

# AgrAbility e·Note

**December 2023**

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

### NTW Updates

- REGISTRATION IS OPEN! Visit [www.agrability.org/ntw](http://www.agrability.org/ntw) by 2/23/24 for earlybird rates. The schedule should be posted on the website soon.
- The hotel rate has increased to \$199+taxes/fees. (The contact was for the prevailing per diem rate, and per diem rates for 2024 have increased.) Book your room by clicking [Grand Hyatt Atlanta/Buckhead](#).
- Poster proposals can still be submitted through January with the form on the [NTW website](#).
- Each SRAP should provide a travel stipend for a farmer before sending any requests for NAP stipends from that state. Reach out to local organizations to see if they can help stipend a farmer to come. The farmer stipend application form has been sent out to the SRAPs and is available on the [NTW website](#).
- Exhibitor applications are also available on the [NTW website](#), or have potential exhibitors contact [Tess McKeel](#).
- Start thinking about auction items and raffle baskets; both are always enjoyed, and they help raise money for farmer stipends.
- If you would like to join the committee, send an email to Tess at [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org).



In cooperation with and supported by the Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP), NAP is in the very beginning phases of planning a regional workshop in Guam for October 2024. More information will be coming out after the NTW.



The [Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment \(VRTAC-QE\)](#) recently posted a web module titled "Serving Agricultural Workers with Disabilities 101" featuring Paul Jones of NAP, Jeff Kratochwill from AgrAbility of Wisconsin, and Karri Wilson, formerly of Missouri DVR. VR counselors can receive CRC credits for completing the module. [Click here to access it](#) (free account required).

Newly archived virtual events:

- [Zoom discussion: Internet of Things for Precision Agriculture \(IoT4Ag\) Center](#)

## Toolbox Spotlight

This [Manual Gas Cylinder Handler](#) (called the Tank Caddy) is designed to make lifting/loading tall, heavy tanks both easier and safer. It consists of two rigid yet pliable handles that are slipped over the cylinder. The handles can be positioned in different configurations on a tank to accomplish different lifting/handling tasks.



## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### Alaska

Three Alaska staff members attended the Western regional workshop "Malama the Farmer, Caring for Yourself and Each Other" in October. It was a great introduction to the connections between WRASAP and AgrAbility and provided many ideas for potential Extension programming to complement AgrAbility.

One person from Alaska attended a WRASAP training in Bozeman, MT, the first week of December.

Outreach/awareness is the main focus for AgrAbility on the Last Frontier, and new and old staff members staffed a booth and gave a 30-minute presentation at the Alaska Food Festival and Conference. The conference brought together the Alaska Farm Bureau, the Alaska Food Policy Council, and Western Region Sustainable Agriculture and Education... [More](#)

### California



It's a been a busy fall season for California AgrAbility. This month staff participated in a farmworker retreat, "Cultivemos Salud," hosted by WRASAP, De Colores non-profit, and Yolo County. [More](#)

### Florida

Florida AgrAbility hosted a webinar focused on accessible beekeeping in partnership with the Florida State Beekeepers Association (FSBA). The content of the webinar focused largely on accessible beekeeping tools and opportunities, along with a portion on the purpose of Florida AgrAbility. [More](#)

### Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility attended and supported the Southern Region FRSAN agrileadHER Conference on November 1st and 2nd. This conference brings together women in agriculture from across the nation to fellowship, learn, and be inspired. [More](#)



"Mental Health First Aid for Military, Veterans, and their Families" was conducted at Troy University Phenix City Campus on November 8 in partnership with New Horizons Behavioral Health in Columbus, GA. Thirteen members from various organizations across the community

attended in order to show continued support to service members and their families.

Georgia was represented at the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) Stakeholders Conference, held in conjunction with National Direct Agricultural Marketing Summit in Arlington, VA, on November 12-14. GA veteran farmer Mike Reynolds served as the keynote speaker for this event and highlighted the impact veterans have on the farming industry.

Staff participated in the Georgia Small Farm Conference as a speaker and an exhibitor on November 16th -17th. Staff brought their Mobile Learning Lab to showcase assistive technology to the attendees. [More](#)



Murray County Cattlemen's Association invited Dr. Glen Rains to speak to their group about the importance of farm safety and how AgrAbility can help if someone gets injured.

Georgia AgrAbility staff member Kyle Haney attended the National AgrAbility Advisory Team meeting in Indianapolis on November 29-30. He is honored to be representing the SRAPs this year on the advisory team.

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## Illinois

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

Staff have begun a "Tuesday Toolbox" campaign on their Facebook page that highlights a different piece of assistive technology from National AgrAbility's The Toolbox each week. Follow Illinois AgrAbility on Facebook [@IllinoisAgrAbility](#).

Illinois AgrAbility and Illinois Extension-Family Life have partnered to host a virtual chronic disease self-management class that will begin in January. This class is open to anyone in Illinois who suffers from a chronic disease, takes care of someone who has a chronic disease, or wants to learn about managing a chronic disease.

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## Indiana



The fall 2023 Indiana AgrAbility [News Note newsletter is available by clicking here](#). Topics include new resources for veterans, working with the Amish, and the story of a multifaceted Indiana client.

On November 7, the Indiana AgrAbility Advisory Team met for their semi-annual meeting at Purdue University to review program activities and provide valuable input and guidance for the Indiana AgrAbility team moving forward. The Advisory Team, in addition to staff, consists of 33 representatives from agriculture, government, the disability community, and education, along with AgrAbility clients from throughout the state. [More](#)

Paul Jones presented a lecture on disability in agriculture on November 28 to Purdue's AGR 201: Communication Across Cultures.

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## Maine

Brie Weisman completed the RESNA AT Fundamentals Course along with five other AgrAbility staff members.

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## Michigan

On November 16, Brett Haynes from EksoBionics <https://eksobionics.com/eksoworks/> joined Ned Stoller in the field at the Clarksville Experiment Station and the Stuart Dairy Farm to test out shoulder supports for various farm tasks.



Ned Stoller attended the National AgrAbility Advisory Team meeting in Indianapolis November 29-30.

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## Missouri

MU Extension (MUE) and Lincoln University Cooperative Extension (LUCE) Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP) staff collaborated with a production company to produce a video on "How drones increase accessibility and save time and money for farmers with disabilities." Missouri AgrAbility will disseminate the video January 2024.

Staff wrote an article on diabetes and distributed it to newspapers, magazines, and radio stations throughout Missouri and neighboring states. A second article was written about one of Missouri's AgrAbility Heroes to Hives beekeepers describing his operation and abilities to scale up to become more profitable. [More](#)

Mackenzie Beving, Madison Fowler, Allison Starke, and Will DiStefano, all doctoral occupational therapy students with the MU Department of Occupational Therapy, developed "A Resource Guide for Healthcare Practitioners Working with the Agricultural Community" from the University of Missouri College of Health Sciences. [More](#)

Daniela Rodriguez, also a doctoral occupational therapy student, who graduates December 2023 with the rehabilitation and participation science program in occupational therapy from Washington University in St. Louis, developed several diverse AgrAbility resources for client customers and their families. [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. [More](#)

NIFA director Dr. Manjit K. Misra toured Lincoln University's Carver Farm on October 4th. Dr. Clement Akotsen-Mensah presented information on the Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program, and Mary Bolling presented on AgrAbility and the Jessup Wagon 2.0.

LU ISFOP staff member Mary Bolling presented information on the 988 Suicide and Crisis Line to nine female farmers at a SARE farmer/rancher grant writing workshop on October 17th.

LU's Mary Bolling joined MU's Karen Funkenbusch in assisting at the annual Missouri Brain Injury Association conference held in Chesterfield, MO, October 19-21st, and shared AgrAbility information with both professionals and survivors of brain injury.



Karen Funkenbusch and Mary Bolling hosted a training about the Missouri AgrAbility program for new ISFOP staff members on October 23rd at George Washington Carver Farm - Lincoln University.

October 23rd, the LUCE ISFOP team presented to 252 African American farmers from four different regions in Missouri at a train-the-trainer event. Dr. Clement Akotsen-Mensah presented on integrated pest management... [More](#)



LUCE ISFOP outreach worker Margo Jakobi shared information about Missouri AgrAbility with local farmers and university staffers at Finca Fest, an event held at the Finca research farm celebrating native edible plants.

Missouri AgrAbility was featured at the Missouri Rural Health Association (MRHA) Conference with an exhibit in partnership with the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO). [More](#)

An additional 500 Missouri teachers learned about Missouri AgrAbility at the BIA-MO/Missouri AgrAbility exhibit during the Missouri State Teachers Association (MSTA) Annual Conference held in Columbia on November 16 and 17. [More](#)

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## Nebraska



Emily Jacobson, Nebraska AgrAbility program manager, attended the 15th Annual Ag-Ceptional Women's Conference held in northeast Nebraska during November. Over 300 farm and ranch women were in attendance.

[More](#)

Nebraska AgrAbility team members Emily Jacobson, Heather Leuenberger, and John Davis have been visiting with clients to ensure their equipment is in good working order. The clients are grateful for their equipment and the opportunity to overcome their limitations.



Nebraska AgrAbility has been finalizing handouts focused on assistive technology tools and equipment. These resources will be shared at upcoming events and educational programs. Thanks to Heather and Emily who have worked diligently to complete this project.

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## New Mexico

New Mexico AgrAbility Project (NMAP) welcomed a reorganized advisory council and had a very productive meeting discussing ongoing and planned activities and receiving a host of excellent suggestions and ideas from a very engaged council.

NMAP presented virtually to the VA regional office staff including their rehab counselors across New Mexico to inform them about opportunities for current and transitioning veterans through AgrAbility, and NMAP is looking forward to a productive collaboration.

NMAP presented information on gardening ergonomics to the New Mexico Conference on Aging on November 13 in hopes of promoting healthy activity and farm assessments in the state.



Three University of New Mexico (UNM) OT students participated in a fieldwork experience at Mandy's Farm (NMAP's non-profit partner) to begin cataloguing the dexterity, balance, strength, and visual perception skills of the farm apprentices served there.

Seven teams of UNM OT students completed ergonomic research posters to improve rehab professional knowledge of the needs of food producers. Subjects included beekeeping, pecan/pistachio farming, red/green chili farming, ranching, dairy production, poultry farming, and irrigation management.

The NMAP partners on UNM Faculty, Mary Thelander Hill and Trish Siegel, have been accepted for a poster presentation at the 2024 AgrAbility NTW in Atlanta. They are so excited!

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## North Carolina

November 3, Betty Rodriguez trained NC AgrAbility colleagues on an "Overview of the

November 11 - 13, NC AgrAbility participated as an exhibitor at the 38th Sustainable Agriculture Conference hosted by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association in Durham, NC. The conference is the largest and longest sustainable agriculture meeting in the Southeast... [More](#)



November 17, NC AgrAbility participated as an exhibitor at the 2023 Northeast NC Niche Ag Conference in Currituck County, NC. This conference, designed for adults in the farming community, consists of six hands-on short courses on topics important to farmers in eastern North Carolina.

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## Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility is grateful for the support of student groups, farmers, and stakeholders. Their contributions to the Ohio AgrAbility Development Fund allow staff to support farmer travel to the NTW and to host peer-to-peer meetings throughout the state. [More](#)

OAP is also so grateful for their amazing team - they could not do the great work they do without the 1000% effort put in by every member of the team and the enthusiasm and expertise everyone brings to their jobs.



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## Pennsylvania

On November 6 & 7, Marci Walborn conducted training about AgrAbility for OT students at Scranton College, Scranton, PA. On November 8, Marci conducted a training for OT students at Central Penn College in Summerdale, PA.



On November 9, Abbie Spackman provided hands-on assistive technology demonstrations for occupational therapy students during the Penn State DuBois AT Awareness Day. Information was also provided to the students about the unique challenges farmers face and the wide range of assistive technology options. [More](#)

Linda Fetzer and Abbie Spackman spent a day delivering educational bags to families and businesses of the Plain Community in the Big Valley area. This is part of AgrAbility's on-going outreach to the Plain Community. [More](#)

AgrAbility PA staff participated in a work group, comprised of Penn State Extension staff, focused on outreach to the Plain Community. The goal of the group is to work together across the state and across Extension programs to increase outreach to the Plain Community, especially in regard to safety, injury prevention, and low-tech assistive technology options.

Abbie Spackman represented AgrAbility during the PA Farm Link Board meeting. During the meeting, Abbie provided information to the board members about AgrAbility programing, outreach to the Plain Community, and ways to collaborate with PA Farm Link. [More](#)

Suzanna Windon conducted an online session, "Managing Stress on the Farm," at the professional development session of the Association for International Agricultural Extension Education on November 15.

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## Tennessee

A Veterans Day salute and thank you to all who serve and have served

our country! Thank you, Mr. Stapleton, a proud U.S. Army Vietnam veteran and farmer. He faces mobility challenges after several knee and back surgeries and degenerative nerve damage but still takes initiative and farms each day. And thanks to Celina Menard for the great LifeLyft photo. [More](#)



Thank you to GA Farm Again for another educational and inspiring AgrileadHER conference. TN AgrAbility participated and appreciated all the work GA and partners did to recruit wonderful speakers. [More](#)



Two hundred fifty Fayette County, TN, 5th graders participated in the annual Fayette County Farm Fest sponsored by Fayette County UT TSU Extension and Farm Bureau. TN AgrAbility presented information on helmet safety and let the students have hands on experience... [More](#)

TN AgrAbility partners with the Southern Ag Exchange Network ( SAgE TN), the Southern region effort of the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN), which addresses heightened stress and elevated suicide rates in rural farming communities. The inaugural issue of Sowing SAgE, the monthly newsletter, introduces SAgE and our director, Tesha Humphrey... [More](#)

Hours of training and thousands of dollars for equipment paid off recently when Lawrence County rescue personnel saved the life of a farmer trapped in a grain bin.



Lawrence County first responders put their training to the test when a farmer became trapped in a grain bin on November 29 in the town of Ethridge. (Above taken from Elizabeth Davis for UTIA news release) [More](#)

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## Texas



Texas AgrAbility collaborated with West Texas A&M University engineering students to design and build a lift for an AgrAbility client. The client is an amputee with a cattle and hay operation. [More](#)

Erin Kimbrough and Makenzie Thomas attended the Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program directors' meeting. Staff networked with other projects in Texas serving beginning farmer ranchers to discuss increasing services to beginning farmers and ranchers with disabilities.

Texas AgrAbility will be collaborating with BattleGround to Breaking Ground on a mini grant to develop and deliver tractor and equipment safety education to beginning farmers. This training will serve as safety training for the new equipment-share program.

Texas AgrAbility published a December newsletter including resources and assistive technology highlights. [Check it out by clicking the link here.](#) .

The Texas AgrAbility peer group met for its quarterly meeting. The featured speaker was an AgrAbility client who has started a produce and nursery operation in the past five years. [More](#)

Makenzie Thomas met with an Extension agent in Polk County to develop programming for older farmers and ranchers with disabilities.

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## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah staff was excited to set up a booth and present at the Utah Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention in St. George, UT, on November 7-8. Utah has 38 conservation districts, and their goal is to protect soil, water, and other natural

resources within the state. The event was attended by over 120 people.

On November 27, AgrAbility staff presented to members of the Cache Interagency Council in Logan, UT.

AgrAbility of Utah staff set up a booth at the Utah Cattleman's Association Winter Convention in Salt Lake City on November 30. Cattle are Utah's number one agriculture commodity, accounting for over one-third of the state's total agriculture production.

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## Virginia

AgrAbility Virginia was highlighted in a special lecture by Dr. Kim Niewolny at Virginia Tech University. Her presentation discussed accessibility, safety, and wellness with students in the VT College of Agriculture and Life Sciences as part of their "Diversity and Identity in Agriculture" course.

Additionally, the team got to meet with participants at the 2023 Virginia Farm Bureau Annual Convention in Virginia Beach.



Staff members are actively working with 34 client cases, including a horse farmer with Parkinson's with whom staff is looking into securing tractor modifications in collaboration with DARS.

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## Washington

The Washington AgrAbility team has been running all over the state attending conferences and sharing AgrAbility with Washington residents in November!

Deb Eidsness and Alyssa Wade, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinators, attended and tabled at the Washington Cattlemen's Convention in Wenatchee, WA. The conference was a huge hit with the many AT items displayed. The conference resulted in many new potential AgrAbility clients.



Debbie Fredricks, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Washington Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Pasco, WA. Debbie had many great conversations about AgrAbility and met an early AgrAbility client who had a grain auger accident resulting in him having L3/L4 paraplegia, and AgrAbility was a huge help in his recovery process.

This month Emily Whittier, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, continued a partnership with local personal protective equipment distributions for farmers and had the opportunity to give materials and an informal presentation about AgrAbility to a crew of farmers in southern Washington. [More](#)

Alyssa Wade and Emily Whittier presented at WSU's "Cultivating Success Whole Farm Planning" class. The presentation discussed the AgrAbility program and how the new or seasoned farmers in attendance could use the program. [More](#)

Alyssa Wade attended the Tri-State Grain Growers Conference in Coeur D'Alene, ID. Alyssa tabled for AgrAbility and farm stress. Many of the farmers there picked up information about farm stress resources as well as AgrAbility.

Don McMoran, Washington AgrAbility program director, presented on AgrAbility at the Washington State Association of Counties meeting.

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## Maine

We are pleased for our level II occupational therapy student, Morgan Beckwith, to continue her doctorate-level journey after her fourteen-week field work placement with us. Morgan is an excellent representative of Johnson and Wales University, and she specifically requested a placement with Maine AgrAbility. She grew up working with horses and continues to care for animals at shelters. Morgan's biggest learning experience was learning about aquaculture. She started a "tool box" of assistive technology for fishermen, "The Tackle Box," that will be located on the Maine AgrAbility website.

We are excited to welcome Bella Russo to the Maine AgrAbility team as our new coordinator starting in January. She has been working with the Maine Cooperative Extension program as its community education assistant. She brings new connections and energy to our program.

## Missouri

Lincoln University Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program welcomed two new staff members in October. Maurice Theriot and Penny Wilson will both work with small farmers in the southeast region of Missouri.

LU ISFOP staff member and Missouri AgrAbility Co-PI Mary Bolling got married on September 5th and is changing her name to Mary Keeter.

Heather O'Mara joined the Brain Injury Association of Missouri staff as office administrator on November 6. Heather will assist with Missouri AgrAbility activities "Brain Injury Fact of the Day," speakers bureau, technical assistance, and more.

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### AgrAbility in the News

**Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .**

- [AgrAbility Provides Help and Hope to Hoosier Farmers with Disabilities](#) (Indiana AgrAbility Project, National AgrAbility Project)
- [Heroes at Home](#) - Starting on page 40 (Indiana AgrAbility Project)
- [Workshop on Aging in Agriculture slated for Nov. 30](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [Mālama the Farmer, Caring for Yourself and Each Other](#) (AgrAbility)
- [Nebraska AgrAbility, keeping the agricultural dream alive for those with disabilities](#) (Nebraska AgrAbility)
- [AgrAbility Helps Folks of All Abilities to Farm](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
- [Services for farmers with disabilities continue to improve](#) (AgrAbility of Wisconsin)

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### Other News

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

- [Talking Total Farmer Health Podcast](#): Latino and Hispanic Farmworkers Health. Episode 2, 1st December 2023.
- AgriSafe's National Farm Safety and Health Week webinar recordings are now available for FREE! All of the NFSHW webinar recordings are now available for free on-demand in the [AgriSafe Learning Lab](#).
- <https://www.nofence.no/en-us/> Contains livestock digitally without fences and easily incorporates rotation on pasture. Cuts down time and money. A possibility for sheep, but it does not stop predators from coming in. (Submitted by Maine AgrAbility)

- [USDA announces new resources to empower Native American young people at White House Tribal Youth Summit](#)
- [WATCH: HOW NCAT'S ARMED TO FARM HELPED ONE VETERAN FIND HER PURPOSE](#)
- [COTTON AND WOOL PRODUCERS INVITED TO APPLY TO CLIMATE BENEFICIAL FIBER PROGRAM](#)
- [Hired Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines Published](#)
- [Guided by Goats helps provide work training, social support to those with special needs](#)
- [USDA Invests Nearly \\$28M for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers](#)
- [Use of AI Robots on the Rise in Japanese Agriculture](#)
- [USDA Waives Some Requirements For Livestock Programs](#)
- [Where the Wild Rice Grows: USDA Helping Red Lake Nation Reach Global Markets](#)

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## UpcomingEvents

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

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

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December 2023

## Alaska

Outreach/awareness is the main focus for AgrAbility on the Last Frontier, and new and old staff members staffed a booth and gave a 30-minute presentation at the Alaska Food Festival and Conference. The conference brought together the Alaska Farm Bureau, the Alaska Food Policy Council, and Western Region Sustainable Agriculture and Education - all things agriculture and sustainable food systems. Awareness was definitely raised, and several potential AgrAbility clients spent a lot of time with staff at the booth. New avenues for building "FishAbility" are being explored and planned.

Submitted by Leslie Shallcross

December 2023

## California

It's a been a busy fall season for California AgrAbility. This month staff participated in a farmworker retreat, "Cultivemos Salud," hosted by WRASAP, De Colores non-profit, and Yolo County. About 40 farmworkers from Woodland, California, and the surrounding areas, led a discussion on mental health moderated by bicultural therapist Lupe Nambo, LMFT. Together they enjoyed lunch and entertainment followed by a group stretch. Throughout the retreat participants shared their experiences with mental health and working in agriculture before closing out the day with a session on cultivating community. Many participants expressed their appreciation for the retreat and are looking forward to the next one.



Submitted by Angelina Padilla

December 2023

## Florida

Florida AgrAbility hosted a webinar focused on accessible beekeeping in partnership with the Florida State Beekeepers Association (FSBA). The content of the webinar focused largely on accessible beekeeping tools and opportunities, along with a portion on the purpose of Florida AgrAbility. The webinar was well-attended, and attendees actively engaged with Lindsey Head, the Florida AgrAbility case coordinator and Danny Bost, the FSBA District 1 representative. The full webinar can be viewed at <https://abe.ufl.edu/agrability/resources/webinars/>.

Submitted by Shelby Thomas

December 2023

## Georgia



the conference attendees. They especially enjoyed the AgrAbility arthritis publications.

Georgia AgrAbility attended and supported the Southern Region FRSAN agrileadHER Conference on November 1st and 2nd. This conference brings together women in agriculture from across the nation to fellowship, learn, and be inspired. AgrAbility had a virtual booth at the conference and had significant interaction with the attendees. They especially enjoyed the AgrAbility arthritis



about AgrAbility.

Staff participated in the Georgia Small Farm Conference as a speaker and an exhibitor on November 16th -17th. Staff brought their Mobile Learning Lab to showcase assistive technology to the attendees. Dr. Glen Rains hosted breakout sessions on farm safety and told participants



Submitted by Whitney Paige Ostrander

December 2023

## Indiana

On November 7, the Indiana AgrAbility Advisory Team met for their semi-annual meeting at Purdue University to review program activities and provide valuable input and guidance for the Indiana AgrAbility team moving forward. The Advisory Team, in addition to staff, consists of 33 representatives from agriculture, government, the disability community, and education, along with AgrAbility clients from throughout the state. The November meeting featured two special presentations. Watch Us Farm near Zionsville, Indiana, provides inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Program founder Janice Agarwal discussed the farm's mission, history, and future plans to serve those impacted by disability. AgrAbility Advisory Team member Jennifer Logue, Purdue Extension 4-H and agriculture educator in Union County, Indiana, proposed options for using 4-H SPARK clubs to serve youth with disabilities, as well as promote disability awareness. SPARK clubs are Extension-sponsored youth programs that focus on a specific or unique topic, and operate alongside traditional 4-H club work.

Submitted by Ed Sheldon

December 2023

## Missouri

Staff wrote an article on diabetes and distributed it to newspapers, magazines, and radio stations throughout Missouri and neighboring states. A second article was written about one of Missouri's AgrAbility Heroes to Hives beekeepers describing his operation and abilities to scale up to become more profitable. This article was widely circulated in the popular press and viewed on the MU Extension, Missouri AgrAbility, and Heroes to Hives Facebook and webpages.

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Mackenzie Beving, Madison Fowler, Allison Starke, and Will DiStefano, all doctoral occupational therapy students with the MU Department of Occupational Therapy, developed "A Resource Guide for Healthcare Practitioners Working with the Agricultural Community" from the University of Missouri College of Health Sciences. Lea Ann Lowry was the capstone occupational therapy clinical professor while Karen Funkenbusch served as their AgrAbility mentor. The publication will be disseminated January 2024.

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Daniela Rodriguez, also a doctoral occupational therapy student, who graduates December 2023 with the rehabilitation and participation science program in occupational therapy from Washington University in St. Louis, developed several diverse AgrAbility resources for client customers and their families. Karen Funkenbusch served as her AgrAbility mentor. Publications will be shared January 2024.

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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. If you are not already, make sure to like and follow Missouri AgrAbility, @MOAgrAbility, on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

Submitted by Linda Geist and Karen Funkenbusch

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October 23rd, the LUCE ISFOP team presented to 252 African American farmers from four different regions in Missouri at a train-the-trainer event. Dr. Clement Akotsen-Mensah presented on integrated pest management, Mary Bolling shared information about Missouri's *Farm and Ranch Family Stress and Depression Guide* and demonstrated the Jessup Wagon, and Jim Shepard discussed the challenges of melon production in Missouri.



Submitted by Mary Bolling-Keeter

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Missouri AgrAbility was featured at the Missouri Rural Health Association (MRHA) Conference with an exhibit in partnership with the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO). More than 300 rural health professionals from across Missouri learned about Missouri AgrAbility. This marketing activity was held November 7 and 8 at the Lake of the Ozarks.

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An additional 500 Missouri teachers learned about Missouri AgrAbility at the BIA-MO/Missouri AgrAbility exhibit during the Missouri State Teachers Association (MSTA) Annual Conference held in Columbia on November 16 and 17. This



marketing activity focused on "Get Schooled on Concussions for Missouri" resources for teachers and other school personnel to support rural youth in their return to learn following a concussion.

Submitted by Maureen Cunningham

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December 2023

## Nebraska



Emily Jacobson, Nebraska AgrAbility program manager, attended the 15th Annual Ag-Ceptional Women's Conference held in northeast Nebraska during November. Over 300 farm and ranch women were in attendance. The annual Ag-Ceptional Woman of the Year was awarded to Hilary Miracle, deputy director, Nebraska Department of Agriculture. The Nebraska AgrAbility booth was well-attended and there were excellent opportunities for outreach, engagement and networking. The booth featured educational resources, a "Test Your Knowledge" game wheel, and an opportunity to win a "Winter Emergency Kit."

Submitted by Soni Cochran

December 2023

## North Carolina

November 3, Betty Rodriguez trained NC AgrAbility colleagues on an "Overview of the Demographic Report and Farm Assessment Tool." This training provided an overview of the definition of terminology, how to navigate the data collection Excel sheet, the disability chart and codes, and the importance of consistency in how the information is collected in the farm assessment tool to match the questions in the demographic report.



November 11 - 13, NC AgrAbility participated as an exhibitor at the 38th Sustainable Agriculture Conference hosted by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association in Durham, NC. The conference is the largest and longest sustainable agriculture meeting in the Southeast, aiming to provide learning opportunities on how to transform the local food system—from land access and sustainable production to advancing

equity and improving access to local food. This year, the event attracted around 1000 attendees from South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina.



Submitted by Beatriz (Betty) Rodriguez

December 2023

## Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility is grateful for the support of student groups, farmers, and stakeholders. Their contributions to the Ohio AgrAbility Development Fund allow staff to support farmer travel to the NTW and to host peer-to-peer meetings throughout the state. Staff are also able to provide their farmers with Ohio AgrAbility hats and other items to show them appreciation and to increase person-to-person marketing. At Farm Science

Review 2023, staff hung posters thanking sponsors and donors, and several of donors received texts and photos from people who saw the signs and wanted them to know they had been thanked at FSR.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

December 2023

## Pennsylvania



On November 9, Abbie Spackman provided hands-on assistive technology demonstrations for occupational therapy students during the Penn State DuBois AT Awareness Day. Information was also provided to the students about the unique challenges farmers face and the wide range of assistive technology options. During the event, AgrAbility also provided information and demonstrations to other service providers and assistive

technology providers.

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Linda Fetzer and Abbie Spackman spent a day delivering educational bags to families and businesses of the Plain Community in the Big Valley area. This is part of AgrAbility's on-going outreach to the Plain Community. Information was provided on both AgrAbility and ag safety and health programs, including educational information, along with coloring books, samples of personal protective equipment, and contact information.

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Abbie Spackman represented AgrAbility during the PA Farm Link Board meeting. During the meeting, Abbie provided information to the board members about AgrAbility programming, outreach to the Plain Community, and ways to collaborate with PA Farm Link. AgrAbility and PA Farm Link also continued to promote the free learning module about AgrAbility that is hosted on the PA Farm Link online Academy. PA Farm Link focuses on serving the agricultural community through hosting a land-linking database, succession planning resources, and educational resources for new farmers and for transitioning farmers. Their partnership has been invaluable to AgrAbility. Learn more about their program on their website: <https://pafarmlink.org/>.

Submitted by Joyce Brkopac

December 2023

## Tennessee

A Veterans Day salute and thank you to all who serve and have served our country! Thank you, Mr. Stapleton, a proud U.S. Army Vietnam veteran and farmer. He faces mobility challenges after several knee and back surgeries and degenerative nerve damage but still takes initiative and farms each day. TN AgrAbility partnered with the TN Vocational Rehabilitation Program, which funded a LifeLyft platform tractor lift to help him get safely on/off his tractor and back to farming. And thanks to Celina Menard for the great LifeLyft photo.



Thank you to GA Farm Again for another educational and inspiring [AgrileadHER](#) conference. TN AgrAbility participated and appreciated all the work GA and partners did to recruit wonderful speakers. Thank you to Dr. Rebecca Brightwell for the AgrileadHER vision and passion to make a difference with her work in AgrAbility. It was a sad day when everyone heard Rebecca had lost her battle with cancer. She will be missed! The University of Georgia's team carried on in her memory and reminded participants at the 2nd AgrileadHER conference "Women need to invest in yourself!" The conference was for every woman who is passionate about agriculture and food, whether a university student studying agriculture, a producer, an entrepreneur, a representative of a grower association, or corporate agribusiness professional. Great virtual exhibits including [Southern Ag Exchange Network](#), [National AgrAbility Project](#), and [Farmer Veteran Coalition](#).



Two hundred fifty Fayette County, TN, 5th graders participated in the annual Fayette County Farm Fest sponsored by Fayette County UT TSU Extension and Farm Bureau. TN AgrAbility presented information on helmet safety and let the students have hands on experience visualizing the difference in wearing a helmet and not wearing a helmet when riding a motorized vehicle. Hard-boiled eggs were used to demonstrate riders with helmets and uncooked eggs were used to demonstrate riders without a helmet.

TN AgrAbility partners with the Southern Ag Exchange Network ( SAgE TN), the Southern region effort of the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN), which addresses heightened stress and elevated suicide rates in rural farming communities. The inaugural issue of Sowing SAgE, the monthly newsletter, introduces SAgE and our director, Tesha Humphrey-plus the first SAgE research brief and more. Follow the link to read the whole thing, and don't forget to subscribe! <https://conta.cc/40vI59t>

Hours of training and thousands of dollars for equipment paid off recently when Lawrence County rescue personnel saved the life of a farmer trapped in a grain bin.

Lawrence County first responders put their training to the test when a farmer became trapped in a grain bin on November 29 in the town of Ethridge. Fire chief Nathan Keeton reported the farmer was 90 percent entrapped in corn. Crews provided medical assistance and used the turtle tube and Great Wall tubes around the farmer to stabilize the corn, which was then removed by vacuum. No injuries were reported.



"At each training, I tell the audience that I hope they never have to use the rescue tubes except for training. (On November 29) I received a call and text I had hoped would never happen," said Joetta White, UT Extension specialist with Tennessee AgrAbility who coordinates the TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness trainings. "Everyone who worked the scene had been trained in grain bin rescue, and it paid off. There was a rescue and not a fatality."  
(Above taken from Elizabeth Davis for UTIA news release.)

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

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December 2023

## Texas



Texas AgrAbility collaborated with West Texas A&M University engineering students to design and build a lift for an AgrAbility client. The client is an amputee with a cattle and hay operation. The lift allows him to get into and out of his tractor safely so he can feed his cattle this winter. Thank you to the students who drove eight hours each way to install the lift and teach the client how to use it.

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The Texas AgrAbility peer group met for its quarterly meeting. The featured speaker was an AgrAbility client who has started a produce and nursery operation in the past five years. He shared tips and resources with members of the group. The peer group map was also highlighted for group members to find other mentors and individuals with disabilities in their area or with similar ag production.

Submitted by Makenzie Thomas



December 2023

## Washington

This month Emily Whittier, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, continued a partnership with local personal protective equipment distributions for farmers and had the opportunity to give materials and an informal presentation about AgrAbility to a crew of farmers in southern Washington. Along the way, she distributed AgrAbility fliers and pamphlets to local farm and feed stores.

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Alyssa Wade and Emily Whittier presented at WSU's "Cultivating Success Whole Farm Planning" class. The presentation discussed the AgrAbility program and how the new or seasoned farmers in attendance could use the program. The presentation was virtual and attended by about 40 current or future farmers in WA State. Thank you to the Cultivating Success team for the invitation, and to Washington State University Extension's Erica Tello for the live Spanish interpretation of the presentation.

Submitted by Alyssa Wade

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

**Name** Fort Wayne Farm Show  
**Dates** January 16-18, 2024  
**City, State** Fort Wayne, Indiana  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.tradexpos.com/fort-wayne-farm-show/>

**Name** American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Healing Conversations: Healing Resources for Individuals Impacted by Suicide Loss  
**Dates** January 17, 2024 1:00 - 2:00 EST  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.agrisafe.org/event/webinar-american-foundation-for-suicide-preventions-healing-conversations-healing-resources-for-individuals-impacted-by-suicide-loss/>

**Name** QPR for Farmers and Farm Families Virtual Training  
**Dates** January 17, 2024 1:00 - 2:30 EST  
**City, State** Virtual Training - Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.agrisafe.org/courses/qpr/>

**Name** Great Lakes Crop Summit  
**Dates** January 24-25, 2024  
**City, State** Mount Pleasant, Michigan  
**Contact** <https://www.greatlakescropsummit.com/>

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** Onward to Orlando 2024 CATTLECON

**Dates** January 31 - February 2, 2024

**City, State** Orlando, Florida

**Contact** <https://convention.ncba.org/>

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** World Ag Expo

**Dates** February 13-15, 2024

**City, State** Tulare, California

**Contact** <https://www.worldagexpo.com/>

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** AOTA INSPIRE 2024 Annual Conference

**Dates** March 21-23, 2024

**City, State** Orlando, Florida

**Contact** <https://inspire.aota.org/>

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** AgrAbility National Training Workshop

**Dates** March 15-18, 2024

**City, State** Atlanta, Georgia

**Contact** <http://www.agrability.org/agrability-national-training-workshop/2024-agrability-national-training-workshop/>

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** 2024 Midwest Stream Forum for Agricultural Worker Health

**Dates** April 16-18, 2024

**City, State** Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Contact** <https://www.ncfh.org/midwest-stream-forum.html>

**Info/Web  
link**