

AgrAbility e•Note

November 2023

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

National AgrAbility Project News

The [National AgrAbility Advisory Team](#) provides feedback on NAP activities and recommendations for future efforts, and it includes a SRAP representative and a client representative that change annually. This year's SRAP representative is Kyle Haney of AgrAbility in Georgia, and the client representative is Darin Chapman, a farmer veteran from Indiana. The advisory team is scheduled to meet in Indianapolis on November 29-30.



Next 2023 AgrAbility NTW Encore Webinar: December 13 - "Adaptive Beekeeping for People with Disabilities and Veterans" with Ned Stoller and Joe Ricker. [More](#)

NTW Reminders

- Book your room for the March 25-28 NTW at the per diem rate of \$173+taxes/fees by clicking [Grand Hyatt Atlanta/Buckhead](#).
- The request for proposals is closed, but poster submissions are accepted through January through the form on the [NTW website](#).
- The schedule will be posted on the website, and registration will be open in the beginning of December.
- Each SRAP should provide a travel stipend for a farmer before sending any requests for NAP stipends from that state. Start reaching out to local organizations to see if they can help stipend a farmer to come. Farmer stipend applications will be available soon.
- Exhibitor applications are also available on the [NTW website](#), or have the prospective exhibitors contact [Tess McKeel](#).
- If you would like to join the planning committee, send an email to Tess at tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org.



The regional workshop "Malama the Farmer, Caring for Yourself and Each Other" took place in in Hawai'i on October 17-18. Sixty-seven people from 8 states and Guam attended the workshop sessions, and 55 attended the tours of a coffee plantation/production, a winery that also grows olives and tea, a 3rd generation floral greenhouse, and a farm that supports veterans. There was lots of positive feedback, great conversations, and great connections made.

NAP would love to host a regional workshop with you. If you think that you might be interested, please contact Tess tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org or JoBeth jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org, for more information.

NIFA, AgrAbility's USDA partner, featured AgrAbility during October through social media, its NIFA Updates newsletter, and [a special web feature, which can be seen here.](#)



Many thanks to all who participated in the 2023 AgrAbility Virtual State Fair on Facebook and Twitter. The fair reached more than 16,000 unique Facebook users during October.

Kimber Nicoletti-Martínez represented AgrAbility at the 2023 annual conference of APRIL - the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living. The event took place in Orange County, CA, on October 12-14, and in addition to staffing a display, Kimber spoke on "The art of engagement in Latina farm worker communities."

Chuck Baldwin helped staff the AgrAbility booth at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, WI, October 3-4. He shared the responsibilities with Ami Bliefernicht of Easterseals Wisconsin on Tuesday and with Alan Kaltenberg, WI farmer, and Julianne Renner, AgrAbility of Wisconsin communications, on Wednesday. [More](#)



National AgrAbility collaborated with Colorado AgrAbility to provide a display and presentation at the 2023 conference of FALCON (First Americans Land grant Consortium) in Denver on October 13-15. See the Colorado AgrAbility section of this newsletter for more.



Ed Sheldon and Chuck Baldwin joined their 2501 LIFE Project partner John Jamerson in attending the National Black Farmers Association conference in Natchez, MS, located on bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River, October 27-28. There were roughly 200 in attendance. [More](#)

National AgrAbility hosted an exhibit at the 2023 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis on November 1-3. The team talked with many of the estimated 72,000+ attendees and shared the space with [Purdue's Gearing Up for Safety](#) youth agricultural safety training program.



Newly archived virtual events:

- [AgrAbility All-Staff Meeting of October 30](#)
- [NTW Encore Webinar: "What tools are in your AgrAbility truck?"](#)

Toolbox Spotlight



A [Throatless Hand Shear](#) is used to make complex straight and curved cuts in sheet metal. It consists of a heavy-duty cast-iron base (to ensure stability), a long handle (that provides added leverage), and side-by-side steel blades (that do the cutting). The tool's "throatless" design lets the material pass through without getting stuck and also makes it easy to cut large, unwieldy sheets. Additionally, the blades adjust for different material thicknesses - the maximums usually being 14-gauge mild steel and aluminum and 18-gauge stainless.

Alaska



Staff participated in many events this October including the Aging & Disability Summit, a physical therapy conference, Alaska Federation of Natives Convention, and the Alaska Federation for the Blind Convention.

Along with [Empowering Education](#)'s Annette Alfonsi, AKAgrAbility staff accepted a resolution to make October "Disability Employment Awareness Month" at the October 10th Anchorage Assembly meeting. [More](#)

California

It's been an eventful month for California AgrAbility. Staff members had the pleasure of participating in the 2nd Annual Yolo Farmworkers & Growers Festival in Woodland, California. [More](#)



Colorado



Dr. Rebecca Hill, Colorado AgrAbility co-director, and James Craig, Colorado AgrAbility veteran outreach & rural rehabilitation specialist, represented the National AgrAbility Project at The First Americans Land-Grant Consortium (FALCON) annual conference October 13th - 15th. [More](#)

Candiss Leathers, program manager, spoke eloquently and engagingly on "Ergonomic Safety & Health in Agriculture... A Few Issues and Solutions" to 50-plus participants from 8 states and Guam at the National AgrAbility Project's regional training workshop in Hilo, Hawaii, on October 17th. [More](#)



Ellis Vidmar, program coordinator, spoke to Washington County Farm Bureau about the services Colorado AgrAbility offers. There were seven Farm Bureau members, three community members, and eight Facebook Live participants in the audience. [More](#)

Mountain Regional Behavioral Health Specialist Kirsten Wulfsberg and Mountain Region Health Specialist Jen Aengst shared: "Tips & Tricks for Navigating the Healthcare System." The pilot program kicked off in Teller County, on October 21st in partnership with the Teller County Health Department and the Teller County Sheriff's office. [More](#)



Florida

Concluding its first year of operation, Florida AgrAbility held its first advisory board meeting. The team provided illustrative handouts and presented a presentation to advisory board members to inform them of the progress and efforts conducted by the Florida AgrAbility staff during the past year. This in-person meeting provided a great opportunity to strengthen professional relationships and welcome helpful feedback.

The case coordinator began a course in preparation for becoming a certified Assistive Technology Professional (ATP). This class is four weeks long, twice a week, and will assist with preparing for the ATP exam.

The case coordinator attended the 2023 Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, Georgia, and shared booth space with Georgia AgrAbility and South Carolina AgrAbility. This is a very highly trafficked event (over 100,000 visitors annually) for farmers and ranchers across the Southern U.S.

Georgia



The Sunbelt Ag Expo was held in Moultrie, GA, on October 17-19. Staff were so thankful to have Florida and South Carolina AgrAbility join us this year to showcase AgrAbility for farmers across the Southeast! [More](#)

AgrAbility is part of the Georgia Agricultural Wellness Alliance (GAWA). GAWA was established in response to the prevalence of mental health challenges experienced by farm families and communities. [More](#)



Georgia AgrAbility participated in the AgrAbility Virtual State Fair on October 4th. Staff are grateful to have been part of the VSF to share the wonderful work that AgrAbility does.

Illinois

Illinois AgrAbility's three-month statewide marketing campaign will run from November through January and involves both Illinois Farmer Today and Illinois Farm Bureau. It includes radio, newspaper, website, and social media.

Staff member Haley has begun taking a seven-week facilitator course in chronic disease self-management. The intent will be to offer this interactive class for Illinois AgrAbility audiences around the state beginning this early spring.

Illinois AgrAbility has published its first quarterly newsletter of this grant cycle. [Click here](#) to read it.

Indiana



On October 13, the Purdue University College of Agriculture sponsored a Global Food & Nutrition Security and Human Health Poster Networking Gathering. Indiana AgrAbility Extension Engagement Coordinator Ed Sheldon joined 34 other participants from throughout the College of Agriculture, sharing a poster highlighting the Legacy Innovation Farming Economics (LIFE) Project. [More](#)

Maine

Staff went to a mechanized logging operations student learning site to provide an education on ergonomics and logging. Ten students and two staff participated in the education. [More](#)



Maine AgrAbility was featured in the AgrAbility Virtual State Fair on October 23.

Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility staff attended Michigan Farm Bureau's first career fair for FFA

members. Staff spoke to members about a career in engineering, assistive technology, and communications. [More](#)

Missouri



October was the beginning of the new 4-H program year, so efforts have been on recruitment and training of members, volunteers, and teen leaders. Red Ribbon Week activities were a success with 4-H Save Your Brain Ambassadors doing demonstrations during the week's activities.

Karen Funkenbusch from MU Extension and Mary Bolling at Lincoln University Cooperative Extension Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (LUCE ISFOP) provided a half-day AgrAbility training workshop October 17 at the George Washington Carver Farm Lincoln University to new small farm specialists and farm outreach workers. [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility focused social media efforts around the promotion of National Farm Safety and Health Week and prevention of suicide. Educational materials, dissemination of information, and program presentations also geared toward meeting the diverse needs of Missouri farmers through inclusion, equity, and equality.

Missouri AgrAbility was recognized as the Rural Missouri Track Sponsor for the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) 19th Annual Statewide Conference. Marketing activities included an exhibit that featured tools of the Missouri AgrAbility Jessup Wagon in partnership with Lincoln University, and Mary Bolling discussing specifics about the tools with more than 250 attendees of the conference. [More](#)

Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility staff attended the "One USDA: Beginning Farmer and Rancher" webinar training. Training topics included: "Beginning Farmer and Rancher program, Employment programs for Veterans," "NRCS, Extension Services,"... [More](#)

Nebraska AgrAbility staff member Angie Howell attended the regional AgrAbility training in Hilo, Hawaii. The two-day learning event offered valuable agricultural experience and shared expertise from a variety of AgrAbility projects about farm stress, mentoring, and business planning and provided assistive technology examples. [More](#)



For the month of October, Nebraska AgrAbility participated in National AgrAbility's Virtual State Fair. The Nebraska program was showcased on October 13. [More](#)

Nebraska AgrAbility is excited to be working with Center for Rural Affairs (CFRA) on their veterans in agriculture project, "Embracing Farm and Ranch Diversification, Adding Agritourism through Farm Stores, UPick operations, and Outdoor events." Over the next few months, Nebraska AgrAbility will be meeting with CFRA and planning educational courses.

New Mexico

NM Technology Assistance Program partners promoted AgrAbility at a Rio Rancho Public Schools Transition Fair on October 26.



NMAP's non-profit partner, Mandy's Farm, held a Harvest Fest where apprentices ran a booth selling purple sweet potatoes, onions, garlic, rainbow popping corn, and daikon radishes that they grew, as well as apple butter and peach preserves that they prepared. [More](#)

AgrAbility was asked to present two times at an upcoming conference on aging on November 13. The presentation was offered to New Mexico seniors live in Albuquerque, and was viewable live and via recordings at senior centers throughout the state.

North Carolina

The 2023 Extension Early Career Conference, "Meet your Specialists," was held October 3. It was an event hosting county-based NC Cooperative Extension staff (agents and PAs). [More](#)

On October 5, NC AgrAbility hosted the AgrAbility Virtual State Fair, sharing the work the program does and a video featuring farmers, staff, partners, and collaborators across the state.

At the FSA State Conference on October 12, NC AgrAbility's Crystal Cook Marshall presented on NC AgrAbility to 60 Farm Service Agency directors and staff. Along with ECU Agromedicine, the team also conducted a mini-refresher course in CPR and Stop the Bleed.

On October 13, Betty Rodriguez participated at the Farmer Veteran Coalition of North Carolina Western Educational Conference sponsored by the Frontline to Farm program and hosted at the Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute in Boone, NC. [More](#)



The Grassroots Leadership Conference, Charlotte, NC, October 17, was a conference that brings together diverse stakeholders from across North Carolina to learn about new community development initiatives and identify strategies to improve the quality of life in communities, particularly among underserved and limited-resource populations. [More](#)

On October 25, NC Cooperative Extension at NCA&T and NCSU hosted the Center for Environmental Farming Systems Field Research, Education, and Outreach Facility at Cherry Research Farm tour, where researchers presented their current work and projects. [More](#)



The Farmer Veteran Coalition of North Carolina Eastern Educational Conference was hosted at the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension office in Fayetteville, NC, on October 27. Betty Rodriguez chaired the planning committee for the event. [More](#)

Ohio

Over the years, the Ohio AgrAbility Program has sponsored collegiate capstone projects. Some projects are specific for undergraduate engineering students, and some are for occupational therapy or public health students. [More](#)



Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA and PSU Ag Safety partnered to provide information to Amish families with school-age children through a partnership with a rural fire company. The fire company has several volunteers who are Amish and who were providing safety and health education to all the Amish schools in Centre County, Penn's Valley, PA. [More](#)

AgrAbility staff gave a presentation about AgrAbility PA to OTA students at Penn State Mont Alto Campus in Mont Alto, PA on October 23 & 24. [More](#)

Abbie Spackman, project coordinator with PSU, presented an interactive workshop to the Centre County, PA Agricultural Forum. This is an agricultural group that meets monthly for education, community, and support. [More](#)

South Carolina

The South Carolina AgrAbility team continues to work with a client who is interested in the hand controls for his tractor. Assistance has been asked for assistive technology and vocational rehabilitation. Staff are still in the process of assisting the gentleman.

The team has attended events to spread the word about AgrAbility and its offerings and will continue this endeavor through the rest of the year. [More](#)

Tennessee

Thanks for the big impact all the AgrAbility stories shared this month on the AgrAbility Virtual State Fair!



TN Association of Rescue Squads received the 1st annual Friend of TN AgrAbility award at the 2023 TARS Convention for their hard work and dedication to the TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness trainings for ag producers and rescue personnel throughout Tennessee. [More](#)

TN AgrAbility partnered with Lawrence, Wayne, Perry, UT TSU Extension, and UT MANAGE to host the 2nd annual Cultivate Women in Ag conference. There were 42 women producers in attendance and topics included: [More](#)



Tennessee AgrAbility in collaboration with Tennessee Department of Human Services (TN DHS) celebrated National Disability Employment Month by hosting the Resource Ability Assistive Technology Access Fair in Lebanon, TN. The annual event showcased the importance of assistive technology in the lives of people with different abilities. [More](#)

On October 10th, TNAP promoted World Mental Health Day. A great local reminder was written on round cotton modules on Hwy 22 North in Huntingdon, TN. [More](#)



TN AgrAbility partnered with STAR Center at the TN Taste of Technology Expo in Brentwood. This event connected 89 vision- and hearing-impaired individuals to a wider world with technology for work, home, and everyday life.

Utah

AgrAbility of Utah staff attended the Utah Nonprofits Lunch and Learn Event on October 10 in Logan, Utah, where attendees learned valuable tips about marketing, outreach, and hiring.

On October 23, AgrAbility the staff was able to present to 23 members of the Cache Interagency Council in Logan, UT.

The AgrAbility staff was excited to visit with many of the 120 farmers and ranchers who attended the Central Utah Grazing Expo on October 17-18. The two-day event was sponsored by Utah State University Extension and was taught in Richfield and Bicknell, Utah. Sheep nutrition, poisonous plants, electric fencing options, and flood irrigation efficiency were just some of the many classes that were taught.

Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia participated in multiple outreach activities during the month of October. From a farm tour in Fauquier County to a veterans hospital job fair for individuals with disabilities, the team was able to network with new faces in the agricultural community. The team is currently working with 34 open farmer cases, including a horse farmer for whom the staff is looking into assisting with his farming needs.

Washington

A big thank you to Paul Jones for coordinating another year of AgrAbility Virtual State Fair! Washington AgrAbility enjoyed the opportunity to showcase some of the home visits and some of the exciting changes to our team from the past year.



Don McMoran, Washington AgrAbility program director, Debbie Fredricks and Deb Eidsness, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinators, all attended the "Mālama the Farmer, Caring for Yourself and Each Other" AgrAbility regional workshop in Hilo, Hawaii. They really enjoyed the speakers and tours, and they were able to bring lots of information with them back to

Washington.

Deb Eidsness and Don McMoran conducted a site visit with a couple who raise Maine Anjou cattle, grow hay, and have a small meat processing operation. They both had recent injuries from cattle accidents and look forward to AT suggestions to make life easier for them. Deb has two more site visits scheduled for next week as well.

Emily Whittier, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator had the opportunity to partner with a farmer PPE (personal protective equipment) distribution activity in Clark County, WA, where she distributed AgrAbility information to each farmer picking up supplies. [More](#)

Alyssa Wade, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, and Emily Whittier went on an exciting site visit to a Native Plants Nursery owned and operated by the Umatilla Tribe. They observed their everyday activities and visited with the employees about recurring injuries that are happening on the operation. [More](#)

Emily Whittier and Deb Eidsness attended the annual Tilt Alliance Conference, in Port Townsend where they had a table of AgrAbility information and AT. The Washington farmers and the agricultural service providers at the conference were very enthusiastic about the program and the lending library of assistive technology.

International AgrAbility Network News

AgrAbility for Africa

The AgrAbility for Africa staff is currently engaged in HIV/AIDS and diabetes outreach awareness, and at the same time spreading knowledge on success stories of living and working productively with HIV and diabetes. This is to support mental health and spread hope to those affected in rural farming communities. [More](#)

Staff Changes and Recognition

Alaska

Leslie Shallcross, MS, RDN, LD, and professor of Extension - health, home, and family development, will be taking over as the new project director for the Alaska AgrAbility project.



DeShana York, co-PI and part of the Alaska AgrAbility team from the beginning of the project, will be transitioning off of the team to work on some other special projects she has been asked to lead. She sent a note on October 30th to the national AgrAbility listserv expressing her gratitude for the many relationships she has made and the inspiring work that she has been a part of in the "Last Frontier" regionally and nationally.

Maine

We are welcoming Toni Small as our new contract staff working directly with our fishing clients. Toni has been representing the fishing industry for the past two years on our advisory council (AC). Taking her place on the AC is Monique Coombs who is the wife of a lobsterman and has been working with staff on providing Yoga for Fishermen. She is also the community coordinator for the Maine Coast Fishing Association.

Sadly, we said goodbye to Gary Nadeau who has been on our AC since the inception of Maine AgrAbility.

Michigan



Michigan AgrAbility welcomes Samantha Wolfe as the new agricultural and occupational health educator with Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Wolfe brings a wealth of experience to her position, having previously overseen numerous education initiatives at a 2000-acre environmental facility in New Jersey, benefiting thousands annually. [More](#)

AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [Supporting Veterans is the Goal of At Ease Orchard in Hancock County](#) (National AgrAbility Project; Indiana AgrAbility Project)
- [Helping Farmers Keep Doing What They Love](#) (Michigan AgrAbility)
- [AgrAbility: Helping Overcome the Odds](#) (AgrAbility; Indiana AgrAbility Project, Michigan AgrAbility Project)
- [NC AgrAbility Overview](#) (North Carolina AgrAbility Project)
- [Specialty Spotlight Practitioner Interview-Industrial Rehabilitation](#) - Reprinted by permission of the AOTA RDSIS - (Maine AgrAbility)
- [How Colorado training programs aim to cut mental health care stigma among farmers and ranchers](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [Ergonomics and Fishing: Part 2](#) - Reprinted by permission of the October 2023 edition of the *Commercial Fisheries News* magazine - (Maine AgrAbility)
- [Crop Talk | AgrAbility | October 20, 2023](#) (Nebraska AgrAbility)
- [Madonna gives Nebraska All-Star football player new life outlook after spinal cord injury](#) (Nebraska AgrAbility)
- [Colorado AgrAbility Project offers winter workshop in Kremmling](#) (Colorado

- AgrAbility Project)
- [UT-TSU Extension Breaks Down Gender Barriers](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [This Project is Helping Colorado Farmers with Mental Wellness](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [Mental health researchers focus on farm youth stressors and resources](#) (AgrAbility; Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited)
- [Workshop on "Aging in Agriculture" at Senior Center](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [AgrAbility helps veterans seeking careers in ag](#) (National AgrAbility Project; Indiana AgrAbility Project)
- [USDA Offers Many Resources for Veterans](#) (AgrAbility)

OtherNews

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

- [PA Farm Link](#) is now offering a new ag educational tool called the PA Farm Link Academy. Learning modules found within the Academy are geared towards high schoolers, beginning farmers, experienced farmers, and ag professionals. The Academy currently offers learning modules on the following topics:
 - 4 P's of Finance
 - Understanding Ag Leasing
 - PA Farm Link Overview (English & Spanish Options Available)
 - Starting a Food Business
 - New Farmer Programs through USDA
 - Grants & the PA Preferred Program
 - Business Planning
 - ...and more in 2024!



Register today: <https://pafarmlink.org/academy/>

For inquiries about the Academy, please contact PA Farm Link at farmland@pafarmlink.org or call 717-705-2121.

- [New SARE Video: Ecological Weed Management at the Martens Farm](#)
- [USDA Announces 2024 Tribal Scholarships and Fellowships](#)
- [The goats fighting fires in Los Angeles](#)
- [The Hands Behind a Cup of Coffee](#)
- [Food Deserts in Rural America Expose Need for Broader Distribution Strategies](#)
- [America's Farmers Are Getting Older, and Young People Aren't Rushing to Join Them](#)
- [Generating clean electricity with chicken feathers](#)
- [Should You Be Milking Camels?: U.S. Dairy Camels](#)
- [U.S. Agricultural Land Sees Inflation-Crushing Gains as Investors Snap up American Farmland](#)

UpcomingEvents

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

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





November 2023

National AgrAbility Project

Chuck Baldwin helped staff the AgrAbility booth at the World Dairy Expo in Madison,

WI, October 3-4. He shared the responsibilities with Ami Bliefert of Easterseals Wisconsin on Tuesday and with Alan Kaltenberg, farmer, and Julianne Renner, AgrAbility of WI communications, on Wednesday. The booth had an excellent location in the main entrance hall next to the FBI booth and Triple Crown products, being just a couple tables down from some of the cheese outlets and a very short walk from the Ellsworth Creamery's ice cream stand at the end of the hall. Besides the location, another thing that attracted people to the booth was a sign-up sheet that people could fill in for a drawing to win a truck step provided by AgrAbility of WI.



Staff were able to speak with a number of FFA members on Tuesday and, in addition to the variety of farmers and vendors from the United States that stopped by, they also had some good interaction with foreign visitors from several countries in Europe and Barbados on both days that Chuck worked. Other AgrAbility personnel that stopped by included Dick Straub from WI and Abi Jensen-Quinlan, formerly with AgrAbility of WI.

Ed Sheldon and Chuck Baldwin joined their 2501 LIFE Project partner John Jamerson in attending the National Black Farmers Association conference in Natchez, MS, located on bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River, October 27-28. There were roughly 200 in attendance. Much of the conference focused on the 22007 Discrimination Financial Assistance Program, but the LIFE Project and AgrAbility were also given



time to present along with the opportunity to have a booth to share printed materials and some small assistive technology tools. Both Ed and Chuck thought that more people visited them to ask excellent questions and to express a lot of interest in what AgrAbility was doing than at any of the previous eight NBFA conferences AgrAbility had attended.



The schedule permitted Chuck and Ed a bit of time to take in some of the culture, food, and history of the Natchez area - learning of the struggles between the settlers, the Native Americans, the African Americans, and the North and South during the Civil War. The trip also afforded them the chance to travel part of the Natchez Trace on their way back to the Jackson, MS, airport. That trace, or trail (now a national parkway), was widely used by Native Americans and, eventually, by many barge pilots who would take unmotorized wooden barges down the Mississippi to New Orleans and then walk 35 days on the Natchez Trace to Nashville, TN, where they could find a better road system and transportation to take them home to various points across the United States. The barges themselves would then be dismantled and sold as lumber in New Orleans.

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin

November 2023

Alaska



Staff participated in many events this October including the Aging & Disability Summit, Physical Therapy Conference, Alaska Federation of Natives Convention, and the Alaska Federation for the Blind Convention. Along with [Empowering Education's](#) Annette Alfonsi, AKAgrAbility staff accepted a resolution to make October "Disability Employment Awareness Month" at the October 10th Anchorage Assembly meeting. The Office of

Disability Employment Policy chose "Advancing Access and Equity" as the theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month this October and staff were happy to help increase awareness about disability inclusive employment. Upcoming in November is Assistive Technology Awareness Month where staff is accepting another resolution to recognize the importance and impact of assistive technology at the November 21st Anchorage Assembly meeting.

Submitted by DeShana York

November 2023

California

It's been an eventful month for California AgrAbility. Staff members had the pleasure of participating in the 2nd Annual Yolo Farmworkers & Growers Festival in Woodland, California. The event drew hundreds of community members and celebrated the efforts of the agricultural community with food vendors, informational booths, and live music. It was an amazing evening, and the staff can't wait for next year's festival!



Submitted by Angelina Padilla

November 2023

Colorado



Dr. Rebecca Hill, Colorado AgrAbility co-director, and James Craig, Colorado AgrAbility veteran outreach & rural rehabilitation specialist, represented the National AgrAbility Project at The First Americans Land-Grant Consortium (FALCON) annual conference October 13th - 15th. "We spoke with over 80 individuals, most of whom did not know what AgrAbility was. In addition, there were a lot of National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) folks who came by and asked questions about the project. I think our presence there was noticed and appreciated by NIFA." Dr. Hill said.

Candiss Leathers, program manager, spoke eloquently and engagingly on "Ergonomic Safety & Health in Agriculture... A Few Issues and Solutions" to 50-plus participants from 8 states and Guam at the National AgrAbility Project's regional training workshop in Hilo, Hawaii, on October 17th. In addition, she attended a full day of touring different farm sites, including a coffee farm, winery, nursery, and a veteran organic farm site. "It was a beautiful location for a training and filled with great people and places to visit," Candiss reported.



Ellis Vidmar, program coordinator, spoke to Washington County Farm Bureau about the services Colorado AgrAbility offers. There were seven Farm Bureau members, three community members, and eight Facebook Live participants in the audience. Ellis reported that several of the members are excited to know about Colorado AgrAbility as a resource for aging and behavioral health.



Mountain Regional Behavioral Health Specialist Kirsten Wulfsberg and Mountain Region Health Specialist Jen Aengst shared: "Tips & Tricks for Navigating the Healthcare System." The pilot program kicked off in Teller County, on October 21st in partnership with the Teller County Health Department and the Teller County Sherriff's office. Over the next 14 weeks, more "tips & tricks" will be sent via email to those that signed up at the health fair.

Submitted by Ellis Vidmar

November 2023

Georgia



The Sunbelt Ag Expo was held in Moultrie, GA, on October 17-19. Staff were so thankful to have Florida and South Carolina AgrAbility join us this year to showcase AgrAbility for farmers across the Southeast! Staff also want to thank LifeLyfts, Action Trackchair, and Ghost Controls for bringing assistive technology for the farmers to experience.

AgrAbility is part of the Georgia Agricultural Wellness Alliance (GAWA). GAWA was established in response to the prevalence of mental health challenges experienced by farm families and communities. In October, partners met to work together on a comprehensive strategic plan, refining the organization's goals and outlining opportunities to support rural Georgia farmers.



Submitted by Georgia AgrAbility Project

November 2023

Indiana



On October 13, the Purdue University College of Agriculture sponsored a Global Food & Nutrition Security and Human Health Poster Networking Gathering. The purpose of the program was to spotlight the wide variety of ongoing research and engagement projects Purdue students and staff conduct to improve the access to safe, nutritious food across the globe. Indiana AgrAbility Extension Engagement Coordinator Ed

Sheldon joined 34 other participants from throughout the College of Agriculture, sharing a poster highlighting the Legacy Innovation Farming Economics (LIFE) Project. The LIFE Project supports the efforts of small scale and underserved farmers by connecting them with USDA resources and programs (including AgrAbility). The gathering provided the opportunity to not only discuss the LIFE Project, but also introduce numerous Purdue researchers, Extension specialists, students, and alumni to the Indiana and National AgrAbility Projects.

Submitted by Ed Sheldon

November 2023

Maine



Staff went to a Mechanized Logging Operations student learning site to provide an education on ergonomics and logging. Ten students and two staff participated in the education. Students learned about seating and positioning in their logging machines, using a lumbar cushion to keep their lumbar curve, and taking regular breaks to reduce compressive forces when sitting for extended periods of time.



Submitted by Brie Weisman

November 2023

Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility staff attended Michigan Farm Bureau's first career fair for FFA members. Staff spoke to members about a career in engineering, assistive technology, and communications. Over 200 FFA members attended the inaugural meeting. Students who visited the AgrAbility table were presented with random household/farm shop items and a problem to solve and asked to create a solution to the presented problem. Students enjoyed "engineering" an assistive technology tool from the items

Staff Changes and Recognition



Michigan AgrAbility welcomes Samantha Wolfe as the new agricultural and occupational health educator with Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Wolfe brings a wealth of experience to her position, having previously overseen numerous education initiatives at a 2000-acre environmental facility in New Jersey, benefiting thousands annually. Her recent role with the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) in Grand Traverse and Antrim Counties allowed her to directly assist farmers in mitigating environmental risks while safeguarding natural

resources. Samantha Wolfe's appointment marks an exciting addition to MSU Extension, reinforcing the commitment to serving Michigan's agricultural community and fostering a sustainable and safe environment.

Submitted by Hailey TenHarmsel

November 2023

Missouri

Karen Funkenbusch from MU Extension and Mary Bolling at Lincoln University Cooperative Extension Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (LUCE ISFOP) provided a half-day AgrAbility training workshop, October 17, at the George Washington Carver Farm Lincoln University to new small farm specialists and farm outreach workers. LUCE ISFOP staff assist Missouri AgrAbility in East Central, West Central, and the Southwest Regions of Missouri. The ISFOP staff provide MO AgrAbility assistance to all farmers, both urban and rural, and to small-scale operators including backyard gardeners.

Submitted by: Emily Doosing, Elizabeth Picking, Willard Downs, and Karen Funkenbusch

Missouri AgrAbility was recognized as the Rural Missouri Track Sponsor for the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) 19th Annual Statewide Conference. Marketing activities included an exhibit that featured tools of the Missouri AgrAbility Jessup Wagon in partnership with Lincoln University, and Mary Bolling discussing specifics about the tools with more than 250 attendees of the conference.

BIA-MO Conference sessions featured Missouri AgrAbility staff and partners. Karen Funkenbusch shared information about Missouri AgrAbility on the "Navigating State and Community Resources for Long-Term Support" panel discussion as well as served on the planning committee. Dr. Amy Patillo with University of Missouri Extension - Springfield presented "Supporting a Path to Successful Self-Employment" at the BIA-MO Conference.

Submitted by: Maureen Cunningham

November 2023

Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility staff attended the "One USDA: Beginning Farmer and Rancher" webinar training. Training topics included: "Beginning Farmer and Rancher program, Employment programs for Veterans," "NRCS, Extension Services," "Military Spouse Employment Supports," "Urban Agriculture," "The Farmer Veteran Coalition," and "Rural Development Programs." This information will be helpful to share with Nebraska AgrAbility clients in need of resource facilitation and wrap-around supports, especially those connected to the military.



Nebraska AgrAbility staff member Angie Howell attended the regional AgrAbility training in Hilo, Hawaii. The two-day learning event offered valuable agricultural experience and shared expertise from a variety of AgrAbility projects about farm stress, mentoring, and business planning and provided assistive technology examples. Angie learned more about coffee, tea, and wine production, as well as the floral industry. There was also a tour that highlighted the many ways agricultural programs can be designed for and include veterans with disabilities, such as the Victory Gardens and Farm to Car projects operating in Hawaii.



For the month of October, Nebraska AgrAbility participated in National AgrAbility's Virtual State Fair. The Nebraska program was showcased on October 13. During the Virtual State Fair, it was interesting to see what each state is doing. The Nebraska AgrAbility team took away some great ideas from other states during the month. The team hopes to implement some of those ideas in the future. Thank you to National AgrAbility for hosting and for each state that participated.

Submitted by Soni Cochran

November 2023

New Mexico



NMAP's non-profit partner, Mandy's Farm, held a Harvest Fest where apprentices ran a booth selling purple sweet potatoes, onions, garlic, rainbow popping corn, and daikon radishes that they grew, as well as apple butter and peach preserves that they prepared. It was very successful, and apprentices had the opportunity to see their hard work come full circle, practice customer service and sales, and speak with lots of people about the program and the NM AgrAbility Project.

Submitted by New Mexico AgrAbility Project

November 2023

North Carolina

The 2023 Extension Early Career Conference, "Meet your Specialists", was held October 3, 2023. It was an event hosting county-based NC Cooperative Extension staff (agents and PAs). The session was designed for county staff to meet specialists, campus-based program staff, and area specialized agents. Betty Rodriguez attended the event and shared pertinent information about the NC AgrAbility program, reaching out to 13 attendees through individual sessions.

On October 13, 2023, Betty Rodriguez participated at the Farmer Veteran Coalition of North Carolina Western Educational Conference sponsored by the Frontline to Farm program and hosted at the Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute in Boone, NC. Betty assisted with planning of the conference and as an exhibitor, having the chance to share information and resources with the 23 participants.



The Grassroots Leadership Conference, Charlotte, NC, October 17, 2023, was a conference that brings together diverse stakeholders from across North Carolina to learn about new community development initiatives and identify strategies to improve the quality of life in communities, particularly among underserved and limited-resource populations. This event aims to give participants the inspiration and knowledge to work with neighbors and other community leaders to foster hope, action, and positive change.

Betty and Dr. Ibrahim manned a NC A&T Cooperative Extension and NC AgrAbility booth and had the opportunity to network and share information with the 260-plus attendees.



On October 25, 2023, NC Cooperative Extension at NCA&T and NCSU hosted the Center for Environmental Farming Systems Field Research, Education, and Outreach Facility at Cherry Research Farm tour, where researchers presented their current work and projects. It is a 2,200-acre research farm, the largest organic farm in North Carolina. Betty presented herself and the NC AgrAbility program to the 25 participants.



The Farmer Veteran Coalition of North Carolina Eastern Educational Conference was hosted at the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension office in Fayetteville, NC, on October 27, 2023. Betty Rodriguez chaired the planning committee for the event. NC AgrAbility participated as exhibitor and speaker. Dr. Cook Marshall shared information about the program with 39 attendees.



Submitted by Beatriz (Betty) Rodriguez

November 2023

Ohio

Over the years, the Ohio AgrAbility Program has sponsored collegiate capstone projects. Some projects are specific for undergraduate engineering students, and some are for occupational therapy or public health students. In all cases, this opportunity broadens the perspectives on disability awareness, both for the student teams and for the AgrAbility staff.



Capstone projects are an opportunity to work together and bridge the gaps between the classroom and the industry or professional communities. Students apply the knowledge and skills gained throughout their academic coursework to solve real-world, open-ended disability-services problems. During their project, students work with AgrAbility staff, farmers, and other industry members to gain experience about a limiting condition or barrier that exists in agriculture. Many of their projects can lead to new technologies or other innovations outside of the university. Typical outcomes include written reports, design prototypes, and professional communication to sponsors and the community. It's hard to determine who is the true benefactor of efforts: the students, the AgrAbility program, or the farmers.

Submitted by Dee Jepsen

November 2023

Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA and PSU Ag Safety partnered to provide information to Amish families with school-age children through a partnership with a rural fire company. The fire company has several volunteers who are Amish and who were providing safety and health education to all the Amish schools in Centre County, Penn's Valley, PA. Materials provided included AgrAbility information about low-tech modifications, safety vests for kids, coloring books, and safety handouts about extra riders and silo gases, etc.

AgrAbility staff gave a presentation about AgrAbility PA to OTA students at Penn State Mont Alto Campus in Mont Alto, PA on October 23 & 24. Topics of discussion included farm culture, types of agriculture in PA, different types of assistive technology which can be utilized on the farm, and more. It was wonderful to see the interest in future OTA professionals and provide a useful resource for them if they meet a farmer in their future practice as an OTA.

Abbie Spackman, project coordinator with PSU, presented an interactive workshop to the Centre County, PA Agricultural Forum. This is an agricultural group that meets monthly for education, community, and support. Many of the members are older farmers. Abbie provided hands-on demonstrations of low-tech assistive technology such as garden aids, adaptive gloves, shop tools, and more. Each attendee was given a packet of information on AgrAbility, assistive technology, and resources for aging farmers. Attendees were also asked to participate in a lifting and carrying activity that demonstrated adapting daily tasks by changing habits or with items already on the farm. Attendees were very engaged and very interested in follow-up assessments to address their specific abilities.

Submitted by Joyce Brkopac

November 2023

South Carolina

The team has attended events to spread the word about AgrAbility and its offerings and will continue this endeavor through the rest of the year. The staff assistant, Shelly, has combined AgrAbility and agriculture safety to offer safety tips to individuals so they won't be injured while they attend to their agricultural tasks. The team is also investigating other means of advertisement for AgrAbility in South Carolina to assist those in need of the project.

Submitted by AgrAbility in South Carolina

November 2023

Tennessee



TN Association of Rescue Squads received the 1st annual Friend of TN AgrAbility award at the 2023 TARS Convention for their hard work and dedication to the TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness trainings for ag producers and rescue personnel throughout Tennessee. The partnership and trainings began in 2020 and have totaled: 60 counties/500+ participants/\$130,000+ in local sponsorships/130 Turtle Rescue Tubes/21 Great Wall rescue tubes in Tennessee.

TN AgrAbility partnered with Lawrence, Wayne, Perry, UT TSU Extension, and UT MANAGE to host the 2nd annual Cultivate Women in Ag conference. There were 42 women producers in attendance and topics included: "Then, Now & When: Women's Leadership in Agriculture" (Keynote speaker Rhedona Rose, TN Farm Bureau); "Managing Stress on the Farm"; "Connecting with Customers"; "Cultivating Flavorful Landscapes"; "Don't go Bacon My Heart" (Pork Production); "Fall/Winter Cut Flower Tasks"; and "Deadstock Disposal and Sprayer Calibration". More can be read about the conference by [clicking here](#).



Tennessee AgrAbility in collaboration with Tennessee Department of Human Services (TN DHS) celebrated National Disability Employment Month by hosting the Resource Ability Assistive Technology Access Fair in Lebanon, TN. The annual event showcased the importance of assistive technology in the lives of people with different abilities. The Fair helps promote partnerships between TN AgrAbility, TN Technology Access Program, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN, who partner to assist farmers to continue to make a living doing what they love. Thank you, TN DHS, for another educational 2023 Resource Ability AT Access Fair and the best networking with VR counselors! Also, thanks to the informative guest speaker Sam Seavey, AT expert. See his ["The Blind Life" videos here](#).

On October 10th, TNAP promoted World Mental Health Day. A great local reminder was written on round cotton modules on Hwy 22 North in Huntingdon, TN. Thank you to Renfro Farms! 988 is a number anyone can call if they need to talk to someone. Everyone has days when they need to hear these reminders. It could be the very thing that makes a positive impact in someone's life.



Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

November 2023

Washington

Emily Whittier, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator had the opportunity to partner with a farmer PPE (personal protective equipment) distribution activity in Clark County, WA, where she distributed AgrAbility information to each farmer picking up supplies. Later that week, she attended and tabled at a farmer appreciation breakfast on National Farmer Day, October 12. The breakfast was hosted by the Goldendale Grange.

Alyssa Wade, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, and Emily Whittier went on an exciting site visit to a Native Plants Nursery owned and operated by the Umatilla Tribe. They observed their everyday activities and visited with the employees about recurring injuries that are happening on the operation. They are devising a plan on how to prevent secondary injuries with more thought-out movements and AT options that could be helpful.

Submitted by Alyssa Wade

November 2023

AgrAbility for Africa

The AgrAbility for Africa staff is currently engaged in HIV/AIDS and diabetes outreach awareness, and at the same time spreading knowledge on success stories of living and working productively with HIV and diabetes. This is to support mental health and spread hope to those affected in rural farming communities.

Topowa, a youth group with a mission to mitigate HIV/AIDS stigma, has invited AgrAbility for Africa staff and Uganda Junior Rangers to team up on community health campaigns to encourage positive living while fighting AIDS stigma. Starting December 2023, the AgrAbility staff will be joining these outreach events - starting with the coastal fishing market vendors to spread the HIV prevention message and encouraging testing for fishing community members for a potentially disabling health condition, if ignored.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

November 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/01t4x000002ciNKAAAY>

Name QPR for Farmers and Farm Families
Dates November 15, 2023, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. EST
City, State Online Training
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.agrisafe.org/event/qpr-for-farmers-and-farm-families-22/>

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/>

link

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/>