30 at 3:00 p.m. EDT. Look for email details prior to the meeting.



The AgrAbility Virtual State Fair returns in October! Visit and follow the [Facebook](#) and [Twitter \(X\)](#) pages for updates and encouraging success stories from a different AgrAbility project each day from October 2-25.

The requests for proposals and posters for the 2024 NTW are due November 1 and are available on the [NTW Website](#). The event will be at the [Grand Hyatt Atlanta/Buckhead](#), March 25-28, 2024. Rooms can be booked at the per diem rate of \$173+taxes/fees by clicking on the hotel name above. [More](#)



Anyone wanting to join the NTW planning committee should send an email to Tess at [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org).



National AgrAbility continues to promote the USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program for eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners, including those with disabilities, who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. NAP recently added the *Farmers' Guide to USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program* to its web page about the program. Applications are due October 31. [More](#)

AgrAbility/North Central Farm and Ranch Assistance Center webinar: "Farm Youth and Stress," Tuesday, September 26, 3:00

p.m. EDT. It's not just adults that experience stress. [More](#)

The AgrAbility National Training Workshop Encore Webinar Series continues each month through January. Tune in October 11 for "SARE Grants – Preparing a Proposal." [More](#)



The National AgrAbility Project exhibited as part of the Health and Safety Tent at the 2023 Farm Progress Show at Decatur, Illinois. The exhibit included USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program information, AgrAbility brochures and case studies, assistive technology, and arthritis information.

---

## Toolbox Spotlight

For those using wheelchairs or walkers, the [T-Pull Door Closer](#) provides a handle at the most advantageous location to maximize leverage for closing interior or exterior doors. The handle's shape, length, and swivel action reportedly allow for more ergonomic motion of one's arm and shoulder. Made of high-density plastic, the T-Pull tucks against the door when not in use. It can be mounted via 3M adhesive backing or the screws provided.



---

## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### Alaska

AKAgrAbility was represented again this year at the 2023 4-H Ag Expo on the Kenai Peninsula in early August. DeShana York along with ag & hort agent Casey Matney spoke with numerous people at the event and provided information about CES and AgrAbility. [More](#)

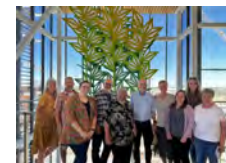
The AKAgrAbility team was very busy at the end of August through the first week in September with outreach engagements such as the Veteran Stand Down in Fairbanks and the Alaska Palmer Statewide Fair. [More](#)

Assistive Technology of Alaska hosted its second free virtual Tech Expo on September 12th & 14th. There were six sessions in total, starting with "AT for Farmers & Other Ag Workers."

---

### Colorado

The Colorado AgrAbility team met for their bi-monthly meeting at the Colorado State University's Spur Campus, in Denver. CSU Spur is home to active science and research and welcomes visitors of all ages. This unique campus is located on the National Western Stock Show grounds, where they continue to have a long-standing partnership.



---

### Florida

During the month of August, the Florida AgrAbility staff conducted and participated in several different forms of outreach.

The Florida AgrAbility case coordinator attended the 2023 National Amputee Coalition

conference in collaboration with the National Project from August 2nd-4th. The case coordinator operated a booth with National Project Manager Paul Jones. [More](#)

On August 17th, members of the Florida AgrAbility Project visited the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Tropical Aquaculture Lab in Ruskin, Florida. This visit included a facility tour, information about the tropical aquaculture industry in Florida,... [More](#)

On August 22, Florida AgrAbility hosted Chad Reznicek and Clinton Wilson as speakers for a webinar on "Promoting Resilience through SAMHSA's Eight Domains of Wellness." Chad and Clinton discussed eight dimensions of wellness as a holistic, strengths-based, and practical approach to increasing resilience and well-being. [More](#)

---

## Georgia



Georgia AgrAbility displayed the mobile learning lab at the Georgia Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association Summer Conference. The event was hosted in Tifton, Georgia. Teachers who braved the heat outside were able to learn about and try out assistive technology devices.

GA continued to share Mental Health First Aid for Military, Veterans, and their Families, in July, teaching two courses across the state in Athens and Tifton. Mental Health First Aid for Military, Veterans, and their Families is an evidence-based and early intervention training program... [More](#)

The veterans coordinator attended a lethal means safety course hosted by the Department of Veterans Affairs on August 9th to learn the impacts of availability and access to lethal means during a crisis and the various methods of limiting access to prevent the loss of life from suicide.

Staff had the opportunity to visit the Veteran's Farm of NC. Owner and Executive Director Robert Elliott has been essential in developing a program to provide agricultural training to transitioning service members. [More](#)

In addition to the MHFA for veterans, staff also taught QPR and MHFA for general community members with the majority of attendees being from the University of Georgia Extension. Staff are excited to be able to train Extension agents in this curriculum so that they can be prepared in case a farmer is experiencing a crisis.

On July 28th, Georgia AgrAbility staff presented a "Gardening and Farming with Arthritis" workshop. The interactive workshop showed participants different planting modifications, tool adaptations, and other effective strategies that can help in managing arthritis pain while managing farms and gardens.



The Meet at the Shed Program is continuing to offer workshops for men to come and fellowship with each other. On August 12th, GA staff had another wood carving class in which the participants carved a bear. This class was maxed out with participants, and they had a great time talking with each other and working on the project.

Georgia AgrAbility's partnership on mental health work with the Southern Region Farm

## Illinois

Illinois AgrAbility has developed new marketing materials that are co-branded with Illinois AgrAbility and Illinois Extension. Items include pop-up banners (Spanish and English), tablecloths, brochures (Spanish and English), and giveaway items.



Illinois AgrAbility hosted the Health and Safety Tent at the 2023 Farm Progress Show held in Decatur, IL, on August 29-31. Representing 15 organizations across Illinois and the nation, the tent provided health and safety resources to farmers and the agricultural community as well as access to free health screenings and services. [More](#)

---

## Indiana

Indiana AgrAbility displayed brochures, client success stories, assistive technology, video case studies, and USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program information at the 2023 Indiana State Fair in the Corteva FFA Pavilion. [More](#)

Chuck Baldwin staffed an AgrAbility booth at the Indiana Amish Handicap [sic] Gathering in St. Joe, IN, August 26. More than 170 people participated in the gathering with the vast majority being Amish families impacted by disability. [More](#)



## Maine



Boots-2-Bushels had its final in-person, on-farm visit at Grace Pond Farm in Thomaston, Maine. The focus was on small-scale organic livestock (chickens, turkeys, pigs) and dairy. There were 15 participants.

AgrAbility staff participated in an oyster farm workshop at Ice House Oysters in Port Clyde, Maine. Staff learned about the different aspects of growing and harvesting oysters and homed in on ergonomically appropriate methods of working and assistive technology to prevent wear and tear on the body.



## Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility staff attended [Agro Expo](#) with the AgrAbility display.

Staff also attended the Ottawa and Allegan Conservation Districts' joint field day, "[Cultivating Resilient Farms](#)", to promote AgrAbility programs and the farm stress counseling available through Easterseals MORC. Staff talked to many farmers and agency folks at each event, promoting AgrAbility services, and had some meaningful conversations with potential clients at both events.

---

## Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility focused its social media efforts around the promotion of health, safety, assistive technology, and personal well-being for farmers with disabilities, farm families,

and stakeholders. Educational materials, dissemination of information, and program presentations are also geared toward meeting the diverse needs of Missouri farmers through inclusion, equity, and equality.



Missouri AgrAbility campus and Extension field faculty were also on hand to disseminate disability, physical and mental health, prevention, and personal well-being resources at the Missouri State Fair, August 10 - 20, in collaboration with the Show-Me Farm Committee: <https://farmsafety.mo.gov/>.

[Carey Portell-National Speaker](#) and MO AgrAbility Ambassador has her own new show, "Cruisin' Cowgirl" at <https://fb.watch/mTzRwFdzs8/>. Carey shares how she and her family survived a fatal drunk driving crash, how she farms with disabilities, and how she pays it forward by inspiring and teaching others.

Lincoln University's Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program staff Mary Bolling and Haze Gaddie assisted the University of Missouri at the Show-Me Farm Safety booth at the Missouri State Fair, which ran from August 10-20, 2023.

Lincoln University ISFOP staff attended a training in Jefferson City, MO, August 14-16, 2023, and received updates on the Missouri AgrAbility program and a preview of an in-depth training to be held in October 2023.



Maureen Cunningham, executive director with the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) and co-PI for Missouri AgrAbility, shared information about brain injury causes and effects with advisory board members of Missouri Rehab Services for the Blind, a Missouri AgrAbility partner. There was good discussion among the 15 attendees about Missouri AgrAbility during this presentation on August 3.

Lynn Winterberg, BIA-MO program associate, shared brain injury prevention information with an estimated 750 youth at the St. Louis Cardinals Redbird Rookies Health Fair on August 12 at Busch Stadium. This Missouri AgrAbility marketing activity included the distribution of Youth and Teen Activity Sheets and discussed brain injury prevention with future AgrAbility clients.

Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) staff participated in an in-service provided by Maureen Cunningham on August 16. This in-service focused on the effects of brain injury and resources with Missouri AgrAbility highlighted as a self-employment option for individuals.

Therapists with St. Luke's Rehab Hospital in St. Louis learned about Missouri AgrAbility through an in-service provided by Maureen Cunningham and distribution of the Brain Injury Resource Kits for Missouri AgrAbility marketing. This in-service was held on August 30.

## Nebraska



2023 Nebraska State Fair - Older Nebraskans Day: located in the Raising Nebraska building at the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island, Nebraska, the AgrAbility booth was visited by dozens of fairgoers during Older Nebraskans Day on August 28. Emily Jacobson and Soni Cochran were on hand to answer questions and share information on AgrAbility. [More](#)

Occupational and physical therapists are invited to "Rehabilitating Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities." The day-long seminar is planned for Tuesday September 26, 2023, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. CDT, as an in-person course at the Park Clubhouse in Battle Creek, Nebraska, or via Live Zoom conferencing. It is sponsored by Nebraska AgrAbility. [More](#)



---

## New Mexico

New Mexico AgrAbility Project (NMAP) presented to some 40+ attendees at the Farmer Stress Summit organized in Albuquerque, NM, by NMSU CES and NM Department of Ag, with many agency and Extension folks present who received a clearer picture of what exactly AgrAbility does and the projects NMAP is involved in.

NMAP met with representatives from the [NM Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum](#) along with a farmer who has recently benefitted from an NMAP evaluation. NMAP and the museum are working to create an exhibit to highlight the benefits of AgrAbility to food producers.

The NMAP farm site evaluator and a farmer presented at the NM Occupational Therapy Association 2023 Conference in Albuquerque. Though a small number of attendees were at the break-out session, all 140 OT professionals and students were introduced to AgrAbility through having the session on the schedule.

NMAP is planning a "Day on the Farm" event to train its Division of Vocational Rehabilitation team members in the ways that people with disabilities will and can continue to be functional food growers. Staff will do this in conjunction with a farmer who has benefitted from a NMAP assessment.

NMAP/UNM faculty are updating curricula to include a poster proposal for OT students to research and present relating to the work-needs of farmers with disabilities.

---

## North Carolina



On August 4, , NC AgrAbility participated at the Hickory Nut Gap Farm Day in Fairview, NC. Approximately 45 people attended the event.

On August 9, NC AgrAbility presented at the Veteran Farm of NC in Cameron, NC, to veterans who want to become farmers.

NC A&T graduate student Evan Hairston presented his MS graduation project on August 22. The project is titled "Increasing the Visibility of NC AgrAbility Through Marketing Strategies."

---

## Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility staff were busy with outreach events in August. The Center of Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus, Ohio, hosted Farm Days August 8 - 13. Ohio AgrAbility and OSU Ag Safety and Health's program's Farm Hazard Hunt was a big hit with attendees. [More](#) OAP staff attended the Southwest Ohio Corn Growers Agronomy Field Day and made connections with farmers, vendors, and Master Gardeners. It was a windy day (a great relief after the heat of the COSI event), and attendees were very interested to learn about AgrAbility services.



---

## Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA Case Coordinator Abbie Spackman was pleased to provide a training to Vocational Rehabilitation staff (OVR) on August 3rd. The training was a virtual presentation open to all OVR staff across the state. [More](#)

AgrAbility PA hosted the Rural Health and Safety Tent at Ag Progress Days! Penn State's Ag Progress Days is the state's largest outdoor



agricultural exposition. It was held on Aug. 8-10 and was attended by over 40,000 farmers and farm families. [More](#)

---

## South Carolina

The South Carolina AgrAbility team will continue working with their nonprofit, Able SC, in their commitment to the state in offering the AgrAbility program. The staff from AbleSC and Clemson were able to meet with assistive technology and vocational rehabilitation education and developed a plan to provide farmers in the state with resources that will benefit their commitment to agriculture.

The staff is also putting the final touches on the needs analysis that will be distributed throughout the state. The staff will continue to cross-educate each other on the benefits of disability services offered around the state to maintain the quality of agriculture in South Carolina.

---

## Tennessee

Lauderdale County UT/TSU Extension showed their appreciation to their farm families in August by hosting a Farm Family Appreciation Day. TN AgrAbility & STAR Center were privileged to present to 40 farm families on services and examples of assistive technology tools offered through AgrAbility and STAR Center. [More](#)



It was a happy day delivering new assistive technology to Mr. Stapleton, a proud U.S. Army Vietnam veteran and farmer. He has mobility challenges after several knee and back surgeries and degenerative nerve damage. [More](#)

Frontline Gardens expanded outside TN with their first build in Colorado! Earlier this year, Stephanie Trost, one of the founders and part of the TN AgrAbility family, was contacted by The American Red Cross of Colorado and Wyoming and the Veterans Administration of Aurora, CO, which had been following their mission and wanted to expand Frontline Gardens in Colorado. [More](#)



Bradford FFA Alumni hosted their first Farm 2 Table event at the Cowen Blackberry Farm in Bradford, TN. The alumni wanted to showcase farm businesses and organizations in the county. TN AgrAbility was privileged to set up a display and visit with TN AgrAbility farmer Charles Cowen.



It is Fair time! TSU TN New Farmer Academy exhibited and shared TNAP information. TN AgrAbility assisted the TN Department of Ag in recruiting some of TNAP's veteran farmers to tell their stories at the TN State fair. Thank you to Ron Bridges, Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN past president, who taught about growing mushrooms. [More](#)

DeKalb County Cattlemen's Association wanted to get a jump on Farm Safety & Health Week and asked Joetta T. White with TN AgrAbility to speak at its August meeting. "Maintenance Is More Than A Grease Gun, and It Begins with YOU" was her topic. A steak dinner was provided for 36 DeKalb County farmers and their families.

The STAR Center and TN AgrAbility were honored to be joined by Governor Bill Lee and Maria Lee at the STAR Center! Staff are

grateful for their support and their work to empower Tennesseans of all abilities. [More](#)



---

## Texas

Texas AgrAbility staff attended the Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course. The course is the largest beef cattle education event in the country. Staff members networked with producers and shared resources with agricultural vendors in attendance.

The Texas AgrAbility project advisory committee met for their quarterly meeting. A summary of the impact survey results was shared with members, and attendees shared resources and events for the fall.



Megan Peveto hosted a booth at the urban agriculture workshop in San Antonio. Resources, information, and assistive tools were utilized to promote Texas AgrAbility at the event.

A "Women in Agriculture" panel is scheduled for September 21 at 12:30 p.m. CDT. The panel will discuss the role of women in agricultural operations and share resources and tips for beginners. [Click here to register.](#)

Texas AgrAbility will host a webinar "[Growing Safely: Safety Planning for Small Farms](#)" on October 11 at 12:30 p.m. CDT.

---

## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah staff was excited to join with Utah State University Extension and display a "Farm Safety Scavenger Hunt" exhibit at the Cache County Fair in Logan, Utah, on August 10th and 11th. The demonstration was seen by hundreds, and participants attempted to find all 13 unsafe farm practices.



On August 28th, AgrAbility of Utah staff presented to 35 members of the Cache Interagency Council in Logan, Utah.

---

## Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia is currently working with 33 open farmer client cases at various levels of engagement and need, including a goat and vegetable farmer with whom staff is looking into mobility equipment alternatives in collaboration with VSU Extension.

In addition to onboarding a new farmer, this month the team tabled at the Boots to Roots conference for veteran/military farmers in Rapidan, Virginia.

---

## Washington

August kicked off fair season for many of Washington AgrAbility's team members and for Extension staff across the nation!

Don McMoran, Washington AgrAbility program director, met with Dr. Majit Misra, director of USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) NIFA (National Institute of Food and Agriculture), at the National Association of County Agricultural Agents meeting in Des Moines, Iowa. [More](#)





Emily Whittier, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Clark County Fair just outside of Vancouver, WA; the Skamania County Fair, which took place right next to the beautiful Columbia River; and Klickitat County Fair and Rodeo. [More](#)

Debbie Frederick, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Grays Harbor Fair in Elma, WA, and the Pacific County Fair in Raymond, WA, where she met prominent members of the agricultural community and provided resources on AgrAbility.

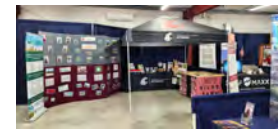


Debbie toured the Port of Willapa and met with the manager to discuss safety concerns for fishermen and oystermen. She also met with the supervisor of Taylor Seafood and talked about possible demonstrations at their facility.



Deb Eidsness, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Evergreen State Fair in Monroe, WA, where she tabled with AgrAbility information and resources.

Alyssa Wade, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Grant County Fair in Moses Lake, the Benton Franklin County Fair in Kennewick, WA, the Lincoln County Fair in Davenport, WA, and the Adams County Fair in Ritzville, WA. She shared AgrAbility and farm stress resources at every event and had amazing conversations with many farmers about the program.



## Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin received a \$5,000 general use grant from Compeer Financial, a part of the Farm Credit system. The purpose of the grant is to enhance digital resources, and work is being done to update the project's website and video. Look for a final version soon!



AgrAbility of Wisconsin hosted a Neighbor-to-Neighbor event on August 8 at the Stinson Family Farm in Westby, Wisconsin. Attendees had the chance to tour Doug and Becky Stinson's 70-head beef operation and learn more about the ways Doug has incorporated assistive technology into his farm and everyday life. [More](#)

## International AgrAbility Network News

## AgrAbility for Africa

AgrAbility for Africa is constantly increasing its research to learn and test innovations in low-tech assistive technology for farmers in Rural Africa to boost employment and social independence. This research is a crucial step to closing the gap in assistive technology access.



AgrAbility for Africa staff members work to connect mentees who want to start their own agricultural operations with experienced mentors. They do this because they believe that improved knowledge of the most recent farming techniques has been useful in inspiring and encouraging youth with disabilities to join the industry and increase their overall social

## StaffChanges and Recognition

### Florida

In August, Florida AgrAbility staff welcomed a new communication and engagement specialist, Shelby Thomas.

### Maine

We are saying goodbye to Anne Martin who has been with Maine AgrAbility since 2018. Anne was instrumental in establishing the Boots-2-Bushels program to work with veterans and all beginning farmers. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors on the west coast!

We are thrilled to say hello to our new director, Izzy Ruffin! Izzy has experience working on farms with diverse production fields. She has spent the last year and a half as the coordinator for the Maine Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, focusing on farmer and farmworker mental health. Izzy is excited to expand her knowledge to further include a focus on physical health, as well as work with aquaculture and forestry professions. She knows firsthand the toll that farming can take on one's body and looks forward to the opportunity to help reduce those impacts for others, ensuring they can farm successfully with the right knowledge, tools, and adaptations.



### Nebraska



Heather Leuenberger joins Nebraska AgrAbility serving as rural rehabilitation specialist. Heather has lived in southeast Nebraska her entire life. Her grandfather was a farmer and that's where she learned to love being outdoors and to appreciate agriculture. Heather shares that her family also has a background in beekeeping. Prior to joining AgrAbility, Heather was a teacher. She worked with speech-language pathologists and, in addition to teaching students in grades 3-5, worked in a behavioral disorders classroom. [More](#)

### Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA welcomes new staff member! Joyce Brkopac joined AgrAbility PA in August as a community specialist in assistive technology services at UCP of Central PA. She will be assisting with marketing and outreach. Joyce has a background in working with adults with developmental disabilities. She is a veteran who served in the US Navy for 11 years, and she currently works with her fiancé on their farm raising beef and growing crops. She is also the primary caregiver for her mother who has a diagnosis of dementia. Her background and experiences make her an excellent fit for AgrAbility! Please welcome her to the team! [Joyce.Brkopac@ucpcentralpa.org](mailto:Joyce.Brkopac@ucpcentralpa.org)



### South Carolina

The staff at AgrAbility SC would like to announce the addition of Maryann "Shelley" Lovern to our team. She will be helping with two related subjects: AgrAbility and farm safety. The staff is excited to have her and her ability to help with AgrAbility throughout the state of South Carolina.



## AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [‘Everybody Gets a Front-Row Seat’](#) (Florida AgrAbility Project)
- [Illinois AgrAbility will host health, safety tent at 2023 Farm Progress Show](#) (Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited, National AgrAbility Project)
- [Beginning Farmer Field Day Teaches New Farmers About Agriculture, Profitability](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [MU researchers to study autonomous tractor](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
- [First fully electric, autonomous tractor in the Midwest unveiled in Missouri](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
- [Congresswoman Caraveo Announces Slate of Bipartisan Bills Supporting Rural Coloradans](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [UF/IFAS AgrAbility project enhances ADA](#)

## Other News

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

- [Talking Total Farmer Health Podcast](#)  
HR Management Yields Results  
Episode 25 • 1st September 2023 • AgriSafe Talking Total Farmer Health • AgriSafe
- [Dr. Glen Rains was invited by NASF and BARD to present his research in Israel.](#)
- [Dr. Rains presented at the ASABE International Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, July 7-12.](#)
- [Inflation Reduction Act Forest Landowner Support](#)
- [National FFA, MANRRS enter partnership to build ag diversity](#)
- [Kellogg, Meijer celebrate young Black farmers making an impact in Michigan](#)
- [SARE Is Now Accepting Grant Applications](#)
- [Penn State Extension launches Farm Stress Real Talk podcast](#)
- [Vietnam POW seeks memorial for Armless Farmer](#)
- [CattleCon24 Registration Opens Early](#)
- [A New Study Finds that Performing Acts of Kindness Improves Mental Health Symptoms](#)
- [In Amish-Chinese partnership, shiitake mushrooms are the main ingredient](#)



## Upcoming Events

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

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



September 2023

## National AgrAbility Project

Saturday, September 16 is the last day to reserve a hotel room for the regional workshop, Malama the Farmer, Caring for Yourself and Each Other, that is taking place at the [Grand Nanihoa Hotel](#) in Hawai'i, October 17-18. Hotel reservations can



be made by clicking on the hotel name above. This workshop is being planned in conjunction with WRASAP and the University of Hawai'i and will focus on behavioral health resources, assistive technology, preventing injury, and business planning. Registration is open. For more information and the registration link, see NAP website under Training and Events, or [click here](#).



The requests for proposals and posters for the 2024 NTW are due November 1 and are available on the [NTW Website](#). The event will be at the [Grand Hyatt Atlanta/Buckhead](#), March 25-28, 2024. Rooms can be booked at the per diem rate of \$173+taxes/fees by clicking on the hotel name above. Staff

should be thinking about sessions that they would like to present or people they might want to contact about sessions. Anyone with an idea for a session, but who doesn't know who could present it, let Tess know and she can survey the planning committee. Each SRAP will again be asked to stipend a farmer before the NAP will consider any stipends from that state. Now is a good time to reach out to local organizations to see if they can help stipend a farmer to come.

Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes

September 2023

## Alaska

AKAgrAbility was represented again this year at the 2023 4-H Ag Expo on the Kenai Peninsula in early August. DeShana York along with ag & hort agent Casey Matney spoke with numerous people at the event and provided information about CES and AgrAbility. DeShana did some impromptu AT demonstrations and engaged folks to try some of the tools on for size while explaining how AgrAbility is helping some clients across the state.

---

The AKAgrAbility team was very busy at the end of August through the first week in September with outreach engagements such as the Veteran Stand Down in Fairbanks and the Alaska Palmer Statewide Fair. DeShana York gave an overview presentation about AgrAbility and demonstration with a health, home & family development agent, Julie Cascio, at the State Fair and some other general public demonstrations throughout the Fair's schedule of events.

Submitted by DeShana York

September 2023

## Florida

The Florida AgrAbility case coordinator attended the 2023 National Amputee Coalition conference in collaboration with the National Project from August 2nd-4th. The case coordinator operated a booth with National Project Manager Paul Jones. Between 25-50 attendees from across the nation stopped by the AgrAbility booth to learn about the program, and if the services are available in their home-state. Many attendees showed immense interest in the AgrAbility program and the adaptive tools brought for display.

---

On August 17th, members of the Florida AgrAbility Project visited the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Tropical Aquaculture Lab in Ruskin, Florida. This visit included a facility tour, information about the tropical aquaculture industry in Florida, and a trip to a nearby farmer to view a fish processing/packaging house. The staff members gained valuable industry information that will aid in diversifying their knowledge set for clients who may be involved in aquaculture.

---

On August 22, Florida AgrAbility hosted Chad Reznicek and Clinton Wilson as speakers for a webinar on "Promoting Resilience through SAMHSA's Eight Domains of Wellness." Chad and Clinton discussed eight dimensions of wellness as a holistic, strengths-based, and practical approach to increasing resilience and well-being. The webinar had a great turnout and welcomed more than 60 participants. Participants were very engaged and provided positive feedback.

Submitted by Shelby Thomas

September 2023

## Georgia

GA continued to share Mental Health First Aid for Military, Veterans, and their Families, in July, teaching two courses across the state in Athens and Tifton. Mental Health First Aid for Military, Veterans, and their Families is an evidence-based and early intervention training program developed for adults to learn how to assist and support members of their community who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. More than 20 community members attended, developing the essential skills to assist individuals in crisis.

Staff had the opportunity to visit the Veteran's Farm of NC. Owner and Executive Director Robert Elliott has been essential in developing a program to provide agricultural training to transitioning service members. Representatives from NC Farm Bureau and various educators also visited to witness the ongoing impacts the program has across the NC veteran community.

Dr. Glen Rains was invited by NASF and BARD to present his research in Israel. The purpose was to foster interactions and collaborations between the two countries. The session was held in Tel-Aviv, Israel, July 16-21.



Dr. Rains presented at the ASABE International Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, July 7-12. His presentation was on how to develop a farm management assistance based on crop models and collected data. He also visited the Nebraska Future Ag Research & Management Systems (NFarms). They showed state-of-the art crop scouting with drones and a skycam camera, similar to cameras used in football stadiums. Also, greenhouse gas emissions testing equipment was used to determine the effects of climate-smart management.

Submitted by AgrAbility in Georgia



September 2023

## Illinois



Illinois AgrAbility hosted the Health and Safety Tent at the 2023 Farm Progress Show held in Decatur, IL, on August 29-31. Representing 15 organizations across Illinois and the nation, the tent provided health and safety resources to farmers and the agricultural community as well as access to free health screenings and services.



Free screenings included hearing and vision screenings, blood pressure testing, blood glucose screening, ear fit protection, and eye

pressure screenings. In addition to the health screenings, the Health and Safety Tent offered agricultural safety demonstrations,



agricultural assistive technologies on display, information about stress management and mental health, and resources for parents to keep children safe on farms. Over 1,000 Farm Progress Show attendees visited the tent throughout the three days.



Submitted by Haley Jones

September 2023

## Indiana

Indiana AgrAbility displayed brochures, client success stories, assistive technology, video case studies, and USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program information at the 2023 Indiana State Fair in the Corteva FFA Pavilion. AgrAbility also exhibited in the Purdue University Cooperative Extension building for one day and partnered with Easterseals Crossroads for a display at the Indiana State Fair Abilities Awareness Day. A John Deere tractor with a Life Essentials lift was also part of the latter exhibit.

Submitted by Steve Swain

Chuck Baldwin staffed an AgrAbility booth at the Indiana Amish Handicap [sic] Gathering in St. Joe, IN, August 26. More than 170 people participated in the gathering with the vast majority being Amish families impacted by disability. This year's gathering was a bit more somber than some, as the Amish man on whose property the event was held had been killed in a work-related accident just a month prior to the Gathering. Nevertheless, the Amish expressed their faith and hope in God and eternity, and the normal food and fellowship throughout the day was encouraging to all.

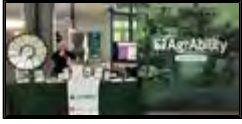


Three Amish men and a van driver spoke at length with Chuck about needs they have with which AgrAbility might be able to help. Chuck and Ned Stoller (Michigan AgrAbility) are doing follow-up with them. A number of people picked up some of the AgrAbility literature on display.

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin

September 2023

## Nebraska



2023 Nebraska State Fair - Older Nebraskans Day: located in the Raising Nebraska building at the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island, Nebraska, the AgrAbility booth was visited by dozens of fairgoers during Older Nebraskans Day on August 28. Emily Jacobson and Soni

Cochran were on hand to answer questions and share information on AgrAbility. The "knowledge wheel" was popular and people enjoyed spinning the wheel to learn about arthritis and its impact on farmers and ranchers. Ergonomic garden tools were also available for people to try. During the day, Emily was also able to visit with AgrAbility clients who stopped by the booth.



Occupational and physical therapists are invited to "Rehabilitating Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities." The day-long seminar is planned for Tuesday September 26, 2023, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. CDT, as an in-person course at the Park Clubhouse in Battle Creek, Nebraska, or via Live Zoom conferencing. It is sponsored by Nebraska AgrAbility. Eight (8) continuing education units (CEUs) will be available through NPTA. Lunch and snacks will be provided for those attending in person and all course materials will be mailed before class to those attending via live zoom.

Most do not realize it, but when a farmer or rancher is discharged from care following an injury or serious illness, he or she is not only returning home, but is also returning to an industrial work site. Occupational therapists, physical therapists, OT assistants, and PT assistants can play an important role in preparing farmers and ranchers to return to their homes. When home includes the workplace, special considerations are needed to ensure a safe transition.

"Rehabilitating Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities" is designed to help health care providers become more competent in their care to the agricultural population they see on a regular basis. Christine Hutchinson, PT, DPT, will be the lead instructor for the course. She is a physical therapist at St. Francis Memorial Hospital in West Point, Nebraska. She has advanced certification in geriatrics and is a credentialed clinical instructor. Nebraska AgrAbility staff will also teach portions of the seminar.

Pre-registration and payment for the seminar is required by September 19, 2023. Visit [go.unl.edu/ot-pt](https://go.unl.edu/ot-pt). A complete agenda and registration materials are also available online at <https://agrability.unl.edu/>. Contact Nancy Frecks, Nebraska Extension educator, (308) 334-5666, or [nfrecks1@unl.edu](mailto:nfrecks1@unl.edu) for further information or with any questions.



## Staff Changes and Recognition

Heather Leuenberger joins Nebraska AgrAbility serving as rural rehabilitation specialist. Heather has lived in southeast Nebraska her entire life. Her grandfather was a farmer and that's where she learned to love being outdoors and to appreciate agriculture. Heather shares that her family also has a background in beekeeping. Prior to joining AgrAbility, Heather was a teacher. She worked with



speech-language pathologists and, in addition to teaching students in grades 3-5, worked in a behavioral disorders classroom.

Heather has two children. Her son is a junior at Chadron State College majoring in rangeland management and minoring in agricultural business. Heather shares that her 19-year-old daughter has several health issues that have introduced Heather to the world of accessibility and disability services. Her daughter is currently in a transition program focused on life skills and independent living skills. Heather's husband works for a local cooperative.

Heather says, "I look forward to this new role and the opportunity to have a positive impact on farmers and ranchers with accessibility needs." Welcome to the team, Heather!

Submitted by Soni Cochran

September 2023

## Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility staff were busy with outreach events in August. The Center of Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus, Ohio, hosted Farm Days August 8 - 13. Ohio AgrAbility and OSU Ag Safety and Health's program's Farm Hazard Hunt was a big hit with attendees. The Hazard Hunt is a farm diorama with at least 20 hazards or unsafe practices. The kids wanted the vehicles from the hunt, and several attendees pointed out hazards that related to their own occupations - power company, OSHA, factory supervisor, nurses, and insurance claim specialists. Other exhibits at Farm Days included farm machinery, a life-sized dairy cow that kids (and adults) "milked," and an interactive seed planting activity with OSU Master Gardener volunteers. OAP staff had many good conversations with attendees, and received thanks for the work that AgrAbility does with farmers with disabilities.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

September 2023

## Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA Case Coordinator Abbie Spackman was pleased to provide a training to Vocational Rehabilitation staff (OVR) on August 3rd. The training was a virtual presentation open to all OVR staff across the state. Abbie provided information about AgrAbility as well as education on agricultural assistive technology and the unique challenges farmers face. The presentation was very well received and lots of great questions were asked.

AgrAbility PA hosted the Rural Health and Safety Tent at Ag Progress Days! Penn State's Ag Progress Days is the state's largest outdoor agricultural exposition. It was held on Aug. 8-10 and was attended by over 40,000 farmers and farm families. AgrAbility staff (pictured) provided AgrAbility information and hands-on assistive technology demos. AT demos included Gripeeze gloves, weightlifters' hooks, magnetic wrist bands, parts trays, and additional magnetic tools. A cooling vest was also demonstrated and was of great interest to attendees. Staff highlighted two new handouts on AT and provided copies to many attendees.



Marty Cotterman from LifeLyfts attended two days of the show and provided excellent interaction with attendees. He demonstrated the Truck Pilot Lift and played videos of lifts in action. Staff are very thankful for the time and effort he put into the show!

Also, in the Rural Health and Safety tent, AgrAbility hosted free health screenings to attendees. Screenings included vision, blood pressure, carotid artery, and physical therapy. Information was also provided on liver health, concussion prevention, hydration, rural health, and pesticide safety. The show was a huge success!

Submitted by AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians

September 2023

## Tennessee



Lauderdale County UT/TSU Extension showed their appreciation to their farm families in August by hosting a Farm Family Appreciation Day. TN AgrAbility & STAR Center were privileged to present to 40 farm families on services and examples of assistive technology tools offered through AgrAbility and STAR Center. This event was sponsored by Southern Ag Exchange Network (SAGE) TN and Lauderdale County UT TSU Extension. The SAGE website (<https://southernagexchange.org/>) officially launched with farm stress resources and tools.

It was a happy day delivering new assistive technology to Mr. Stapleton, a proud U.S. Army Vietnam veteran and farmer. He has mobility challenges after several knee and back surgeries and degenerative nerve damage. The UTV and additional assistive technology will get him back farming on his hilly East TN farm. Thank you to the TN Division of Rehabilitation Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Program for the state funding to purchase the mobility device that allows Mr. Stapleton to continue work on his farm. This was a great effort by the TN AgrAbility team!



Frontline Gardens expanded outside TN with their first build in Colorado! Earlier this year, Stephanie Trost, one of the founders and part of the TN AgrAbility family, was contacted by The American Red Cross of Colorado and Wyoming and the Veterans Administration of Aurora, CO, which had been following their mission and wanted to expand Frontline Gardens in Colorado.

TN AgrAbility connected Stephanie with Colorado AgrAbility. The Colorado team built their first garden for a Vietnam veteran and made his garden accessible by adding a ramp so he has safe access to his back yard. They built a pergola with an electric retractable cover and a wheelchair-high herb box. Follow [Home - Frontline Gardens](#) or contact them for more information. Stephanie said "We are so excited for our future builds and to be able to give back to those who are most deserving. We are very proud of our team in Colorado. They worked very hard to make this happen!" More builds for the TN team are in process.

It is Fair time! TSU TN New Farmer Academy exhibited and shared TNAP information. TN AgrAbility assisted the TN Department of Ag in recruiting some of TNAP's veteran farmers to tell their stories at the TN State fair. Thank you to Ron Bridges, Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN past president, who taught about growing mushrooms.

Amanda Blount, the Farmer Veteran Coalition's Region 2N coordinator, championed the cause of small scale and micro farming. "Sadly, we are losing the older generations of farmers daily and with their loss, larger farms are being subdivided at an alarming rate. Each time we lose an experienced farmer, it's like a library of knowledge is burned down. That lifetime of farming knowledge is something we can't get back. On the other side, we have motivated veterans looking for their next adventure,



but they may not have farming experience or the capital to purchase and run a large-scale commercial farm."

Blount continues, "Small scale and micro farms have less start-up costs and can be started at a slower pace than a commercial farm. Small scale and micro farming are the perfect way to encourage younger or less experienced generations to pick farming as a modern career. Small scale and micro farming are a great way to bridge the gap and engage the older and more experienced farmers to continue their love of farming and sharing their knowledge with new generations." Blount said. "Our FVCTN mission is clear: to empower TN veteran farmers with the tools, knowledge, and support they need to succeed in farming. Small scale and micro farming can be a profitable career choice for veterans." For more information about the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Tennessee and its initiatives, please visit <https://www.fvctn.org>.



The STAR Center and TN AgrAbility were honored to be joined by Governor Bill Lee and Maria Lee at the STAR Center! Staff are grateful for their support and their work to empower Tennesseans of all abilities. Thank you, Governor Lee and Mrs. Lee, for spending the morning with the staff learning more about The STAR Center! Maria Lee said, "A disability should never be a disadvantage to experiencing life to the fullest." Tennesseans living with intellectual and developmental disabilities can face lifelong challenges. Maria Lee and Tennessee Serves have been working this month to help empower both children and adults with special needs to experience life's richest blessings to the fullest and to live the lives they envision for themselves. Jennifer Cunningham, VP of client services with STAR Center stated, "It was great to have Joetta Turbeville White from Tennessee AgrAbility with us for the visit from Governor and Mrs. Lee! We talked about our statewide partnership serving farmers with disabilities."

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project



September 2023

## Washington

Don McMoran, Washington AgrAbility program director, met with Dr. Majit Misra, director of USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) NIFA (National Institute of Food and Agriculture), at the National Association of County Agricultural Agents meeting in Des Moines, Iowa. He will be traveling to Washington D.C. to participate in the Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services at a farm stress and suicide prevention briefing. The event will take place during the National Farm Safety and Health Week and Suicide Prevention Month.

Emily Whittier, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Clark County Fair just outside of Vancouver, WA; the Skamania County Fair, which took place right next to the beautiful Columbia River; and Klickitat County Fair and Rodeo. Whittier tabled on behalf of the agricultural suicide prevention program and Washington AgrAbility, and invited fair attendees to engage with the displays through sticker voting on ideas the team learned from the fantastic AgrAbility webinar, "Making Lemonade When Outreach Events Hand You Lemons." Farmers and community members in attendance voted on their stressors, and placed stickers on a silhouette where they "felt pain or resistance." The WA AgrAbility team is excited to use this information to guide their messaging and programming.



Submitted by Alyssa Wade

September 2023

## Wisconsin



AgrAbility of Wisconsin hosted a Neighbor-to-Neighbor event on August 8 at the Stinson Family Farm in Westby, Wisconsin. Attendees had the chance to tour Doug and Becky Stinson's 70-head beef operation and learn more about the ways Doug has incorporated assistive technology into his farm and everyday life. The weather was beautiful, and it was a great chance to network and share knowledge among current and past clients.



Submitted by Annie Klahn

September 2023

## **AgrAbility for Africa**

AgrAbility for Africa staff members work to connect mentees who want to start their own agricultural operations with experienced mentors. They do this because they believe that improved knowledge of the most recent farming techniques has been useful in inspiring and encouraging youth with disabilities to join the industry and increase their overall social participation. These programs give clients of AgrAbility for Africa the chance to study, set farming objectives, and start farm businesses using innovative techniques and technologies.



Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

September 2023

## Upcoming Events

- 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** Husker Harvest Days  
**Dates** September 12-14, 2023  
**City, State** Grand Island, Nebraska  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.huskerharvestdays.com/en/home.html>
- Name** National Farm Safety & Health Week webinars from AgriSafe  
**Dates** September 18-22, 2023 at 12:00p.m. and 2:00p.m. EDT each day  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://files.constantcontact.com/20e75ba9001/36d8d6a3-b510-476d-b1c9-a3dc5350c423.pdf>
- Name** Farm Science Review  
**Dates** September 19-21, 2023  
**City, State** London, Ohio  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://fsr.osu.edu/>
- Name** FVC QPR Suicide Prevention Training for FVC  
**Dates** September 20, 2023, from 1:00-2:30 EDT  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_UbysqogQT26SBDC1GptrMg#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UbysqogQT26SBDC1GptrMg#/registration)
- Name** Cardiovascular Health in Farmworkers with a Concentration on Females  
**Dates** September 20, 2023 from 12:00-1:00 p.m. EDT  
**City, State** Webinar Online

**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_hafgUZuBSnudrpioKiQ5ow#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hafgUZuBSnudrpioKiQ5ow#/registration)

**Name** Strategies to Increase Access to Mental Health Services in Farmworker Communities in Post-COVID Era

**Dates** September 20, 2023, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. EDT

**City, State** Webinar Online

**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_VMb5XAWsQGGocboSJ9nvUg#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VMb5XAWsQGGocboSJ9nvUg#/registration)

**Name** World Dairy Expo

**Dates** October 1-6, 2023

**City, State** Madison, Wisconsin

**Contact Info/Web link** <https://worlddairyexpo.com/>

**Name** APRIL Annual Conference

**Dates** October 12-14, 2023

**City, State** Garden Grove, California

**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.april-rural.org/index.php/en/>

**Name** AgrAbility Hawaii Workshop

**Dates** October 17-18, 2023

**City, State** Hilo, Hawaii

**Contact Info/Web link** <http://www.agrability.org/rtw/check-back-for-upcoming-regional-workshops/>

**Name** Sunbelt Ag Expo

**Dates** October 17-19, 2023

**City, State** Moultrie, Georgia

**Contact Info/Web link** <https://sunbeltexpo.com/>

**Name** 2023 agrileadHER virtual conference

**Dates** November 1-2, 2023

**City, State** Virtual Event Online

**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.agrileadher.com/>

**Name** National FFA Convention

**Dates** November 1-4, 2023  
**City, State** Indianapolis, Indiana  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://convention.ffa.org/>

**Name** 9th Annual Farmer Veteran Coalition Stakeholders Conference  
**Dates** November 12-14, 2023  
**City, State** Washington, D.C.  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://tinyurl.com/5ak5v5pr>

**Name** Keystone Farm Show  
**Dates** January 9-11, 2024  
**City, State** York, Pennsylvania  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.keystonefarmshow.com/>

**Name** Onward to Orlando 2024 CATTLECON  
**Dates** January 31 - February 2, 2024  
**City, State** Orlando, Florida  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://convention.ncba.org/>

**Name** World Ag Expo  
**Dates** February 13-15, 2024  
**City, State** Tulare, California  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.worldagexpo.com/>

**Name** AOTA INSPIRE 2024 Annual Conference  
**Dates** March 21-23, 2024  
**City, State** Orlando, Florida  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://inspire.aota.org/>

**Name** AgrAbility National Training Workshop  
**Dates** March 15-18, 2024  
**City, State** Atlanta, Georgia  
**Contact Info/Web link** <http://www.agrability.org/agrability-national-training-workshop/2024-agrability-national-training-workshop/>

