

# AgrAbility e•Note

**February 2024**

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

### NTW Updates

- Don't put off making your hotel reservations any longer. **The room block closes on February 26th, so don't miss out.** Double rooms are sold out for Thursday night, but king rooms are available all week. You can click [HERE](#) to go to the hotel reservation page or call the hotel at 404-237-1234 and let them know that our group code is AGRA. You can also go to the hotel tab on the NTW website, there you will find more information and the link to reserve your room.
- **Earlybird registration pricing ends February 23rd. Regular registration will increase from \$450 to \$525.** You can click [HERE](#) to go to the NTW website. There you will find more detailed information. The registration link is on the registration tab.
- Do you know of someone that might like to be an exhibitor or a sponsor? [More](#)
- Don't forget, you can register to have a SRAP display table. [More](#)
- Put together a SRAP raffle basket and/or collect auctions items. [More](#)
- Start thinking about the snack you would like to bring to share in the hospitality suite



If you have any questions about the NTW, contact Tess at [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org).



Many thanks to AgrAbility of Utah for staffing a display, sponsored by National AgrAbility, at the 2024 American Farm Bureau Convention in Salt Lake City.

NAP has just started planning a regional workshop that will take place in Michigan in July 2024. This workshop will be focusing on worksite assessments, assistive technology and preparing for the RESNA ATP exam. More information will be coming

soon.

NAP is also planning a regional workshop in Guam for October 2024. More information will be coming out after the NTW.

Idaho Farm Bureau recently released a ["Dirt Road Discussions" podcast](#) on AgrAbility featuring an interview with Paul Jones.

Newly archived virtual events:

- [AgrAbility All Staff Meeting](#), February 5
- [Zoom discussion: Outreach to Extension](#), January 31, 2024
- [AgrAbility webinar: FSA Farm Loans](#), February 13



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## Toolbox Spotlight



The [WayAround Tag-and-Scan System for the Visually Impaired](#) allows for any item (e.g., tools, container contents, clothing, medicines) to be identified, described, etc. then audibly 'read back' every time one needs to utilize it. With the WayAround app, one IDs and records desired information about the item onto the WayTag label.

The user can add a description of the item and additional details like usage instructions, dates, or clickable contact information. To later access what was recorded, one simply taps the WayTag with the phone, which then audibly reads back the info that the tag contains.

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## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### Alaska

Deep cold, darkness, and lots of snow have kept Alaska AgrAbility hunkered down and mostly incubating ideas for the coming year. Their past outreach has reached mainly agricultural workers, but this year we will be designing more materials and doing more targeted outreach to fishers and mariculture workers. [More](#)

AK AgrAbility has also engaged a physical therapist (on-call) who completed a Ph.D. focused on fishing injuries. She is quite excited about preventing injury and supporting individuals with injuries and limitations. Staff are hopeful that she will be able to do education and assessments in southeast Alaska communities.

Julie Cascio, an Extension faculty/educator, has presented to several community groups on modifications and adaptive technology for gardening/farming. Intensifying these efforts has seemed effective in spreading the word about AgrAbility.

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### Colorado

The Colorado AgrAbility Project (CAP) successfully completed this year's Aging in Agriculture Winter Workshop series on February 2nd in Rocky Ford, Colorado. Two prior workshops were held in Kermmling and Fort Morgan Colorado in November. [More](#)



Check out CAP's most recent impact story that features Lexi, a passionate Colorado 4-H'er who benefited from AgrAbility support and resources. Lexi just competed at the National Western Stock Show in Denver! Watch the impact video here: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/856567826221975>

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### Florida



On January 23rd and 24th, the Florida AgrAbility case coordinator staffed a booth at the South Florida Fair in West Palm Beach. This event annually hosts over 500,000 attendees. [More](#)

On January 30th, the Florida AgrAbility UF project directors and the case coordinator attended CIL (Centers for Independent Living) Day at the Florida capitol in Tallahassee. At CIL day, staff spoke with legislators to spread awareness of Florida AgrAbility and its success. [More](#)



## Georgia



Georgia AgrAbility client Donald Adams and his dog Skippy were awarded the 2024 American Farm Bureau Federation 2024 Farm Dog of the Year Award! Donald received Skippy from [PHARM Dog USA](#). [More](#)

On January 24th, Mental Health Day at the Capitol was attended by many key figures assisting farmers throughout Georgia. The Georgia AgrAbility veteran liaison as well as members from the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia Farm Bureau,... [More](#)



The AgrAbility National Training Workshop is less than 2 months away! The staff can't wait to see you in Georgia!

## Illinois

Illinois AgrAbility will be hosting a [spring webinar series](#) open to staff, Extension colleagues, farmers, farm families, and ag businesses. This four-part series will begin with the first topic on February 15th from Noon-1p.m. (CST) and will cover mental health in agriculture, research, and resources. Open to all who are interested!

Illinois AgrAbility hosted a booth at the annual Everything Local conference hosted by the Illinois Farm Bureau. This event took place in Springfield, IL, and brought nearly 75 visitors through the AgrAbility booth to learn more about AgrAbility.

Illinois AgrAbility is gearing up to host a virtual six-week chronic pain self-management class for those in Illinois involved in agriculture who are dealing with chronic pain and/or are caretaking for someone who is. This will be free to participate in and sponsored by Illinois AgrAbility. The first class will begin on March 18.

Illinois AgrAbility is currently working with program partner Illinois Assistive Technology Program (Illinois) to get some ag-related assistive technology tools and devices in their center in Springfield for clients to check out for free as they experiment with a device for up to six weeks before deciding if it's right for them.

## Indiana

The annual Fort Wayne Farm Show in January attracts about 35,000 visitors, most of whom are from the tri-state area of Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. As they have for many years, the Indiana AgrAbility/Purdue Agricultural Safety & Health team hosted a display highlighting AgrAbility programs and resources at the Fort Wayne show. [More](#)





This year, the AgrAbility/Purdue team collaborated with Purdue Extension educators from northeast Indiana to promote farm safety and health efforts, including AgrAbility. The Purdue Extension display, which was near the AgrAbility exhibit, featured Gearing Up for Safety Jeopardy. [More](#)

On January 20, Veterans IN Farming conducted a beginning and advanced farming workshop that over 70 people attended. It was an outstanding opportunity to talk about AgrAbility opportunities, USDA programs, Purdue Extension, and great things happening to start veterans on a path to becoming farmers or enhancing their skills.



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## Maine

Maine AgrAbility tabled at the 2024 Maine Agricultural Trade Show in Augusta. Attendees of the trade show were offered a paraffin wax hand dip treatment. Attendees also participated in the "Where is my Pain" visual to show us where physically or cognitively they were experiencing pain or challenges.

Maine AgrAbility had a tabling presence at the Maine Landscape and Nursery Association trade show in Augusta. Attendees were able to interact with AgrAbility staff to learn more about the program and were able to see some small pieces of assistive technology that were on display.

Maine AgrAbility presented to the Agricultural Council of Maine at the Farm Bureau in Augusta. It was a general, informative presentation to members of the Ag Council, which included commodity-specific board representatives. These representatives were able to interact and ask questions about the program and are now able to share this information with other professionals in their respective commodity group.

The Northeast Aquaculture Conference was attended. Issues facing Maine fisherman and those in aquaculture are related to the weather this year.

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## Michigan

During the Great Lakes Crop Summit, MSU Extension staff presented "Farming Strong All Year Long," which focused on Farm Stress and AgrAbility.

The team is also working on refreshing and updating marketing materials for 2024.

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## Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility team members with University of Missouri Extension (UME) and Lincoln University Cooperative Extension (LUCE) collaborated with Missouri's Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program to produce the "Organic Farmer Liz Graznak Shares Tips and Techniques for Beginning Farmers" video. Access the video on the MU Extension Facebook page at, <https://www.facebook.com/MUExtension/videos/1059654295290866>.

Missouri AgrAbility focused its social media efforts this month on promoting program initiatives, sharing information about assistive technologies, upcoming learning opportunities, and Missouri & National health, safety, and wellbeing resources for AgrAbility Clients and their families. [More](#)

Staff members with the Missouri AgrAbility, Farm and Ranch Stress, Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, and 2501 OPPE programs continue to partner with stakeholders from the [Show-Me Farm Safety](#) committee to heighten awareness about state, regional, and national health, farm safety, and wellbeing resources as well as educational webinars,

classes, and workshops.

4-H partnership with Missouri AgrAbility completed the following activities: [More](#)

Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP) with Lincoln University Cooperative Extension (LUCE) provided onboard training with new staff members who assist with Missouri's plan of work. ISFOP worked with MU Extension to reschedule the ABCs of USDA Programs workshop due to weather. [More](#)

Maureen Cunningham, BIA-MO executive director, participated in the Missouri Brain Injury Advisory Council (MBIAC) meeting to highlight upcoming activities. These highlights included Missouri AgrAbility as a program partner for the BIA-MO "Sports Concussions:... [More](#)

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## Nebraska

In January, Nebraskans battened down the hatches as brutally cold weather (-56°F wind chills), heavy snow, and strong winds impacted a good portion of the state. As a result, client visits were postponed so farmers and ranchers could care for their animals and families. [More](#)

Emily Jacobson, Nebraska AgrAbility program manager, gave her quarterly Vocational Rehabilitation training this month. This training is for new VR staff. [More](#)



Emily Jacobson and occupational therapy students Jesse Coble and Ethan Deyhle represented Nebraska AgrAbility at the Local Food & Health Farms Conference in January. The conference was organized by the Nebraska Sustainable Agricultural Society. [More](#)

On January 25, Nancy Frecks, Nebraska Extension educator, and AgrAbility team member and occupational therapy student intern Jesse Coble attended the Nebraska Sorghum Symposium in Curtis, Nebraska. At the symposium, Nancy gave a presentation on AgrAbility.

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## New Mexico

Eight farm apprentices are returning to the project's non-profit partner (Mandy's Farm) for continued training in agricultural production.

A UNM occupational therapy student will be starting a 12-week fieldwork rotation with New Mexico starting February 5. Two OT service learning students will also be receiving training in the needs of farmers and ranchers this semester in collaboration with Mandy's Farm.

The NM Technology Assistance Program and UNM faculty are sewing ideas for a master gardener's education program in early summer.

Staff harvested numerous referrals for farm-site assessments from recent education efforts.

Staff are excited about their upcoming presentations at the 2024 National Training Workshop.

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## North Carolina (affiliate)

North Carolina AgrAbility is pleased to announce its new non-profit partner Easter Seals UCP. Easter Seals UCP has long been a partner to AgrAbility Virginia, and NC looks forward to effective and fruitful collaboration for the benefit of the citizens of NC!



In 2023, NC AgrAbility, as part of the Agromedicine platform at NC A&T, piloted partnering with various Stop the Bleed (STB) trainers to bring this important training to 150 NC farmers and FSA agents and as a means to discuss the kinds of injuries often leading to NC AgrAbility services. Participants also receive STB kits. [More](#)



Two significant save-the-dates for NC AgrAbility are coming up: August 5-6, Agromedicine at NC A&T and NC AgrAbility as its program, in partnership with SHCIP out of UKY, will hold a one and a half-day symposium on the needs of underserved farmers and farmworkers in the US Southeast. More details to follow.

Moved by learning about the needs of farmers associated with NC AgrAbility, the vertically integrated winery Dojo Wineries has planned to host a 5K in mid-September to support AT for NC farmers/farmworkers, and, to spread awareness also about the need for Stop the Bleed training particularly among the NC BIPOC population.

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## Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility started the year with big plans for outreach, education, and engagement. Disability Services Coordinator Laura Akgerman presented "Accessible Agritourism" to the American Conifer Society January 27. [More](#)

Project Director Dee Jepsen promoted Ohio AgrAbility at a recent state specialist networking meeting. Attendees included many state specialists from across the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. [More](#)

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## Pennsylvania



AgrAbility staff worked with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to create a step-by-step guide on working with AgrAbility and OVR. Staff will provide this handout to new clients and during outreach events. To view a copy of this handout, click [HERE](#).

AgrAbility PA staff connected with attendees at the Keystone Farm Show in York, PA, by providing hands-on AT examples. During the three-day event, staff provided examples and demonstrations of low- and high-tech assistive technology. [More](#)



AgrAbility PA staff provided a take-home message to all attendees at the Perry County Crops Day, hosted by Penn State Extension. This event was attended by 100 farmers renewing their pesticide licenses. [More](#)

AgrAbility staff attended the ATIA national conference from January 25-27 to learn about new assistive technology standards and developments in the field to assist individuals with disabilities.

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## South Carolina

The AgrAbility team in South Carolina has kicked off the new year with notable progress and impactful initiatives. Their second meeting with the advisory committee was a resounding success, marked by increased engagement and enthusiasm. [More](#)

Efforts are underway to finalize the details of the needs analysis, a crucial step in

understanding the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in the agricultural field. Staff are in the process of obtaining approval from Clemson's IRB committee, paving the way for compiling a comprehensive list of potential participants. [More](#)

The team actively participated in an event at the South Carolina Farmer and Agribusiness Association's Annual Meeting on Clemson's campus. Their informational booth served as a hub for direct interactions with farmers and agricultural education teachers across the state, offering a platform to showcase AgrAbility's services. [More](#)

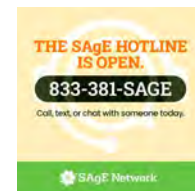


## Tennessee



TN AgrAbility (statewide) experienced four seasons this month with a 10-inch snowfall and recovery from the 1st "Big Ice Freeze" of 2024. Next came a heavy downpour of rain causing flooding in many areas and finally some warm weather bringing mud to pastures and fields. [More](#)

TN AgrAbility had its first request from a family member for mental health assistance. They connected this family with SAgE TN for a mental health referral. His family was informed of the SAgE hotline for mental health-support as well as information to other resources. SAgE's Farm Stress Hotline Is Open, 24/7 - [Southern Ag Exchange Network](#)



Charley Jordan, farmer veteran, co-manages and teaches at the Ft. Campbell, KY, Soldier Recovery Unit therapeutic garden. The residents participate in therapeutic activities. He is teaching veterans to farm this month, inoculating logs with Shiitake mushroom spawn, (WR-46 to be exact).

Jason Barber, an AgrAbility farmer who is legally blind, is demonstrating how agriculture intelligence (AI) helps him "see" his cattle. He is making some videos to demonstrate the AT he uses to continue farming and will share at the 2024 AgrAbility National Training Workshop. Check out his recent video on @TNAgrAbility Facebook page or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgvjJtaXU9c>

UT Gardens continues to work with [Tennessee AgrAbility](#) and [Frontline Gardens](#) to offer free monthly lunch & learn sessions for veterans, active duty military, and first responders. The spring 2024 sessions will be held the third Thursday of every month, February-May, at noon Eastern Time. [More](#)

TN AgrAbility participates in winter meetings with UT TSU Extension to network, get new referrals, and promote educational opportunities to farmers. Several programs are online like: [More](#)

## Texas

Makenzie Thomas presented Texas AgrAbility to beginning farmers and ranchers at the BattleGround to Breaking Ground bootcamp event. Most of the attendees were military veterans or active-duty military. Staff members will consult with program participants to provide services during their time in the BattleGround to Breaking Ground program and beyond.



Texas AgrAbility will be working with a capstone occupational therapy student through the spring and summer to develop mental health resources for the agricultural community. She will also assist with farm assessments and help pilot the Texas AgrAbility farm assessment tool to increase services to rural clients.

Texas AgrAbility staff worked with TWC Vocational Rehabilitation staff to schedule

monthly staffing calls to better assist farmers and ranchers utilizing VR services. This will open communication between VR and Texas AgrAbility to better serve clients and keep cases moving.

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## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah was excited to conduct an AgrAbility training workshop for the Ogden Vocational Rehabilitation staff on January 11. Several case studies were reviewed, leading to some great discussion. The training was attended by 21 employees from the Ogden district.



On January 20-22, the AgrAbility of Utah staff was honored to represent NAP at a booth at the National Farm Bureau Convention in Salt Lake City. Staff were able to visit with many of the 4,500 attendees from across the country.

AgrAbility staff presented at the Beef Education Series Program in Logan, UT, on January 29. The bi-weekly five-class series is sponsored by Utah State University Extension.

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## Virginia

It's conference season in Virginia, and the AgrAbility Virginia team is busy cultivating leads and sharing information. The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council hosted its winter conferences across the state, as well as the Virginia Association for Biological Farming (VABF)/Small Farms Outreach Program. [More](#)



Back in the office, the team is busy assisting 33 open client cases and seeking a solution for a visually impaired cattle farmer looking for a talking scale.

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## Washington

Another busy month for Washington AgrAbility. Debbie Fredricks and Deb Eidsness, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinators, along with Kyrstin Szewczyk, Washington AgrAbility occupational therapist, all attended the Country Living Expo in Stanwood, WA. Kyrstin and Deb presented in two classes with a presentation called, "Achey Hands and Stomped-on Feet", and Debbie tabled at the event.

Deb attended the Seed Producer Annual Workshop at the Northwest Regional Experiment and Research Center in Mt. Vernon, WA. Deb also did a site assessment with a farmer who was hospitalized due to a fall and is helping her to prevent secondary injury in her home.

Don McMoran, Washington AgrAbility program director, presented at the Southwest Native American Agriculture Conference in Las Vegas, NV, and a farmers' wellness event in Port Haddock, WA.

Emily Whittier, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, tabled at Agriculture Safety Day in Yakima, WA. The event was hosted by the Governor's Industrial Safety and Health Advisory Board and drew safety and health-focused farmers and organizations from across the state of Washington.

Alyssa Wade, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Cropping Conference in Kennewick, WA. The event drew many farmers from all over the state who showed a lot of interest in both AgrAbility and farm stress.

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## AgrAbility for Africa



AgrAbility for Africa staff were excited to take part in an offshore therapy program for farmers' children as part of the island community outreach education mission. Thanks to the support of Uganda Junior Rangers, staff can access farming island communities... [More](#)

Coffee farming is the top cash crop in Uganda, and it is reaching new heights in harvest and export within the East African region but with implications for farmers' health and safety. Concerns include pesticides, ergonomic related injuries, mental health challenges resulting from poor harvests in some communities, and a lack of inclusiveness. [More](#)

## StaffChanges and Recognition

### Nebraska

Occupational therapy students Ethan Deyhle, Hannah Conlin, and Jesse Coble are teaming with Nebraska AgrAbility for their capstone rotations.

Meet Ethan Deyhle. "I am currently a third year OT student at Creighton University who will be working with Nebraska AgrAbility for my capstone. Throughout my journey as an OT student, I have become really interested in ergonomics and injury prevention while also learning about the importance and value of rural health care. [More](#)



Meet Hannah Conlin. "I am in my final year of the occupational therapy doctoral program at Drake University in Des Moines, IA. I'm also the fifth generation to work on my family's farm, alongside my dad and brother, we raise cattle, hogs, and crops. [More](#)

Meet Jesse Coble. "I grew up on a cattle ranch in the heart of the Nebraska Sandhills. Being from a rural area, I quickly discovered the importance and demand for all rural healthcare professions. I discovered occupational therapy in high school and grew to love the holistic, full person approach. [More](#)



### North Carolina

In January, NC AgrAbility said goodbye to long-term NC AgrAbility program manager Beatriz (Betty) Rodriguez as she moved to working full-time as an Extension associate for urban and underrepresented audiences through NC Cooperative Extension at NC A&T. We thank her tremendously for her years of service and wish her great success in her new position!

### Tennessee

Finis Stribling, TN State University, TN AgrAbility PI, farmer, and the director of Tennessee State University's Agricultural Extension Small Farms Programs



and TN New Farmer Academy, was awarded the inaugural Community Excellence Award from Farm Credit Mid-America. He was recognized for his work in providing training, resources, and advocacy for new and beginning farmers. Happy to have Finis on TN AgrAbility's team! CONGRATUATIONS!

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## AgrAbility in the News

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

- [S1E4 Interview with Army veteran Joe Ricker of National AgrAbility Project](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [AGRABILITY MAKES CONNECTIONS TO HELP LEE COUNTY FARMER STAY MOBILE](#) (Affiliate - North Carolina AgrAbility Partnership)
- [AgrAbility program aids aging, disabled farmers in Benzie, Manistee counties](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
- [AgriAbility Workshop set for Rocky Ford](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [Guide to Working with AgrAbility and the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation](#) (AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians)
- ['Mission: Possible' FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative Celebrates 12th Annual Meeting](#) (AgrAbility of Wisconsin)

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## Other News

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

- [Mini Livestock Farming: Nurturing a New Era of Edible Insects](#)
- New resource: [Best Practices for the Sustainable Urban Farm](#)
- [Scaling Up Urban Agriculture: Research Team Outlines Roadmap](#)
- [Growing the Customer Base at Farmers Markets](#)
- [Market.Biz: Vertical Farming Market Set to Reach \\$35.3 Billion](#)
- [Women farmers quantitatively linked to better community well-being](#)
- [Farm Family Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Revolutionized](#)
- [What's the best diet for healthy sleep? A nutritional epidemiologist explains what food choices will help you get more restful z's](#)
- [Women farm owners more apt to binge drink](#)
- [Farmers can now make USDA farm loan payments online](#)

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## Upcoming Events

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

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



February 2024

## National AgrAbility Project

### NTW Updates

- Do you know of someone that might like to be an exhibitor or a sponsor? Send them this link for [NTW tab on the NAP website](#) and tell them to click on Exhibitor or Sponsor tab, or send their contact information to Tess-[tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org).
- Don't forget, you can register to have a SRAP display table. You can add that to your registration on the registration website. If you have already registered and want a SRAP display table, call or email Tess [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org) 585-447-9015.
- Put together a SRAP raffle basket and/or collect auctions items. Both activities help us to bring farmer clients to the NTW. You can ship items ahead of time to Kyle Haney at 850 College Station Rd., Rivers Crossing Rm. G46, Athens, GA 30602. Please indicate somewhere on the packaging that it is for the AgrAbility NTW auction or raffle basket and let Kyle know that an item is being shipped to him. His email is [kyle.haney25@uga.edu](mailto:kyle.haney25@uga.edu), or you can call him at 706.542.8152.

Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes



**February 2024**

## **Alaska**

Deep cold, darkness, and lots of snow have kept Alaska AgrAbility hunkered down and mostly incubating ideas for the coming year. Their past outreach has reached mainly agricultural workers, but this year we will be designing more materials and doing more targeted outreach to fishers and mariculture workers.

Fishing is one of the top economic drivers in Alaska and is critically important to the independent individuals who have invested in boats, permits, fuel, and crews. These are comparable to a family farm and shouldn't be lost due to an injury or disability. Possible new outreach will be through local public radio stations, which are nearly the only stations broadcasting in rural areas and importantly can be picked-up on boats.

Staff will also be networking with the Alaska Marine Safety Organization to conduct outreach and education. In February, staff will have a booth at the Alaska Mariculture Conference.

Submitted by Leslie Shallcross

February 2024

## Colorado

The Colorado AgrAbility Project (CAP) successfully completed this year's Aging in Agriculture Winter Workshop series on February 2nd in Rocky Ford, Colorado. Two prior workshops were held in Kermmling and Fort Morgan Colorado in November.

The workshops included an introduction to CAP and its associated resources that are available to agricultural communities. Conversations were led by AgrAbility behavioral health specialists surrounding emotional well-being and how to get the most miles out of their "mental engine" with stress management and wellness techniques. Following a catered lunch, a presentation educated participants on strategies to enhance their safety and independence as they age. Representatives from the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and community health agencies were also present at the workshops.



Submitted by Colorado AgrAbility Project

February 2024

## Florida



On January 23rd and 24th, the Florida AgrAbility case coordinator staffed a booth at the South Florida Fair in West Palm Beach. This event annually hosts over 500,000 attendees. FL AgrAbility displayed adaptive tools and program material and offered several different giveaway items to attendees.



On January 30th, the Florida AgrAbility UF project directors and the case coordinator attended CIL (Centers for Independent Living) Day at the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee. At CIL day, staff spoke with legislators to spread awareness of Florida AgrAbility and its success. Florida AgrAbility recently submitted a special budget request in hopes

of receiving state funding to assist the program in directly providing farmers with equipment modifications and new technology/tools.



Submitted by Shelby Thomas

February 2024

## Georgia



Georgia AgrAbility client Donald Adams and his dog Skippy were awarded the 2024 American Farm Bureau Federation 2024 Farm Dog of the Year Award! Donald received Skippy from [PHARM Dog USA](#). We want to say a huge thank you to PHARM DOG USA! They have forever changed Donald's life with Skippy. He says that he doesn't know how he ever farmed without a cattle dog even before his injury. <https://youtu.be/S3dnpxBFIfM>

On January 24th, Mental Health Day at the Capitol was attended by many key figures assisting farmers throughout Georgia. The Georgia AgrAbility veteran liaison as well as



members from the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia Farm Bureau, Mercer School of Medicine, UGA Extension, and Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities attended to continue to bring awareness to the stressors of the rural farming populations.



Submitted by Georgia AgrAbility Project



February 2024

## Indiana

The annual Fort Wayne Farm Show in January attracts about 35,000 visitors, most of whom are from the tri-state area of Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. As they have for many years, the Indiana AgrAbility/Purdue Agricultural Safety & Health team hosted a display highlighting AgrAbility programs and resources at the Fort Wayne show. The AgrAbility team was joined by LifeLyfts by Life Essentials, which brought a lift-equipped compact utility tractor to display and demonstrate.



This year, the AgrAbility/Purdue team collaborated with Purdue Extension educators from northeast Indiana to promote farm safety and health efforts, including AgrAbility. The Purdue Extension display, which was near the AgrAbility exhibit, featured Gearing Up for Safety Jeopardy. During the three-day show, more than 2000 show attendees participated in answering over 800 farm safety Jeopardy questions. The collaboration was successful for both organizations, and highlighted the value and importance of AgrAbility staff working with local Extension personnel.

Submitted by Ed Sheldon

February 2024

## Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility focused its social media efforts this month on promoting program initiatives, sharing information about assistive technologies, upcoming learning opportunities, and Missouri & National health, safety, and wellbeing resources for AgrAbility Clients and their families. Make sure to like and follow Missouri AgrAbility, @MOAgrAbility, on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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4-H partnership with Missouri AgrAbility completed the following activities:

- 4-H Just in Time SPIN Club focused on inclusivity of individuals with different abilities offered in two SE Missouri counties.
- Working with local school district to train teachers and 4-H volunteers on the Missouri Model for Trauma Informed Education to better serve youth with PTSD.
- 4-H Save Your Brain Ambassadors are shifting efforts from prevention of traumatic brain injuries to focus on mental wellbeing using 4-H Mindful Mechanics and the 4-H Mind, Body, Whole Wellness Tracker.

Submitted by Karen Funkenbusch, Emily Doosing, and Linda Geist

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Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP) with Lincoln University Cooperative Extension (LUCE) provided onboard training with new staff members who assist with Missouri's plan of work. ISFOP worked with MU Extension to reschedule the ABCs of USDA Programs workshop due to weather. ISFOP LUCE staff also handed out resources and discussed Missouri AgrAbility during in-person on-the-farm visits with new AgrAbility client farmers and their families.

Submitted by Mary Keeter

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Maureen Cunningham, BIA-MO executive director, participated in the Missouri Brain Injury Advisory Council (MBIAC) meeting to highlight upcoming activities. These highlights included Missouri AgrAbility as a program partner for the BIA-MO "Sports Concussions: Facts, Fallacies, and New Frontiers Seminars" with a focus on "Get Schooled on Concussions for Missouri" that will be held between February 26 and March 1. This Missouri AgrAbility marketing will reach thousands of youth sports and school personnel in rural Missouri. Another highlight was Missouri AgrAbility as a program partner for the BIA-MO "Survivor and Family Seminars" that will provide education for AgrAbility clients in Springfield and western Missouri in Spring 2024.

Submitted by Maureen Cunningham

February 2024

## Nebraska

In January, Nebraskans battened down the hatches as brutally cold weather (-56°F wind chills), heavy snow, and strong winds impacted a good portion of the state. As a result, client visits were postponed so farmers and ranchers could care for their animals and families. The hazardous conditions meant Nebraska AgrAbility staff also had to focus on their safety during this tough time.

Emily Jacobson, Nebraska AgrAbility program manager, gave her quarterly Vocational Rehabilitation training this month. This training is for new VR staff. Emily educates new staff on the AgrAbility process and how we work together to create success for farmers and ranchers throughout the state.



Emily Jacobson and occupational therapy students Jesse Coble and Ethan Deyhle represented Nebraska AgrAbility at the Local Food & Health Farms Conference in January. The conference was organized by the Nebraska Sustainable Agricultural Society. Over 120 people attended the conference each day. While the booth space was not well attended, the conversations in the hallways and during the sessions were productive. The AgrAbility team and students came away with information and ideas on how AgrAbility could partner with small sustainable operations. The team was also approached by

another organization asking if Nebraska AgrAbility handouts could be translated into Spanish. The Nebraska AgrAbility team is exploring options to address translation needs.

## STAFF CHANGES

Occupational therapy students Ethan Deyhle, Hannah Conlin, and Jesse Coble are teaming with Nebraska AgrAbility for their capstone rotations.

Meet Ethan Deyhle. "I am currently a third year OT student at Creighton University who will be working with Nebraska AgrAbility for my capstone. Throughout my journey as an OT student, I have become really interested in ergonomics and injury prevention while also learning about the importance and value of rural health care. When I heard about Nebraska AgrAbility, I was amazed by the services they offer, including education on ergonomic and injury prevention methods for farmers and ranchers in Nebraska. This semester, I'll be assisting with Nebraska AgrAbility social media content, creating educational handouts, and attending health and agricultural related conferences throughout Nebraska and the nation to talk about the services Nebraska AgrAbility provides! I can't wait to learn more about the role OT can play in farmers' and ranchers' health through my time with AgrAbility!"



Meet Hannah Conlin. "I am in my final year of the occupational therapy doctoral program at Drake University in Des Moines, IA. I'm also the fifth generation to work on my family's farm, alongside my dad and brother, we raise cattle, hogs, and crops. When I first started thinking about becoming an occupational therapist, I thought that I would have to choose between a career as an OT and my love for farming. As I began to plan for my final capstone project, I found that I could not only do both, but that I could

combine my two passions to improve safety and accessibility for farmers and ranchers. I learned about Nebraska AgrAbility and how they were able to work with people in the agricultural field to improve safety and accessibility for farmers and ranchers. Throughout this experience, I hope to better my understanding of the programs available to agricultural workers, find ways to improve safety and accessibility on my own farm as well as find ways to implement this information for my future clients, and gain a more in-depth knowledge of assistive devices and adaptive equipment used by farmers and ranchers."

Meet Jesse Coble. "I grew up on a cattle ranch in the heart of the Nebraska Sandhills. Being from a rural area, I quickly discovered the importance and demand for all rural healthcare professions. I discovered occupational therapy in high school and grew to love the holistic, full person approach. I am currently in my final semester of occupational therapy school and am completing my doctoral experiential component with Nebraska AgrAbility. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to merge my passion for agriculture with my passion for occupational therapy to help farmers and ranchers get back to doing what they are passionate about. I hope to help AgrAbility with creating handouts for diagnosis-specific populations. I am looking forward to the remainder of my time with AgrAbility to learn more about the program and be able to take away pertinent information that will be helpful in my future as an occupational therapist!"



Submitted by Soni Cochran



February 2024

## North Carolina

In 2023, NC AgrAbility, as part of the Agromedicine platform at NC A&T, piloted partnering with various Stop the Bleed (STB) trainers to bring this important training to 150 NC farmers and FSA agents and as a means to discuss the kinds of injuries often leading to NC AgrAbility services. Participants also receive STB kits. This has become a popular training, and in January, NC presented to 35 farmers in the Small Farmers 360 program. From this training, three more requests were made by farmers to bring this training and to spread the word about NC AgrAbility to farmers in their home counties.



Submitted by Crystal A. Cook Marshall

**February 2024**

## **Ohio**

Ohio AgrAbility started the year with big plans for outreach, education, and engagement. Disability Services Coordinator Laura Akgerman presented "Accessible Agritourism" to the American Conifer Society January 27. This was the first of two Ohio AgrAbility presentations for the ACS, as Laura will be presenting "Gardening Across the Lifespan" at the ACS annual conference in June.

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Project Director Dee Jepsen promoted Ohio AgrAbility at a recent state specialist networking meeting. Attendees included many state specialists from across the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The meeting was a great opportunity to share information about Ohio AgrAbility and meet state specialists to collaborate with on future education and outreach opportunities.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

February 2024

## Pennsylvania

AgrAbility PA staff connected with attendees at the Keystone Farm Show in York, PA, by providing hands-on AT examples. During the three-day event, staff provided examples and demonstrations of low- and high-tech assistive technology. They engaged with over 170 people. Items such as heated gloves, crampons (ice cleats), Gripeeze gloves, and weightlifting hooks to carry buckets were among the items attendees were most interested in. Several attendees even ordered weightlifting hooks while standing at the booth!



AgrAbility PA staff provided a take-home message to all attendees at the Perry County Crops Day, hosted by Penn State Extension. This event was attended by 100 farmers renewing their pesticide licenses. AgrAbility was able to give an educational presentation to attendees and provide a display of assistive technology examples. During the presentation attendees were encouraged to do a self-evaluation and brainstorm solutions to help them remain safe and active on their own farms as well as to encourage them to connect with AgrAbility for a more in-depth assessment.



Submitted by Joyce Brkopac

February 2024

## South Carolina

The AgrAbility team in South Carolina has kicked off the new year with notable progress and impactful initiatives. Their second meeting with the advisory committee was a resounding success, marked by increased engagement and enthusiasm. Recognizing the significance of cultivating strong relationships within their community, staff have expanded their outreach efforts, leveraging the positive responses from the advisory committee to foster connections and potentially attract new clients.

Efforts are underway to finalize the details of the needs analysis, a crucial step in understanding the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in the agricultural field. Staff are in the process of obtaining approval from Clemson's IRB committee, paving the way for compiling a comprehensive list of potential participants. This strategic approach will enable the team to gain valuable insights into the specific needs of individuals with disabilities in South Carolina's agricultural sector, allowing AgrAbility to modify its services accordingly.

The team actively participated in an event at the South Carolina Farmer and Agribusiness Association's Annual Meeting on Clemson's campus. Their informational booth served as a hub for direct interactions with farmers and agricultural education teachers across the state, offering a platform to showcase AgrAbility's services. The accompanying photo captures the dynamic engagement of the team members at the event, embodying their commitment to positively impacting South Carolina residents' lives.



Submitted by South Carolina AgrAbility

February 2024

## Tennessee



TN AgrAbility (statewide) experienced four seasons this month with a 10-inch snowfall and recovery from the 1st "Big Ice Freeze" of 2024. Next came a heavy downpour of rain causing flooding in many areas and finally some warm weather bringing mud to pastures and fields. It was wonderful to see neighbors

helping each other and reminded staff that we are in this together!

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UT Gardens continues to work with [Tennessee AgrAbility](#) and [Frontline Gardens](#) to offer free monthly lunch & learn sessions for veterans, active duty military, and first responders. The spring 2024 sessions will be held the third Thursday of every month, February-May, at noon Eastern Time. Sign up now to get email reminders and to learn more. Sessions will be recorded and made available to program registrants. Registration link: <https://utgardens.wildapricot.org/event-5590618>

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TN AgrAbility participates in winter meetings with UT TSU Extension to network, get new referrals, and promote educational opportunities to farmers. Several programs are online like: [Tennessee Farm Family Health & Wellness | Family and Consumer Sciences](#) The first sessions include "Strategic Thinking for the Farm Business: Recognizing Opportunities" - Stephanie Plaster; and "How to Identify, Manage and Mitigate Farm Stress" - Paul Norrod. There is still time to register and watch recorded sessions.

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility

February 2023

## Virginia

It's conference season in Virginia, and the AgrAbility Virginia team is busy cultivating leads and sharing information. The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council hosted its winter conferences across the state, as well as the Virginia Association for Biological Farming (VABF)/Small Farms Outreach Program. These events allowed the team to have friendly conversations about all things AgrAbility and invite farmers to the project's upcoming Farmer Dinner Theater. Program Coordinator Roberto Franco is pictured at the VABF Summit where he displayed some of the most popular assistive technology resources staff recommend.



Submitted by Leslie Lawrence



February 2024

## AgrAbility for Africa



AgrAbility for Africa staff were excited to take part in an offshore therapy program for farmers' children as part of the island community outreach education mission. Thanks to the support of Uganda Junior Rangers, staff can access farming island communities and support transportation for children to their rehabilitation and medical appointments, although not as frequently as could be wished because of the need to respond appropriately to the service demand.

Coffee farming is the top cash crop in Uganda, and it is reaching new heights in harvest and export within the East African region but with implications for farmers' health and safety. Concerns include pesticides, ergonomic related injuries, mental health challenges resulting from poor harvests in some communities, and a lack of inclusiveness. The AgrAbility for Africa staff are reaching out and seeking partnerships to enhance knowledge, information, and health and safety as a means to reduce hazards while promoting a fair and equal-opportunity industry.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

February 2024

## Upcoming Events

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|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Name</b>                  | New Battleground to Breaking Ground Phase 1 Course  |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | Rolling admission   |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Online  |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/new-phase-1-battleground-to-breaking-ground/01t4x000002ciNKAAY">https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/new-phase-1-battleground-to-breaking-ground/01t4x000002ciNKAAY</a> |
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|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Name</b>                  | Illinois AgrAbility Spring Webinar Series: Mental Health in Ag, Research and Resources                |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | February 15, 2024, 1:00 - 2:00p.m. (EST)  |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Webinar Online  |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="https://go.illinois.edu/SpringWebinarSeries">https://go.illinois.edu/SpringWebinarSeries</a> |
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| <b>Name</b>                  | Navigating Rural Realities: Addressing Substance Use and Aging in Agricultural Communities  |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | February 22, 2024, at 1:00p.m. EST  |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Webinar Online  |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TFng79ReTtyUtmnrmRrnfw#/registration">https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TFng79ReTtyUtmnrmRrnfw#/registration</a> |
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| <b>Name</b>                  | AOTA INSPIRE 2024 Annual Conference                               |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | March 21-23, 2024   |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Orlando, Florida  |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="https://inspire.aota.org/">https://inspire.aota.org/</a> |
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| <b>Name</b>                  | AgrAbility National Training Workshop   |
| <b>Dates</b>                 | March 15-18, 2024   |
| <b>City, State</b>           | Atlanta, Georgia  |
| <b>Contact Info/Web link</b> | <a href="http://www.agrability.org/agrability-national-training-workshop/2024-agrability-national-training-workshop/">http://www.agrability.org/agrability-national-training-workshop/2024-agrability-national-training-workshop/</a> |
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|--------------|--|
| <b>Name</b>  | 2024 Midwest Stream Forum for Agricultural Worker Health |
| <b>Dates</b> | April 16-18, 2024  |

**City, State** Albuquerque, New Mexico  
**Contact** <https://www.ncfh.org/midwest-stream-forum.html>  
**Info/Web**  
**link**