

# AgrAbility e·Note

**March 2024**

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

The 2024 NTW is just a few days away!!! We are excited to see everyone! More than 250 people have registered - if you haven't, don't miss out. **March 18** is the last day to register.



### Things to remember:

- **Put together your state raffle basket.** These have been a hit. Put together a basket with items from your state or any theme that you would like and let's see whose basket gets the most tickets.
- **Bring auction items.** Let Tess know if you are bringing an auction item, so we have an idea of how much room we need to set up. If you need to ship an item, the information is below. Also, please fill out the attached [Silent Auction Sheet](#) (click the link and it should download automatically) and bring it with your item.
- **Bring a snack to share in the hospitality suite.** We love to have items specific to your state to snack on in the hospitality suite. If you are bringing something to share, let us know so that we know what to plan for.
- **Exhibitors.** We still have space for exhibitors if you know of any organization/company that might want to exhibit. March 18th is the last day to register as an exhibitor also.
- **Shipping.** [Click here](#) for when and where to ship items to the NTW.
- **GET READY FOR SOME GREAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOME FUN!!**
- If you have any questions, contact us any time. Tess McKeel - [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org) -585.447.9015 or JoBeth Rath - [jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org) - 585.402.2059

Are you involved in marketing and media? Join the AgrAbility Marketing & Media Community of Interest for an in-person meeting at the NTW on Tuesday, March 26 at 5:00 p.m. in the Cascade Room.



NAP has just started planning a regional workshop scheduled for Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 16-18. This workshop will be focusing on worksite assessment, assistive technology, and preparing for the RESNA ATP exam. All attendees will get a free 1-year membership to RESNA. Registration and hotel information will be out soon.

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

NAP offered several incentives for completing the Annual Staff Needs Assessment this year. Thank you to everyone who participated, and congratulations to our winners!

- Free NTW registration: Tracy Agiovlasitis, New Mexico AgrAbility
- \$250 in NAP publications: Lindsey Head, Florida AgrAbility
- \$100 in NAP publications: Leslie Lawrence, AgrAbility Virginia

The National AgrAbility Project, in collaborations with Life Essentials, once again exhibited at the National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville, Kentucky February 14-17. The show is the largest indoor farm trade show in the U.S., with 27 acres of exhibit space. [More](#)



Newly archived virtual events:

- Zoom discussion: [Educating Legislators](#), March 13

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## Toolbox Spotlight



Having to constantly go between cab and equipment to carry out various tasks (especially while the tractor's running) is time/energy consuming, risky - and perhaps not physically possible for some. The [RcFarmArm Wireless Tractor Control](#), which is a set of mechanical actuators that fits on the tractor's armrest, allows the operator to use a hand-held remote to start/stop the engine, control the throttle, engage/disengage the PTO, and regulate two hydraulic levers.

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## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### Alaska

The UAF and ATLA AgrAbility in the Last Frontier team made plans for attending the National Training Workshop in Atlanta. They are sponsoring one producer this year.

Julie Cascio, one of Alaska AgrAbility's Extension faculty/educators, has presented to one community group on modifications and adaptive technology for gardening/farming.

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### California



California AgrAbility has been working hard behind the scenes the last couple of months to improve processes and create new ones so that staff can better support California's farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers. They are looking forward to new projects with their partners, such as the Center for Land-based Learning, to provide education, services, and guidance to existing ag workers and those interested in starting a career in agriculture.

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### Georgia

Did you know that Atlanta is called a "city in the forest"? It is the most heavily forested urban area in the country with about 48% of the metro Atlanta area being covered in trees. This is appropriate because Georgia is the #1 state in the nation in acres of commercially available

timberland!

Georgia AgrAbility has spent the last month working hard to prepare for NTW. Staff are so excited for everyone to come to our state. See you shortly!!



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## Illinois

Illinois AgrAbility has been busy promoting its program across the state via a couple of multi-county Annie's Projects. Staff will also be educating a nursing student class about AgrAbility as an agricultural resource they can share with their clients.

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

Illinois AgrAbility is currently working with program partner Illinois Assistive Technology Program 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.

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## Indiana



The Purdue Ag Alumni Fish Fry, held this year on February 3, is a longstanding tradition. Each year, nearly 2,000 Purdue agricultural alumni and supporters gather to meet old friends and celebrate Purdue's College of Agriculture. Indiana AgrAbility and the Purdue Agricultural Safety and Health Program joined numerous other programs and organizations in the Fish Fry exhibit area. [More](#)

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## Maine

Maine AgrAbility participated in Franklin County Farmer Resource and Networking Day in Franklin County, Maine. The director gave a short talk on AgrAbility and how the program can directly help farmers, and she tabled with information for prospective clients. Other farm service providers were in attendance, which AgrAbility networked with.



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## Michigan



The second week of February was a busy one for the Michigan AgrAbility team. Easterseals MORC and MSU staff exhibited at the Great Lakes Regional Dairy Conference on Thursday and Friday,... [More](#)

MSU Extension has a new landing page for Michigan AgrAbility, first populated by a 2023 updates report with more updates to come.

Staff is also in the process of updating resources and handouts, collecting annual survey results from clients served throughout 2023, and managed several farm visits during the mild winter.

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## Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility continued to use social media as a way to disseminate health, safety, and well-being updates, resources, and technologies.

Linda Geist, strategic senior communications associate, assisted with coordinating on- and off-campus video productions, writing scripts, compiling photos, and organizing videos.

Emily Doosing, field specialist in 4-H youth development attended the sports concussion seminars in St. Louis and Kansas City while Karen Funkenbusch, project director attended, exhibited, and moderated program sessions. Doosing also provided training/consultation to three volunteers on making ADA accommodations in 4-H programs. [More](#)

David Middleton, MO AgrAbility consultant & MO AgrAbility ambassador, exhibited at the Midwest's best indoor 62nd 2024 Western Farm Show at the Health & Safety Roundup. The Health and Safety Roundup is coordinated by the Missouri Farm Bureau and was open during regular farm show hours. [More](#)

Lincoln University Cooperative Extension Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (LUCE ISFOP) team of Maurice Theriot, Demetrius Moore, and Penny Wilson exhibited at Missouri AgConnect on February 2nd and 3rd, an event connecting small-scale farmers to resources in Southeast Missouri. [More](#)



Along with SE regional small farmers, LUCE ISFOP staff members Maurice Theriot, Penny Wilson, and Demetrius Moore, along with MU Extension's John Fuller and Audrey Johnson, attended the ABCs of the USDA workshop on February 21st in Sikeston, Missouri. The workshop was held at the LUCE office and coordinated by the University of Missouri Extension.



Lesa Queen, farm outreach worker, in the SW region of Missouri, exhibited at the Farm to Fork Conference on February 23rd. She shared information on ergonomic tools and upcoming programs with local farmers.

Mary Keeter and Karen Funkenbusch exhibited at the 100th Annual Jefferson County Agriculture Conference on Saturday, February 24th. They shared stress relief and suicide prevention resources; displayed and discussed ergonomic tools;... [More](#)

On February 27th, seven Lincoln University staff members joined University of Missouri Extension along with NRCS, St. Louis Urban Hub, and several non-profit professional staff members for an ISE on low tunnels for small-scale farmers including AgrAbility Clients. [More](#)



Farm Outreach Worker Mary Keeter assisted with the construction of a trellis made from a cattle panel at the urban farm at the St. Louis Dream Center on February 29th. The garden is used by veterans with limited mobility, and the trellis will increase their production space and allow easier harvesting.

Missouri AgrAbility was highlighted as a statewide program sponsor for the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) "Sports Concussions: Facts, Fallacies and New Frontiers" seminars. Three in-person and one live-stream seminar was held between February 26 - March 1 across Missouri. [More](#)

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## Nebraska

In February, Jada Ruff, Nebraska Extension, and the AgrAbility occupational therapy (OT) students attended the Women in Agriculture Conference in Kearney. This two-day conference was a great opportunity to meet and have conversations about AgrAbility with women involved in

farming and ranching. [More](#)



The Nebraska AgrAbility team hosted the advisory board in February. The team is grateful to have wonderful board members to help guide this program and its team. [More](#)

Staff have begun preparing for the National Training Workshop in Georgia. The team looks forward to connecting, sharing, and learning at this outstanding event.

The Nebraska AgrAbility occupational therapy (OT) students have developed specialty handouts for the team to utilize with farmers and ranchers across the state. Topics include traumatic brain injury, cardiac Met levels, arthritis, slips and falls on the farm, youth safety, and more. [More](#)

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## New Mexico

New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum continues to design an exhibit about NM AgrAbility. More information to come at the team's presentation at the NTW.

Eight apprentices have returned to Mandy's Farm's program for their second year of internships in which they will be working directly at farms in New Mexico. Two OT fieldwork II students are learning alongside them about the occupations of farming and the ways that rehabilitation professionals can collaborate with food growers.

NMAP has been actively presenting in numerous venues, including the NMDA Employee Conference presentation on AgrAbility on April 17, and two NMAP team members presented at the Navajo Sustainable Agriculture Project in order to improve knowledge about NMAP for the Native American community. 16 people attended the event.

Day on the Farm with DVR representatives is being planned in order to strength our relationship with our DVR partners

New Mexico AgrAbility is getting really excited about NTW, where NMAP will have multiple presentations:

- Reaching new heights and expanding audiences by promoting AgrAbility (NMSU team) - Robert & Sonja
- AT Fundamentals Course panel (NM TAP team)
- Gender differences in health conditions of agricultural workers (UNM team)

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## North Carolina (affiliate)

PI Crystal Cook Marshall and Field Agent James Fry presented about NC AgrAbility to 100+ health care professionals at the Rural Health Symposium at Eastern Carolina Medical School.

PI Crystal Cook Marshall also continued a partnership with ECU Agromedicine to educate rural North Carolinians in "Stop the Bleed," in basic farm safety, on the increased needs for safety while aging, and how NC AgrAbility can assist with farming more safely. ECU Agromedicine nurse Amy Nance also demonstrated CPY basics. [More](#)

PI Crystal Cook Marshall presented to eight "Veterans to Agriculture" trainees at the Veterans Farms of NC. With NC A&T research specialists in agriculture and natural resources, she participated in a listening tour in far eastern and in western North Carolina in order to plan joint agriculture practice and agriculture safety practice in NC A&T served

## Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility reached a new audience in February: case managers and care coordinators from across Ohio. Rachel Jarman, rural rehabilitation coordinator, and Laura Akgerman, disability services coordinator, presented to case managers and care coordinators "Working together to serve Ohio's farmers," at the Ohio chapter of the American Case Managers Association annual conference. [More](#)

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## Pennsylvania

AgrAbilityPA attended the 2024 Pennsylvania Veteran Farms Conference in Cumberland, PA. This was a well-attended event with many returning farmer veterans and speakers. [More](#)



AgrAbilityPA presented a managing stress on the farm workshop at the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention on February 1 in Hershey PA.

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## South Carolina

Two dedicated Clemson team members, Dr. Dale Layfield and Dr. Lance Beecher, recently took charge of an AgrAbility awareness booth at the Farmer Veteran Coalition Symposium held on February 24 in Columbia, South Carolina. This significant event, expertly coordinated by two esteemed advisory committee members, Matt Rutter (the current president of the SC Farmer Veteran Coalition) and his wife Kara, drew an impressive crowd of nearly 100 attendees. [More](#)

The commitment to the AgrAbility program in South Carolina remains firm, as evidenced by its collaboration with the nonprofit Able SC. Dedicated teams from Able SC and Clemson recently engaged in successful discussions with experts in assistive technology and vocational rehabilitation education. [More](#)

Looking ahead, the Clemson team is preparing to attend the Assistive Technology Expo in Columbia, SC. This strategic move aims to raise awareness about AgrAbility's capabilities in extending assistance to farmers in need. [More](#)

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## Tennessee



February's Low Vision Awareness Month highlighted the amazing vision services that The STAR Center offers. Applying for its vision services typically begins with an eye doctor's referral to the agency. For additional information on the assistive technology and vision services available, visit [star-center.org](http://star-center.org).

Jason Barber, a TN AgrAbility farmer with retinitis pigmentosa (RP), created his own YouTube channel to demonstrate how a legally blind person can operate a 100+ acre farm, with 35 head of cattle. Jason plans to demonstrate a multitude of assistive technologies that are used on the farm at the 2024 National AgrAbility Training Workshop in March. [More](#)

TN AgrAbility partnered with Farmer Veteran Coalition at the Pick TN Conference to host 14 sessions with over 800 total attendees of wonderful networking and learning opportunities from 9 TN ag associations. Sessions included: chapter update meetings; meet/greet

meetings; "Women in Ag"; "Pathways to Farming; Farm, Family Safety, Health and Wellness," and a USDA/university panel with AgrAbility. [More](#)



UT Gardens continued its partnership with [Tennessee AgrAbility](#) and [Frontline Gardens](#) by offering free monthly lunch & learn sessions for veterans, active duty military, and first responders. The spring session began the third Thursday in February and will continue through May; [More](#)

Grain Bin Safety Week was observed by UTIA with the release of a [video highlighting the 2023 December Tennessee Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness Training](#), which features comments by TN AgrAbility staff.



TN AgrAbility, TN Association of Rescue Squads (TARS), and UT Extension agents from Fayette, Hardeman, Haywood, Madison and McNairy counties organized the first TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness Training for 2024. The 59 participants included rescue personnel, ag producers and Extension agents. [More](#)

TN AgrAbility exhibited at

- West TN Grain and Soybean Conference. [More](#)
- TN-KY Tobacco Expo. [More](#)
- TEAM (Teaming to Educate for Agricultural Mastery) Conference [More](#)

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## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah staff set up a booth and presented at the Northern Utah Conservation Fair in Logan, UT, on February 2. Staff were able to meet with many of the 240 people in attendance. [More](#)

On February 7-8, AgrAbility staff set up a booth the Soil Health in the West Conference in St. George, UT. This biannual event brings together world experts and regional soil health practitioners to teach about ways to improve soil health.

The AgrAbility staff was excited to conduct an AgrAbility training workshop for both the Logan and Vernal Vocational Rehabilitation districts' staff on February 13 and 28. Several case studies were reviewed, leading to some great discussion. [More](#)

On February 15, AgrAbility staff set up a table at the Cache County Extension Crop School and informed many of the 80 participants about AgrAbility. Topics included weed control with drones for farms, speed melting snow to prevent snow mold, and irrigation optimization options.

AgrAbility presented at the Northern Utah Fruit Growers Association's annual meeting on February 20 in Brigham City, UT. Northern Utah is famous for growing peaches, apricots, raspberries, and tart cherries.

On February 21, staff set up a table and presented at the Central Utah Association of Conservation Districts Fair in Ephraim, UT. Staff were able to visit with many of the 40 participants.

AgrAbility staff presented and set up a table at the Utah State Dairy Extension Workshop in Wellsville, UT on February 27. Some of the topics included risk management, water optimization, and preserving dairy histories.

On February 29, AgrAbility staff were excited to set up a booth at Utah Beef Field Days. This annual event is sponsored by Utah State University Extension and was held at the USU South Farm in Wellsville, UT. [More](#)

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## Virginia

February was another month filled with outreach activities and new clients! Field Coordinator Jeremy Daubert hosted 30 participants for a farmer's dinner theater at the Raphine Volunteer Fire Co. [More](#)



Additionally, AgrAbility Virginia was well-represented at the 2024 Virginia Agritourism Conference in Harrisonburg, VA.

Two new clients were admitted into the program, excited about the resources provided by AgrAbility.

The Virginia AgrAbility team is working alongside DARS to research and recommend assistive technology for a cattle farmer needing assistance accessing his tractor, farm implements, and cattle feeder.

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## Washington

Don McMoran, Washington AgrAbility program director, presented at the Western Washington Seed Workshop in Mount Vernon, the Skagit Ag Summit in Mount Vernon, the Western Washington Potato Workshop in Mount Vernon, and in front of the Skagit Board of County Commissioners.

Emily Whittier, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the World Ag Expo in Tulare, CA, on behalf of the Western Region Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP). There, Emily helped WRASAP representatives educate the public about different stress-reduction resources for farmers, including the AgrAbility program.

Emily also supported a potential client looking for poultry resources. She referred the client to easy coop plans as well as grant opportunities through Northwest Access Fund. [More](#)

Deb Eidsness, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Multi County Annual Growers Recertification Meeting at the Skagit Valley College, as well as the Skagit County Ag Summit in Mount Vernon, WA. [More](#)

Debbie Fredricks, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, met with the Lewis County Farm Bureau president and P&E committee, as well as the Lewis County Health Department to discuss support for a farmer stress and wellness event to be held in April.

Alyssa Wade, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Spokane Ag Expo in Spokane, WA. Washington State University had its College of Agriculture, Human, and Natural Resources Sciences, Extension, 4-H, and other programs all in attendance at the Expo. [More](#)

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## International AgrAbility Network News

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### AgrAbility for Africa

The AgrAbility for Africa staff is actively engaged in research of the latest agriculture technologies that are accessible and cost-effective to enhance participation for persons with disabilities and accessible sustainable food solutions for not only rural, but also urban communities. [More](#)

Preparations are ongoing for the second AgrAbility for Africa training workshop to take place in June 2024 in Uganda. All are welcome to support the initiative that brings together rehabilitation





and assistive technology experts from the rest of the world to engage with African farmers, extension workers, academicians,...  
[More](#)

## Staff Changes and Recognition

### Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility invites you to welcome our newest staff member Stephanie Wallace. Stephanie serves as the event planner across our different grants. She graduated from Georgia State University with a degree in hospitality administration. She has enjoyed meeting many of you already during the preparation for NTW. We are excited to have her as part of our team!



### North Carolina (affiliate)

Welcome on March 11 to Ray B. Parnell, Jr., MBA, farmer, veteran, small business owner, as the first NC AgrAbility "Veterans to Agriculture" field agent. Ray has always been drawn outdoors from helping his grandparents on their small farm while exploring the woods where he grew up, to his time in the Army, taking his children fishing, hiking, and spending as much time outside as possible. He currently owns and operates a small farm in southeast North Carolina raising sheep and pigs and bringing fresh local meats and produce to markets. As a farmer veteran, he understands the experiences and challenges of military service and the draw of this amazing world of agriculture, and he enjoys the bond and camaraderie of farmers and veterans. Ray holds an MBA from Webster University, served 22 years in the U.S. Army, and has worked in various military and small business leadership roles.

## AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .



- [Get Stronger, Fish Longer](#) Published in *Commercial Fishing News* (Maine AgrAbility)
- [Farmer Veteran to Speak at 2024 AgrAbility National Training Workshop](#) (AgrAbility in Georgia, National AgrAbility Project)
- [Safety and Rescue Training Saves the Life of Farmer Trapped in Grain Bin](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [AgrAbility: Farming With Disabilities](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [North Carolina's AgrAbility project assists aging and disabled farmers](#) (Affiliate - North Carolina AgrAbility)
- [Farm of the Brave: Farm Again helps veterans reconnect with the land](#) (AgrAbility in Georgia / Farm Again)
- [AgrAbility Strives to Help Farmers Take Charge of Their Health With Webinar Series](#) (Illinois AgrAbility)
- [KVNF Farm Friday: Colorado AgrAbility program](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [GROUNDSWELL: AGRABILITY CONNECTS FARMS TO VITAL RESOURCES](#) (AgrAbility Virginia)
- [AgrAbility to host webinars](#) (Illinois AgrAbility)
- [Ohio AgrAbility Program Champions Universal Design in Farming for Enhanced Accessibility](#) (Ohio AgrAbility)
- [AgrAbility program focuses on helping producers facing physical challenges, accessibility concerns](#) (Nebraska AgrAbility)
- [Stop the Bleed, Your Neighbor May Benefit](#). Published February 21, 2024, in the

Cherokee Scout newspaper. (Affiliate - North Carolina AgrAbility)

- [How Ergonomic Technology Can Improve Farm Safety](#) (Nebraska AgrAbility)
- [AgrAbility PA Helps Disabled or Injured Farmers Adapt and Keep Working](#) (AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians, National AgrAbility Project)

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## OtherNews

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

- "Blessing of the Tractor" was held during National FFA week at Gibson County High School (TN). Thirty-five FFA students and parents/guardians were given information on how to help a friend, given tractor window clings with the mental health hotline number 988 and SAgE (Southern Ag Exchange Network) window clings and other information. Gibson County FFA members participated in a farm stress skit. Tractors and the window clings were blessed by a local preacher. Coordinators: TN Suicide Prevention Network; Perimeter Health; Gibson County Coordinated Health and Gibson County FFA advisors and members.
- [AgriSafe's Talking Total Farmer Health Podcast: "Finding Resiliency During Financial Strain"; Episode 31](#)
- [1890 Land-grant Institutions Strengthening Agricultural Profitability and Sustainability of Small-Scale Farms](#)
- [USDA Releases Updated Equity Action Plan](#)
- [Hearing Loss Hits Rural America Hardest, New Study Finds](#)
- [BLM Announces \\$18M to Enhance Native Seed Supply and Climate Resilience](#)
- [USDA Releases 2022 Census of Agriculture Data](#)
- [Flowers grown on polluted waterways can help clean up nutrient runoff](#)
- ["I Trusted Him Farther Than Any Living Man": Bose Ikard on the Goodnight-Loving Trail](#)



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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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March 2024

## National AgrAbility Project

### Shipping:

If you are shipping to have it arrive within 3 days of your arrival, you can ship to the hotel:

Grand Hyatt  
3300 Peachtree Rd  
Atlanta, GA 30305  
Put it attention to you.

If you are shipping so it gets there prior to 3 days before your arrival, you can ship to:

Kyle Haney  
850 College Station Rd.  
Athens, GA 30602

Please mark your box that it is for AgrAbility NTW and your name and let Kyle know that it is coming.

If you have any questions, contact us anytime.

Tess McKeel - [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org) -585.447.9015  
or JoBeth Rath - [jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org) - 585.402.2059

Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes



The National AgrAbility Project, in collaborations with Life Essentials, once again exhibited at the National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville, Kentucky February 14-17. The show is the largest indoor farm trade show in the U.S., with 27 acres of exhibit space. Over 300,000 people attended the show to visit with 800 vendors representing every facet of the agricultural industry. The AgrAbility display featured LifeLyfts by Life

Essentials' compact tractor with a lift, and many young participants enjoyed a ride on the lift during the show. In addition, a wide variety of AgrAbility resources were available for show visitors. The show provides the opportunity to visit with farm families from Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Illinois, and numerous other states.

Submitted by Ed Sheldon

March 2024

## Indiana



The Purdue Ag Alumni Fish Fry, held this year on February 3, is a longstanding tradition. Each year, nearly 2,000 Purdue agricultural alumni and supporters gather to meet old friends and celebrate Purdue's College of Agriculture. Indiana AgrAbility and the Purdue Agricultural Safety and Health Program joined numerous other programs and organizations in the Fish Fry exhibit area. AgrAbility resources and programs were featured

in the display. Numerous AgrAbility clients and supporters from throughout Indiana stopped by to visit during the program, and many others learned about AgrAbility for the first time at the event.

Submitted by Ed Sheldon

March 2024

## Michigan



The second week of February was a busy one for the Michigan AgrAbility team. Easterseals MORC and MSU staff exhibited at the Great Lakes Regional Dairy Conference on Thursday and Friday, followed by the annual AGR Beef Preview Fundraiser over the weekend.



Submitted by Samantha Wolfe

March 2024

## Missouri

Emily Doosing, field specialist in 4-H youth development attended the sports concussion seminars in St. Louis and Kansas City while Karen Funkenbusch, project director attended, exhibited, and moderated program sessions. Doosing also provided training/consultation to three volunteers on making ADA accommodations in 4-H programs. She also met with the 4-H Save Your Brain Ambassadors to plan upcoming service projects.

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David Middleton, MO AgrAbility consultant & MO AgrAbility ambassador, exhibited at the Midwest's best indoor 62nd 2024 Western Farm Show at the Health & Safety Roundup. The Health and Safety Roundup is coordinated by the Missouri Farm Bureau and was open during regular farm show hours. It was located on the upper level of the American Royal Complex. There were hundreds of exhibitors, the latest in farm and ranch technology, acres of things to do, and it featured interactive and educational health and safety exhibits for the entire family.

Submitted by Karen Funkenbusch, Linda Geist, Emily Doosing, and Willard Downs



Lincoln University Cooperative Extension Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (LUCE ISFOP) team of Maurice Theriot, Demetrius Moore, and Penny Wilson exhibited at Missouri AgConnect on February 2nd and 3rd, an event connecting small-scale farmers to resources in Southeast Missouri. Local farmers including AgrAbility clients received information on upcoming workshops related to MO AgrAbility,

Heroes to Hives Missouri State Chapter, 2501 OPPE, MO Farm and Ranch Stress, farm safety and resources, and available USDA programs.

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Mary Keeter and Karen Funkenbusch exhibited at the 100th Annual Jefferson County Agriculture Conference on Saturday, February 24th. They shared stress relief and suicide prevention resources; displayed and discussed ergonomic tools; passed out health, safety, and well-being materials; and provided information on upcoming programming events with local farmers and regional community partners. Mary Keeter also gave a presentation, "Grow Your Own Mushrooms," which included information on safe tool usage and ergonomic setups.

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On February 27th, seven Lincoln University staff members joined University of Missouri Extension along with NRCS, St. Louis Urban Hub, and several non-profit professional staff members for an ISE on low tunnels for small-scale farmers including AgrAbility Clients. Mary Keeter also gave a demonstration using hoop benders to build a low tunnel using an ergonomic staple setter. The same demonstration was provided February 28th to a group of small-scale urban farmers.



Submitted by Mary Keeter

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Missouri AgrAbility was highlighted as a statewide program sponsor for the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) "Sports Concussions: Facts, Fallacies and New Frontiers" seminars. Three in-person and one live-stream seminar was held between February 26 - March 1 across Missouri. Approximately 200 school

personnel and youth sports coaches gained knowledge about recognizing a possible concussion from sports or daily activities, including farm accidents. Missouri AgrAbility was also featured as a partner for the "Get Schooled on Concussions for Missouri" resource to help teachers support rural kids in returning to learning following a concussion.

Submitted by: Maureen Cunningham

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March 2024

## Nebraska

In February, Jada Ruff, Nebraska Extension, and the AgrAbility occupational therapy (OT) students attended the Women in Agriculture Conference in Kearney. This two-day conference was a great opportunity to meet and have conversations about AgrAbility with women involved in farming and ranching. Staff also visited with people who had been impacted by AgrAbility's services.



The Nebraska AgrAbility team hosted the advisory board in February. The team is grateful to have wonderful board members to help guide this program and its team. Their input is appreciated, and the staff and team look forward to continuing these conversations throughout the year. This quote sums up our day: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead.

The Nebraska AgrAbility occupational therapy (OT) students have developed specialty handouts for the team to utilize with farmers and ranchers across the state. Topics include traumatic brain injury, cardiac Met levels, arthritis, slips and falls on the farm, youth safety, and more. The OT students are enthusiastic and appreciate this opportunity to work with the team and create educational resources.

Submitted by Soni Cochran



March 2024

## North Carolina

PI Crystal Cook Marshall also continued a partnership with ECU Agromedicine to educate rural North Carolinians in "Stop the Bleed," in basic farm safety, on the increased needs for safety while aging, and how NC AgrAbility can assist with farming more safely. ECU Agromedicine nurse Amy Nance also demonstrated CPY basics. This was a training requested by a local FSA agent for the farm community of Murphy in far Western NC. (Excerpted article attached from <https://www.cherokeescout.com/local-newsletter/stop-bleed-your-neighbor-may-benefit>).

Submitted by Crystal Cook Marshall

March 2024

## Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility reached a new audience in February: case managers and care coordinators from across Ohio. Rachel Jarman, rural rehabilitation coordinator, and Laura Akgerman, disability services coordinator, presented to case managers and care coordinators "Working together to serve Ohio's farmers," at the Ohio chapter of the American Case Managers Association annual conference. The topic was well-received, and Rachel and Laura had the opportunity to speak to many of the attendees and vendors before and after the presentation.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

March 2024

## Pennsylvania

AgrAbilityPA attended the 2024 Pennsylvania Veteran Farms Conference in Cumberland, PA. This was a well-attended event with many returning farmer veterans and speakers. One of the highlights of the conference was a PowerPoint presentation that went over the many grants/programs /awards/fellowships available to veteran farmers who meet the required criteria. Two were created by two veteran farmers to help other new veteran farmers just starting out. "The Skirted Soldier Grant" targets women veteran-owned farms in PA. Being educated in financial resources that are out there is a plus when fostering a professional relationship with the veteran farmers with disabilities that staff encounter. Several of the grants are quite lengthy with requirements that forms be filled out properly and in entirety to have the best opportunity of securing one. [Pavetfarms.org](http://Pavetfarms.org) offers application assistance for new veteran farmers interesting in applying for a grant/program/award/fellowship.



Submitted by AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians

March 2024

## South Carolina

Two dedicated Clemson team members, Dr. Dale Layfield and Dr. Lance Beecher, recently took charge of an AgrAbility awareness booth at the Farmer Veteran Coalition Symposium held on February 24 in Columbia, South Carolina. This significant event, expertly coordinated by two esteemed advisory committee members, Matt Rutter (the current president of the SC Farmer Veteran Coalition) and his wife Kara, drew an impressive crowd of nearly 100 attendees. Notably, Jeanette Lombardo, the executive director of the national Farmer Veteran Coalition, was among those present, adding to the event's significance.

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The commitment to the AgrAbility program in South Carolina remains firm, as evidenced by its collaboration with the nonprofit Able SC. Dedicated teams from Able SC and Clemson recently engaged in successful discussions with experts in assistive technology and vocational rehabilitation education. Together, they crafted a comprehensive plan to provide farmers across the state with invaluable resources to support their dedication to agriculture. The thorough needs analysis has been submitted to the Clemson Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the team is ready to receive approval within the next week and will be able to send it out statewide.

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Looking ahead, the Clemson team is preparing to attend the Assistive Technology Expo in Columbia, SC. This strategic move aims to raise awareness about AgrAbility's capabilities in extending assistance to farmers in need. The conference, focusing on agricultural awareness, will be an excellent platform to engage with those unfamiliar with the challenges and injuries that farmers often encounter.

Submitted by South Carolina AgrAbility

March 2024

## Tennessee

Jason Barber, a TN AgrAbility farmer with retinitis pigmentosa (RP), created his own YouTube channel to demonstrate how a legally blind person can operate a 100+ acre farm, with 35 head of cattle. Jason plans to demonstrate a multitude of assistive technologies that are used on the farm at the 2024 National AgrAbility Training Workshop in March. This information will be useful and can be shared with others who are visually impaired.

<https://www.youtube.com/@jasonbarber5643>

TN AgrAbility partnered with Farmer Veteran Coalition at the Pick TN Conference to host 14 sessions with over 800 total attendees of wonderful networking and learning opportunities from 9 TN ag associations. Sessions included: chapter update meetings; meet/greet meetings; "Women in Ag"; "Pathways to Farming; Farm, Family Safety, Health and Wellness," and a USDA/university panel with AgrAbility. This conference has special meaning since it is where TN hosted its first veteran meeting in 2018. TN also hosted the official stakeholders meeting for FVC-TN in 2020 that Michael O'Gorman attended to set TN up as an official chapter later that year.



UT Gardens continued its partnership with [Tennessee AgrAbility](#) and [Frontline Gardens](#) by offering free monthly lunch & learn sessions for veterans, active duty military, and first responders. The spring session began the third Thursday in February and will continue through May; sessions begin at noon Eastern Time. Registration continues and sessions are recorded and available to program registrants. Registration link: <https://utgardens.wildapricot.org/event-5590618>



TN AgrAbility, TN Association of Rescue Squads (TARS), and UT Extension agents from Fayette, Hardeman, Haywood, Madison and McNairy counties organized the first TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness Training for 2024. The 59 participants included rescue personnel, ag producers and Extension agents. Ten Turtle Tube rescue tubes were distributed throughout Fayette, Hardeman, and McNairy counties. Sponsors for training, meals, and tubes included Farm Credit Mid-America, TN Farm Bureau, Cargill, Consolidated Grain & Barge, and Goddard Family Endowment.

TN AgrAbility exhibited at

- West TN Grain and Soybean Conference. Five hundred grain producers and ag business people attended. Sessions with speakers from UT Extension and UT AgResearch included "Grain Marketing & Risk Management"; "Sustainability, Regenerative Ag & Trends"; "Farmers for Soil Health"; "Understanding Hybrid Characteristics and Agronomics in TN Soybean Production."
- TN-KY Tobacco Expo. Two hundred tobacco growers were in attendance to receive their GAP certification and production updates from UT & KY Extension tobacco specialists.
- TEAM (Teaming to Educate for Agricultural Mastery) Conference provided opportunities and choices for agricultural success with over 200 farmers.

Submitted by TN AgrAbility

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March 2024

## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah staff set up a booth and presented at the Northern Utah Conservation Fair in Logan, UT, on February 2. Staff were able to meet with many of the 240 people in attendance. Some of the many goals of the conservation district include reducing soil erosion, improving water quality, improving wildlife habitat, conserving water, and eradicating invasive weeds.

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The AgrAbility staff was excited to conduct an AgrAbility training workshop for both the Logan and Vernal Vocational Rehabilitation districts' staff on February 13 and 28. Several case studies were reviewed, leading to some great discussion. The training was attended by 15 employees from the Logan district and 14 from the Vernal district.

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On February 29, AgrAbility staff were excited to set up a booth at Utah Beef Field Days. This annual event is sponsored by Utah State University Extension and was held at the USU South Farm in Wellsville, UT. Some of the many presentations included "Beef Market Outlook" and "Rangeland Issues."

Submitted by Randall Bagley

March 2023

## Virginia

February was another month filled with outreach activities and new clients! Field Coordinator Jeremy Daubert hosted 30 participants for a farmer's dinner theater at the Raphine Volunteer Fire Co. Attendees acted out real-life scenarios depicting some of the emotional challenges experienced in agriculture. These events help facilitate conversation and resources for farmers to overcome the unique stressors of the trade.



Submitted by Leslie Lawrence



March 2024

## Washington

Emily also supported a potential client looking for poultry resources. She referred the client to easy coop plans as well as grant opportunities through Northwest Access Fund. Emily will be tabling at the Columbia Gorge Invasive Species and Exotic Pest Workshop in Stevenson, WA, and will be distributing AgrAbility materials.

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Deb Eidsness, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Multi County Annual Growers Recertification Meeting at the Skagit Valley College, as well as the Skagit County Ag Summit in Mount Vernon, WA. Deb also attended an Annual Sod Workshop and a multi-species livestock clinic in Stanwood, WA. Deb tabled at all of the events with assistive technology items and information about AgrAbility.

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Alyssa Wade, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Spokane Ag Expo in Spokane, WA. Washington State University had its College of Agriculture, Human, and Natural Resources Sciences, Extension, 4-H, and other programs all in attendance at the Expo. Alyssa shared AgrAbility and farm stress information to hundreds of farmers, farmworkers, and other people interested in agriculture.

Submitted by Alyssa Wade

March 2024

## AgrAbility for Africa

The AgrAbility for Africa staff are actively engaged in research of the latest agriculture technologies that are accessible and cost-effective to enhance participation for persons with disabilities and accessible sustainable food solutions for not only rural, but also urban communities. These tools can lessen climate change impact on farmers in Africa and at the same time enable farmers maintain their independence and productive lifestyle on the farm.



Preparations are ongoing for the second AgrAbility for Africa training workshop to take place in June 2024 in Uganda. All are welcome to support the initiative that brings together rehabilitation and assistive technology experts from the rest of the world to engage with African farmers, extension workers, academicians, and politicians to explore opportunities, build collaborations, share expertise, and experiences - all to enhance the quality of disability service care and access and support agriculture profitability and inclusion in farming across Africa.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

March 2024

## Upcoming Events

- Name** New Battleground to Breaking Ground Phase 1 Course  
**Dates** Rolling admission  
**City, State** Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://agrillifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/new-phase-1-battleground-to-breaking-ground/01t4x000002ciNKAAAY>
- Name** NC Agromedicine Institute Agricultural Safety & Health Symposium  
**Dates** March 20, 2024  
**City, State** Greensboro, North Carolina  
**Contact Info/Web link** Information: <https://emma-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/7megb/2f96cb041f0ee01ffb3e7a8e4f555729/2024ASHSymposiumCallforAbstractsFINAL.pdf> and for registration: [https://epay-banner.ecu.edu/C20694\\_ustores/web/product\\_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=2135&SINGLESTORE=true](https://epay-banner.ecu.edu/C20694_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=2135&SINGLESTORE=true)
- Name** Stress Control Strategies for the Forestry and Timber Workforce  
**Dates** March 21, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. EDT  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_hi26wip3STqfEUiK\\_X7luA#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hi26wip3STqfEUiK_X7luA#/registration)
- Name** AOTA INSPIRE 2024 Annual Conference  
**Dates** March 21-23, 2024  
**City, State** Orlando, Florida  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://inspire.aota.org/>
- Name** AgrAbility National Training Workshop  
**Dates** March 25-28, 2024  
**City, State** Atlanta, Georgia  
**Contact Info/Web link** <http://www.agrability.org/agrability-national-training-workshop/2024-agrability-national-training-workshop/>
- Name** Protecting Ag Employees from Infectious Diseases in the Post-COVID Era  
**Dates** March 27, 2024, from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. EDT  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_UvFuOM0aR\\_y9cRUBzLabAA#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UvFuOM0aR_y9cRUBzLabAA#/registration)

**Name** Vector-borne Diseases & their Impact in Farmworker Communities  
**Dates** March 28, 2024, 2:00 p.m. EDT  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact** <https://ncfh->  
**Info/Web link** [org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_RPvIkMimQ6uVU7dVG7sOGw#/registration](https://ncfh-)

**Name** Youth and Safety: Guidelines, safety, and programs  
**Dates** April 4, 2024, 1:00 p.m. EDT  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact** <https://illinois.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqdu2oqzIoE9y0MjjwqjPP8QZNjm1PSYRL#/registration>  
**Info/Web link**

**Name** Boots to Business Reboot for Veteran Beginning Farmers & Ranchers  
**Dates** April 8, 2024, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EDT  
**City, State** Online Training  
**Contact** [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/boots-to-business-reboot-for-veteran-](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/boots-to-business-reboot-for-veteran-beginning-farmers-ranchers-registration-817582781107?aff=oddtcreator)  
**Info/Web link** [beginning-farmers-ranchers-registration-817582781107?aff=oddtcreator](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/boots-to-business-reboot-for-veteran-beginning-farmers-ranchers-registration-817582781107?aff=oddtcreator)

**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**

**Name** Heroes to Hives Beekeeping Conference  
**Dates** June 27-28, 2024  
**City, State** Chaska, Minnesota  
**Contact** [https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/etahsdf/lp/84a082fe-52d4-](https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/etahsdf/lp/84a082fe-52d4-44e4-9d76-9de53ef443bd)  
**Info/Web link** [44e4-9d76-9de53ef443bd](https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/etahsdf/lp/84a082fe-52d4-44e4-9d76-9de53ef443bd)