

AgrAbility e•Note

April 2024

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

National AgrAbility Project News

The 2024 NTW is in the books. Thank you to all who attended and to those who helped plan and conduct the NTW! It wouldn't come together without all of you. Two hundred sixty people attended and were able to pick from 48 different sessions. There were many great discussions and networking experiences. Forty-seven farmers/caregivers/spouses were able to come through stipends. During the keynote presentation, Mike Reynolds shared about being a farmer veteran with a TBI.



The NTW auctions and raffles were a big success, raising about \$8,000 for next year's stipends. Thank you to all those that donated and made bids on items.

Please feel free to share photos on the NTW Facebook event page <https://fb.me/e/4Qpu8miFv> under the "Discussion" tab.

If you are interested in being on the planning committee for the 2025 NTW, please contact Tess McKeel - tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org -585.447.9015 or JoBeth Rath - jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org - 585.402.2059

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2024 Breaking New Ground Achievement Awards that are given to individuals who have shown outstanding commitment to serving farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities:

- Eileen Legault, Tennessee AgrAbility
- Esmeralda Mandujano, California AgrAbility
- Kyle Haney, AgrAbility in Georgia
- Steve Swain, Indiana AgrAbility
- Jeff Kratochwill, AgrAbility Wisconsin



NAP staff have started planning a regional workshop that will take place in Michigan July 16-18, 2024. It will focus on assistive technology, worksite assessment, and preparing for the ATP exam. All attendees will get a free 1-year membership to RESNA. Registration and hotel information will be out soon.

Staff are also planning a regional workshop in Guam for October 2024. More information should be coming out in a couple of months.

NAP would love to host a regional workshop with you. Please contact Tess tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org or JoBeth jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org for more information.



AgrAbility was well-represented at the 2024 AOTA INSPIRE Annual Conference in Orlando on March 21-23. Many thanks the AgrAbility staff members who helped staff the display: Vanessa Spero from Florida AgrAbility, Marci Walborn from AgrAbility PA, and Meghan Skidmore from Texas AgrAbility, plus Marty Cotterman from LifeLyfts who supplied the accessible tractor.

AgrAbility/North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center webinar: "Agricultural Stress, Resiliency, and Mental Wellness: A Nevada Case Study," Wednesday, April 24, 3:00 p.m. Eastern. [More](#)



Toolbox Spotlight



The buckled-to-the body [Allrounder Wearable Seat Cushion](#) allows wheelchair users to retain cushioning when transferring to other surfaces, including vehicles, lifts, chairs, or the ground. Containing air-filled SmartCells designed to offer skin protection and comfort, the machine-washable cushion slips into a fabric cover with adjustable straps that fit around the waist and thighs. The user experience is like wearing padded shorts that cover only weight-bearing skin surfaces.

State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

California

March was an action-packed month for California AgrAbility. Staff had the pleasure of celebrating National Agriculture Day at the California State Capitol. The state-wide event, themed "Next-Gen Tools, Talent and Tech," was hosted in partnership with California Women for Agriculture and the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom. [More](#)



Colorado

The Colorado AgrAbility Project (CAP) was featured in the Colorado Farm Bureau's recently released documentary, LEGACY. This film offers a glimpse into the beautiful and sometimes painful stories of agriculture. It is truly an amazing production that everyone should appreciate! [Watch LEGACY here.](#)



CAP staff were excited to have much of the Colorado AgrAbility Project team (Rebecca, Bob, Chad, Jim, Kirsten, Julie, Natalie, James, and Myra) in Atlanta for NTW! In case you missed it... [More](#)

This spring CAP was able to work with two interns from CSU's occupational therapy graduate program. This has been a tremendous,

mutually beneficial partnership. Read about Sabrina's experience of interning with AgrAbility below: [More](#)



Florida



On March 15th-16th, members of Florida AgrAbility attended the UF IFAS Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab's annual Bee College. This weekend event hosts over 300 attendees and provides two-full days of classroom instruction on a variety of beekeeping topics and hands-on experiences in an apiary. [More](#)

Several Florida AgrAbility team members attended the National AgrAbility Training Workshop in Atlanta, Georgia, March 25th -March 28th . Florida AgrAbility presented a poster "Farmfield to Coastline," and co-presented on two panels: [More](#)



Florida AgrAbility staff member Vanessa Spero helped staff the National AgrAbility exhibit during the AOTA "INSPIRE" 2024 Annual Conference and Expo held on March 21-23 in Orlando, Florida.

Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility was the proud host for the 2024 National AgrAbility Training Workshop in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 25th-28th, 2024! It was the largest NTW yet with almost 300 registrations. [More](#)



Justin Miller, the UGA Institute on Human Development and Disability's military veteran agricultural coordinator, was invited to the 2024 Farm Stress Summit as a panelist to discuss how different groups can work together to ensure producers are not falling through the gaps. Click the link to read the full story. <https://ow.ly/Ks5X50R5G1N>

On, March 19th ,Dr. Rains provided training on equipment safety and resources and services offered by Georgia AgrAbility at a Young Farmers association meeting. Fifteen attendees participated.

Thirteen new ANR agents were given a 20-minute presentation on safety programs and AgrAbility resources available for the farmers in their counties. Agents were broken into three groups of four and five agents and rotated through safety, sprayer calibration, and water programs presentation at UGA.



Illinois

Illinois AgrAbility presented a workshop at the National Training Workshop in Atlanta, GA, titled, "Behind the Scenes of the Ambassador Program with Illinois AgrAbility." It highlighted its ambassador program, how to begin one of your own, challenges, etc. Staff presented to about 18 people and had a great time!

Illinois AgrAbility is headed into week four of hosting 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 are caretaking for someone who is. Staff have six class participants with several who are part of a farm family or farming.

Staff are wrapping up their spring webinar series on April 4th, which will be the third webinar in the series. This session will focus on youth health and safety in agriculture and will feature three guest presenters. Staff have had an average of 15 participants on each webinar.

Indiana



Indiana AgrAbility staff and partner Lisa Becker from Easterseals Crossroads in Indianapolis were all involved in the 2024 NTW and appreciated the many fine presentations, good meals, great networking, and wonderful tours.

The Indiana AgrAbility team wishes to thank Farm Credit Mid-America for its generous donation this year that allowed the project to send 12 Indiana farmers to the NTW in Atlanta. For 11 of them, this was their first NTW experience, and the responses staff received have been overwhelmingly positive.

Both the Indiana and the National AgrAbility staff would like to thank all of those farmers who volunteered to share their stories in front of a camera for the "What AgrAbility Means To Me" segments on the NAP website.

Maine

Maine AgrAbility staff presented and tabled at the 2024 Maine Fisherman's Forum in Rockport, ME. Staff were able to network with a variety of service providers that serve the fishing community as well as connect with fisherman and aquaculturists directly. [More](#)



AgrAbility staff attended and tabled at the Maine Dairy Industry Association's Seminar and Annual Meeting in Waterville. The day was filled with education and dairy industry information for attendees. [More](#)



In conjunction with Franklin County Extension ag and hort, Maine AgrAbility co-presented a spring "Apple Tree Pruning 101" workshop. Participants learned general care and strategies for effective tree pruning and learned about adaptive tools and strategies including ergonomics to use on-the-job. [More](#)

Staff continued to serve and take on more farming clients by site visits primarily in the western and central Maine regions.

Maine AgrAbility expanded its reach in the month of March to serve youth audiences and hosted a "Safe Movement for 4-H Youth" workshop. Youth participants discussed with staff farm tasks that they do, identified areas of discomfort and pain, and learned how to better prepare themselves physically for manual work. [More](#)



Maine AgrAbility staff presented virtually to professionals in the logging and forestry products sector about Maine LogAbility. Staff gave a thorough overview of LogAbility services, with information specific to logging-related occupational hazards and common injuries in the mechanized logging vocation.

Staff held their quarterly Maine AgrAbility Advisory Council meeting in March via zoom. They are excited to have the support of an incredibly diverse and supportive group of volunteers to help guide the program.

The Maine AgrAbility group had a great time at the NTW representing their state efforts. Three staff members attended and were joined by Tim Small on behalf of Maine

Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility staff members Bev Berens and Andrea Garza attended the Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) Small Farms Conference. They networked with multiple agencies, non-profits, and small businesses, and talked with multiple farmers and small acreage farmers, people in regenerative agriculture, home gardeners, and people reviving cultural food and farming practices. [More](#)

Bev also attended the Mecosta Area Intermediate School District's career fair and talked to students at the tech center about agriculture, ag engineering, and communications. The all-day event hosted more than 50 vendors who showcased careers and offered internships and summer employment.



Ned Stoller and Samantha Wolfe attended the National Training Workshop, where Ned led several assistive technology breakout sessions, and both connected with AgrAbility staff, clients, and supporters from across the country. Client Cade Krieger also attended the NTW, and the three posed for a photo with T-Bone, the unofficial mascot for the conference.

Missouri

4-H received grant funding from the Missouri 4-H Foundation to put on a summer camp for youth with the focus on positive mental health. 4-H Kindness Clown College will be a five-day, day camp targeting youth ages 8-12. [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility worked with a multidisciplinary team to launch during the 2024 National AgrAbility Training Workshop a video on how drones can assist farmers with disabilities.

Mary Keeter with Lincoln University shared information on ergonomics and safety with a group of beginner veteran farmers at a workshop on electric fencing for small ruminants on March 23rd.

Lincoln University Farm Outreach Worker Susan Jaster presented at the AgrAbility 2024 National Training Workshop alongside MU colleague Karen Funkenbusch and Missouri AgrAbility onsite assessor David Middleton in a session titled "Farm Like It's 2024: Adaptive Devices and Technology for Safety and Wellbeing"

Mary Keeter and Susan Jaster with Lincoln University collaborated on an educational poster titled "Jesup Wagon 2.0" with MU's Karen Funkenbusch for the 2024 AgrAbility National Training Workshop.

Nebraska

Several members of the Nebraska AgrAbility team attended NTW in Atlanta, Georgia, including Emily Jacobson, program manager, Dr. Aaron Yoder, UNMC, Jada Ruff, Nebraska Extension, Soni Cochran, Nebraska Extension, and Ethan Deyhle, OT/PT student intern. Emily presented "Creating a Program for Educating OTs and PTs on Rehabilitating Farmers and Ranchers." [More](#)



Emily Jacobson shared that the staff spent this past month following up on client visits and shared that there are new referrals coming through the system soon. Emily also shared that the team will be at the Nebraska State FFA Convention in Lincoln and in attendance at youth safety days events this next month.

The Rehabilitating Nebraska Farmers & Ranchers with Disabilities Workshop will be held April 24, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the public library in St. Paul, Nebraska. This is an intermediate level training to help health professionals become more competent care providers for production agriculture workers who seek treatment at facilities in rural and urban areas. [More](#)

New Mexico

The team is exhausted, but exhilarated, from a wonderful conference in Atlanta and grateful to the hosts.

NMAP partner NMTAP is excited to be hosting a second annual hands-on assistive technology event for University of New Mexico occupational therapy graduate students at the NMAP demonstration center. During the event, OT students will have the opportunity to engage with not only AT for daily living and automation, but students will also hear about AgrAbility and see examples of tools that folks in agriculture can use to assist them in their work. [More](#)

All eight farm apprentices at non-profit partner Mandy's Farm have been participating in internships at local farms to stretch their skills. They are supported by job coaches and by two fieldwork II OT students from UNM.

Staff are continuing to coordinate major activities:

- Day at the farm for training of DVR about the important mission of AgrAbility
- An AgrAbility exhibit at the National Farm and Heritage Museum in sunny and beautiful Las Cruces, NM.

Dairy is now the #1 agricultural product in New Mexico, surpassing green chili!

North Carolina



NC AgrAbility, as part of NC A&T's agromedicine platform, participated in the NC Agromedicine Institute's 25th anniversary symposium. NC A&T is a co-founding institution of the NC Agromedicine Institute, with NC AgrAbility as its featured service program. [More](#)

NC AgrAbility will host a SaGE (Southern Ag Exchange Network) fellow this summer, working as part of a team on solutions for issues of BIPOC farmer stress and duress.

NC AgrAbility tabled at the Organic Growers School in Mars Hill, NC, connecting with small growers throughout the region. It is now in the process of developing a relationship for financial counseling for its farmers through Western North Carolina University.

The NC AgrAbility PI participated again this month as part of an ANR "listening tour" with Extension agents and directors, this month visiting mountain counties Madison, Yancey, Avery, and Watauga.

NC AgrAbility brought 20 farmers, veterans in agriculture, researchers, field agents, staff, assistive technology staff, and students to the NTW in Atlanta.



NC AgrAbility staff and partner Veterans Farm of NC presented at the NTW on their ongoing and anticipated research on adapted and assistive technology and equipment for small and/or sustainable farms.

Easterseals UCP began its formal relationship with NC AgrAbility in March 2024 as its participating non-profit for the duration of NC AgrAbility's current NCE. Easterseals UCP's Leslie Lawrence will work principally with NC AgrAbility on issues of marketing and public relations.

NC AgrAbility client Carolyn Cheek remains in production due in part to NC AgrAbility support and recently received the [Small Farmer of the Year award](#).

Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility staff and farmers enjoyed making new friends and seeing old friends and colleagues at NTW 2024. Ohio AgrAbility sponsored six farmers, four capstone students, and the entire (5-person) OAP team this year.

Staff and farmer/OSU Extension colleague Kane Lewis presented with Texas AgrAbility on building a peer network/mentoring program. Staff also co-presented five sessions with AgrAbility SRAP colleagues. [More](#)



March 6, OAP hosted a peer-to-peer networking meeting in Bellville, Ohio. Attendees were a mix of "regulars" as well as new farmers and family members. [More](#)

Pennsylvania



The PA AgrAbility team Suzanna Windon (PSU), Linda Fetzer (PSU), Marci Walborn (UCP), and Danielle Schmidgall (PA OVR) had a productive and insightful experience at the 2024 National AgrAbility Workshop in Atlanta, GA! Attending various training sessions and learning about the work of other AgrAbility projects provided valuable knowledge and networking opportunities for the team. [More](#)

AgrAbility's Linda Fetzer presented at the Mercer County Crops Day on March 15th. The presentation focused on reasons why ag safety and health practices are good for the farm operation and highlighted AgrAbility, farm stress and wellness.

AgrAbility Case Coordinator Abbie Spackman provided six comprehensive worksite assessments in March for new and returning clients across the state of Pennsylvania. The assessments resulted in assistive technology recommendations, referrals to additional service providers, and other tangible takeaways. [More](#)

AgrAbility PA staff continues to focus on direct client services and providing education on assistive technology options for the agricultural community.

AgrAbility PA staff member Marci Walborn (non-profit partner), OTR/L, ATP, attended the 2024 AOTA annual conference in Orlando, FL, along with staff members from Texas AgrAbility, Florida AgrAbility, and LifeLyfts to talk with OT professionals who visited the booth in the exhibit hall. [More](#)



South Carolina

South Carolina AgrAbility's new associate and a graduate student traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to attend the national conference and training workshop. The new associate attended training for new staff and enjoyed the essential information to use in the program. [More](#)

The team also conducted a site survey with an individual inquiring about assistance. The person initially asked about getting an equestrian lift to be used by the particular education class at West Oak High School to allow students with mobility disabilities to mount and dismount the horses at WOHS. [More](#)

Tennessee



THANK YOU to GA AgrAbility FARM AGAIN for being gracious hosts, and to Tess McKeel and the NTW planning committee for hours of calls and work toward the AgrAbility National Training Workshop (NTW) in Atlanta, Georgia. There were 15 attendees (seven TN AgrAbility farmers and eight professionals) from Tennessee. [More](#)

Thank you to Pokeadot Hops Cabin and the Trosts (TNAP farmers) for donating a two-night stay to their cabin for the live auction. Staff believe networking with other state projects and farmers is the best part every year, but T-bone, feature bull at the NTW photo booth, was a close second this year. [More](#)

Eileen Legault, TNAP area specialist, was honored for being one of five recognized nationally with the AgrAbility Breaking New Ground Achievement Award. She has worked for the University of TN Extension since 2014 for a total of 15 years with UT TSU Extension/TN AgrAbility Project. [More](#)



Agricenter International is immersed in the heart of agriculture in Memphis on over 1000 acres. Thank you to Agricenter for hosting a great learning experience at the TSU Farmer Veteran Bootcamp. [More](#)

UT TSU Extension Carter County, SAgE TN Network (Southern Ag Exchange Network/USDA's Farm and Ranch Assistance Network/stress assistance program), TN Farm Bureau Insurance-Elizabethton, and Carter County Cattleman's Association partnered to honor TN farm families with a "Farmer's Night Out" at Stateline Drive-in Movie Theater. It was a huge hit for local farm families. [More](#)



Paulus P. Shelby, age 88, retired in July of 2001 as Extension professor of plant and soil science. Mr. Paulus served as specialist for cotton and small grains. He modified his zero-turn mower with assistance from his son Philip Shelby and a close friend who is a welder. [More](#)

For the fourth year, the 113th General Assembly of Tennessee proclaimed March 11th #DisabilityAdvocacyDayTN! Staff honored the importance of advocacy in the lives of Tennesseans with disabilities and continue to work to improve access to equal opportunities across the state. [More](#)

March is Extension month in Tennessee. To highlight Tennessee AgrAbility's impact with UT/TSU Extension and the STAR Center, Tennessee AgrAbility highlighted a new video clip on a local farmer/client. [More](#)

Texas

Texas AgrAbility staff attended the AgrAbility NTW in Atlanta, Georgia, to network with other projects and gain education and resources. Staff members were able to interact with assistive technologies and connect with other projects to collaborate on initiatives. [More](#)



Texas AgrAbility staff presented with Ohio AgrAbility staff at the AgrAbility NTW. The presentation "Cultivating a Peer and Mentorship Network in Your State" included testimonials from peer group members from each state. [More](#)

Makenzie Thomas, program manager, presented to the Polk County Growers Breakfast on March 29. Attendees learned about assistive tools for their agricultural operations and ways to get connected with Texas AgrAbility.

Utah

On March 1, the AgrAbility of Utah staff was 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."

AgrAbility staff set up a table at the "Meet the Specialists" session of the Utah State University Extension Conference on March 6 and met with many of the Extension agents and staff from across the state. This three-day annual conference was held at the Event Center in Logan, Utah.

AgrAbility staff set up a table at the Morgan County Disability Fair in Morgan, Utah, on March 16. This first ever event was sponsored by Roads to Independence Independent Living Center and featured over 25 organizations that work with people with disabilities.

On March 22, AgrAbility presented at the Annual Pork Producers Convention in Lehi, Utah. Utah has over 560 hog farms and ranks 15th among U.S. states in pork production.

Thanks to AgrAbility of Georgia and the planning committee for the wonderful and enjoyable NTW conference. The speakers, presentations, and food were amazing! Thank you so much!

Virginia

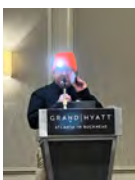
Virginia AgrAbility team members assisted in organizing a farm safety day event for school-aged children. Students learned about safety regarding power lines, cattle handling, guns, silo/grain bins, water tanker, equipment, and general farm safety. Each station provided an interactive, hands-on experience to practice skills being taught.



Team members enjoyed sharing with NTW attendees about farmer dinner theaters and how these events facilitate healthy conversation and resources across Virginia. Many thanks to the planning committee and Georgia team for hosting another wonderful conference!

Washington

Don McMoran, Washington AgrAbility program director, attended the National AgrAbility Training Workshop in Atlanta, Georgia. With his team of Julie Jesmer, program coordinator for the Western Region Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP) and Gracia Puerto, Skagit County Spanish-speaking agricultural Extension coordinator, they tabled at the event and had many amazing training experiences while in attendance.



Among the amazing experiences in the humorous category was learning from Dr. Bill Field the proper decorum for conducting large conferences. All attendees saw the light!

Emily Whittier, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, presented at two agriculture safety and health forums hosted by the Washington Department of Labor and Industries. She shared information about Washington's SRAP and the National AgrAbility Project.

Emily also attended and tabled at Maritime Safety Day, hosted by the Governor's Industrial Safety and Health Advisory Board. She displayed various AT items and

promoted The Toolbox to many maritime professionals.

Debbie Fredricks, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, has been busy putting the finishing touches on her "Farmer Wellness" event on April 5th in Lewis County, WA. It is going to be a magnificent event with loads of resources for local farmers. [More](#)

Deb Eidsness, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, attended the Northwest Meat Processors Association in Albany, Oregon. She tabled at the event, shared many assistive technology resources, and had many great conversations.



StaffChanges and Recognition

Colorado

We are still searching for a new AgrAbility Supervisor. Please consider sharing the [job listing](#) with your networks!

Pennsylvania

Joyce Brkopac said goodbye to the team on April 5, 2024. "Although it was a short run with the team, I really enjoyed working with our community of farmers and our counterpart Penn State Extension teammates. As a veteran farmer myself, I enjoyed once more being in the company of fellow veterans. I am hoping to remain connected to AgrAbility 'on the other side of the fence'."

Washington

Washington AgrAbility is sad to announce that Emily Whittier will be leaving our team this month. Thank you, Emily, for your hard work and dedication to AgrAbility. We wish you the best of luck on your next adventure. You will be missed!

AgrAbilityin the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [AgrAbility Breeds Accessibility and Enrichment](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [Promoting health and productivity through ergonomic practices for farming and gardening](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
- [Farm of the Brave](#) (Georgia AgrAbility / Farm Again)
- [National AGR, ability, conference recap](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project, National AgrAbility Project)
- [AgrAbility strives to help farmers take charge of their health with webinar series](#) (Illinois AgrAbility)

OtherNews

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

- [Talking Total Farmer Health Podcast](#): A Lens to Understand Farmer Stress. Episode 32, 1st April 2024.

- On March 22nd, Dr. Glen Rains (GA AgrAbility) gave a safety talk to 18 groups of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders at Candler County Schools were given information on the dangers of riding on a tractor without a seat and seatbelt, what a SMV emblem means when on the road, and the dangers of playing in grain or peanut wagons.
- [For a Healthy Fruit Snack, What Would You Choose?](#)
- [HOUSE AG COMMITTEE OFFERS SOLUTIONS TO FARM LABOR CRISIS](#)
- [From Gray to Gourmet: How Spring's Colorful Harvest Brightens Moods and Meals](#)
- [USDA finalizes voluntary 'Product of USA' label claim to enhance consumer protection](#)
- [Solar power occupies a lot of space – here's how to make it more ecologically beneficial to the land it sits on](#)
- [Farmers face steep challenges with USDA loan appeals](#)
- [Milk to the rescue for diabetics? Illinois project creates first insulin-producing cow](#)
- [Farmers share stories as 'teachable moments' in safety during Ag Literacy Week March 18-22](#)

UpcomingEvents

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

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

Copyright © 2024 Purdue University
An equal access/equal opportunity university. All rights reserved.



April 2024

California

March was an action-packed month for California AgrAbility. Staff had the pleasure of celebrating National Agriculture Day at the California State Capitol. The state-wide event, themed "Next-Gen Tools, Talent and Tech," was hosted in partnership with California Women for Agriculture and the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom. Farm groups and attendees came together to recognize California's agricultural community and celebrate with good food and entertainment. It was a wonderful event, and staff are looking forward to participating again next year.



Submitted by Angelina Padilla

April 2024

Colorado



CAP staff were excited to have much of the Colorado AgrAbility Project team (Rebecca, Bob, Chad, Jim, Kirsten, Julie, Natalie, James, and Myra) in Atlanta for NTW! In case you missed it...

CAP co-director Robert "Bob" Fetsch presented on his research in partnership with Brian French and Sarah Ulrich-French (Washington State University) regarding quality-of-life outcomes among AgrAbility clients. As of 2024, among 17 participating state AgrAbility projects, 69% (N = 205/299) of clients reported improving all parts of their life - physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and financial - between when they began and when they completed their work with AgrAbility. For more information or if interested in bringing the quality of life study to your SRAP, please email robert.fetsch@colostate.edu.

CAP co-director Rebecca Hill presented on her upcoming researching surrounding the economic impact of AgrAbility across the nation. If you have thoughts on how this project should further proliferate, email rebec.hill@colostate.edu.

CAP's behavioral health specialists Chad Reznicek, Jim Kuemmerle, Kirsten Wulfsberg, and Julie Elliot, presented on the promoting not only physical, but psychological well-being among AgrAbility clients. For example, in February, Kirsten hosted a presentation in Gunnison County on managing stress associated with calving season. For questions about this type of engagement, please email chad.reznicek@colostate.edu.

This spring CAP was able to work with two interns from CSU's occupational therapy graduate program. This has been a tremendous, mutually beneficial partnership. Read about Sabrina's experience of interning with AgrAbility below:



Growing up in North Carolina, Sabrina had always felt a deep connection to helping others. From volunteering with peers who had autism in middle and high school to working in a neurorehabilitation outpatient center after college, Sabrina always felt drawn to healthcare but wasn't sure of the exact direction to take. When she stumbled upon occupational therapy, she realized it was her true calling. The holistic approach of OT, focusing on helping individuals lead independent and fulfilling lives, resonated deeply with her.

In her first year at CSU, the opportunity to intern with the Colorado AgrAbility Project came up, perfectly blending exposure to her interests in neurorehabilitation and nature immersion. AgrAbility's mission to support farmers and ranchers with disabilities resonated with her current focus on neurorehabilitation, while also offering a valuable glimpse into the world of specialized home healthcare. Working with clients in their natural environments was a new and valuable experience for Sabrina, offering a chance to learn about their daily routines and challenges in an immersive and personal way (along with the opportunity to work outside!).

Throughout her internship, Sabrina found great fulfillment, particularly during home visits with Candy, who inspires her to always put relationships first and truly get to know clients as people. A recent moment touched Sabrina when she connected with a woman with a disability who runs a small farm in Northern Colorado. When

Sabrina asked her how she handled the recent snowstorm, the woman expressed concern. Sabrina was able to share information about AgrAbility and directly connected her the National AgrAbility Toolbox, an online database for farming and ranching assistive technology. The woman responded with immense gratitude and said, "The universe must have brought us together today!", after learning about the opportunities available through AgrAbility.

Sabrina provided several ways in which her internship with AgrAbility will impact her future career. From seeing firsthand the impact of assistive technology on farms and ranches to gaining invaluable experience learning how to conduct observations and assessment techniques in home environments, Sabrina has learned skills that will serve her well as a future occupational therapist.

Submitted by Natalie Bachmeier

April 2024

Florida



On March 15th-16th, members of Florida AgrAbility attended the UF IFAS Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab's annual Bee College. This weekend event hosts over 300 attendees and provides two-full days of classroom instruction on a variety of beekeeping topics and hands-on experiences in an apiary. Florida AgrAbility presented on accessible beekeeping, demonstrating a range of assistive technology that would be helpful in accessible apiaries.



Several Florida AgrAbility team members attended the National AgrAbility Training Workshop in Atlanta, Georgia, March 25th - March 28th . Florida AgrAbility presented a poster "Farmfield to Coastline," and co-presented on two panels: "De-stigmatizing Disability - How do we get there from here?" and "SRAP Panel Discussion on Taking the RESNA ATP Exam." Thank you, Georgia AgrAbility, and National AgrAbility for hosting a great week!



Submitted by Serap Gorucu

April 2024

Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility was the proud host for the 2024 National AgrAbility Training Workshop in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 25th-28th, 2024! It was the largest NTW yet with almost 300 registrations. Thank you to everyone who came to Georgia and made the NTW a great event! Georgia AgrAbility had a wonderful time getting to see all of you! Thank you to the National AgrAbility staff for all of their hard work in making this year's conference a success. A special thanks to Tess and Jo Beth for taking care of everything. Did you get a picture with T-Bone at NTW? Check out your pictures in the album called "2024 NTW T-Bone Pictures" on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/FarmAgainGeorgia/>.



Submitted by Kyle Haney

April 2024

Maine



Maine AgrAbility staff presented and tabled at the 2024 Maine Fisherman's Forum in Rockport, ME. Staff were able to network with a variety of service providers that serve the fishing community as well as connect with fisherman and aquaculturists directly. Staff presented the "Get Stronger, Fish Longer!" workshop. Participants learned how the ergonomics of their job can impact performance and affect quality of life. Brie Weisman, occupational therapist and farmer, taught simple steps participants can take to reduce risk of injury and have better productivity on the job. Toni Small, an oyster and kelp farmer and certified yoga instructor, provided yoga instruction that can be done anywhere on the clam flats or boats, as well as instruction on how to stay fit in the off season so fishermen are better prepared for fishing.



AgrAbility staff attended and tabled at the Maine Dairy Industry Association's Seminar and Annual Meeting in Waterville. The day was filled with education and dairy industry information for attendees. Attendees had the opportunity to speak with Maine AgrAbility about services. Maine AgrAbility staff were able to network with providers more specific to the dairy industry.

In conjunction with Franklin County Extension ag and hort, Maine AgrAbility co-presented a spring "Apple Tree Pruning 101" workshop. Participants learned general care and strategies for effective tree pruning and learned about adaptive tools and strategies including ergonomics to use on-the-job. Participants also learned and identified safety strategies.



Maine AgrAbility expanded its reach in the month of March to serve youth audiences and hosted a "Safe Movement for 4-H Youth" workshop. Youth participants discussed with staff farm tasks that they do, identified areas of discomfort and pain, and learned how to better prepare themselves physically for manual work. Staff also taught yoga-based stretches to 4-H participants.

The Maine AgrAbility group had a great time at the NTW representing their state efforts. Three staff members attended and were joined by Tim Small on behalf of Maine Vocational Rehab. Staff presented "Pain Management for Farmers" on the pain tool developed with a OTD student as well as "Movement and Self- Massage for Longevity and Productivity on the Farm".

Submitted by Bella Russo

April 2024

Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility staff members Bev Berens and Andrea Garza attended the Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) Small Farms Conference. They networked with multiple agencies, non-profits, and small businesses, and talked with multiple farmers and small acreage farmers, people in regenerative agriculture, home gardeners, and people reviving cultural food and farming practices. The most popular giveaway at the table was the *Arthritis and Gardening* booklet! This is a fun conference with a lot of engagement and great discussions.

Submitted by Samantha Wolfe

April 2024

Missouri

4-H received grant funding from the Missouri 4-H Foundation to put on a summer camp for youth with the focus on positive mental health. 4-H Kindness Clown College will be a five-day, day camp targeting youth ages 8-12. The purpose of the program will be to promote kindness and positive mental health practices using humor. In addition to learning mindfulness, journaling, and relaxation techniques using a variety of activities from 4-H curricula, youth will learn to foster positive emotional and social wellbeing through humor using pieces from the 4-H clowning curriculum. To cap off the week of learning and fun, youth will participate in a community service project in which they visit a local nursing home and/or senior housing to spread joy through humor and share mindfulness and positive mental health practices they've learned with the elderly. Emily Doosing continued to recruit volunteers to help with this camp. 4-H Save Your Brain Ambassadors are also being trained to help with this camp.

Submitted by Karen Funkenbusch, Willard Downs, and Emily Doosing

April 2024

Nebraska



Several members of the Nebraska AgrAbility team attended NTW in Atlanta, Georgia, including Emily Jacobson, program manager, Dr. Aaron Yoder, UNMC, Jada Ruff, Nebraska Extension, Soni Cochran, Nebraska Extension, and Ethan Deyhle, OT/PT student intern. Emily presented

"Creating a Program for Educating OTs and PTs on Rehabilitating Farmers and Ranchers." The session was well attended, and there were terrific questions from the participants. The Nebraska AgrAbility team reported many learning opportunities at NTW, and as always, connected with passionate people who are dedicated to providing resources and support to farmers, ranchers, and veterans. Georgia AgrAbility did a great job hosting NTW, and there was something at the event for everyone!



The Rehabilitating Nebraska Farmers & Ranchers with Disabilities Workshop will be held April 24, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the public library in St. Paul, Nebraska. This is an intermediate level training to help health professionals become more competent care providers for production agriculture workers who seek treatment at facilities in rural and urban areas. The featured trainer is Christine Hutchinson, PT, DPT, from St. Francis Memorial Hospital, West Point, Nebraska. She is a credentialed clinical instructor. If interested, more information and the agenda are available at <https://go.unl.edu/ot-pt>.

Submitted by Soni Cochran

April 2024

New Mexico

NMAP partner NMTAP is excited to be hosting a second annual hands-on assistive technology event for University of New Mexico occupational therapy graduate students at the NMAP demonstration center. During the event, OT students will have the opportunity to engage with not only AT for daily living and automation, but students will also hear about AgrAbility and see examples of tools that folks in agriculture can use to assist them in their work. Students will also be introduced to the NAP Toolbox for further reference. This event is a collaboration between NMTAP and UNM-OTGP, another NMAP partner. OT Students value the opportunity to learn about assistive technology and food production.

Submitted by New Mexico AgrAbility Project

April 2024

North Carolina

NC AgrAbility, as part of NC A&T's agromedicine platform, participated in the NC Agromedicine Institute's 25th anniversary symposium. NC A&T is a co-founding institution of the NC Agromedicine Institute, with NC AgrAbility as its featured service program. USDA-NIFA Acting Chief of Staff Michelle

Samuel-Foo presented the keynote. PI Dr. Crystal Cook Marshall and Dr. Sydney Davis-Richardson outlined their research in development on solutions for BIPOC farmers and stress from extreme weather.



Submitted by Crystal Cook Marshall

April 2024

Ohio



Staff and farmer/OSU Extension colleague Kane Lewis presented with Texas AgrAbility on building a peer network/mentoring program. Staff also co-presented five sessions with AgrAbility SRAP colleagues. Thank you to all of the presenters for so many opportunities for networking, collaborating, learning and improving our processes and service delivery. The Ohio farmers who attended were all very impressed with the quality of sessions, resources, and information shared.

March 6, OAP hosted a peer-to-peer networking meeting in Bellville, Ohio. Attendees were a mix of "regulars" as well as new farmers and family members. OAP staff shared an overview of the year, as well as news about future events and professional development opportunities. OAP staff continues to be grateful for their farmers and their dedication and willingness to travel across the state to meet with OAP staff and other farmers.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

April 2024

Pennsylvania

The PA AgrAbility team Suzanna Windon (PSU), Linda Fetzer (PSU), Marci Walborn (UCP), and Danielle Schmidgall (PA OVR) had a productive and insightful experience at the 2024 National AgrAbility Workshop in Atlanta, GA! Attending various training sessions and learning about the work of other AgrAbility projects provided valuable knowledge and networking opportunities for the team. It



was very beneficial to learn about "Creating a Program to Educate OTs and PTs," "Building Capacity for Farm Stress Resilience," "Cultivating a Peer and Mentorship Network," "AgrAbility Ambassador Program," "Accessible Beekeeping," "Veteran-owned Business," "Working with the Client Assistance

Program."

The session on "AgrAbility & VR: Navigating Policies, Procedures, and People" was highly relevant, given the importance of understanding policies and procedures when working with clients who may benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.

Suzanna Windon presented a research poster on "Farmers' Motivation for Learning and Developing New Skills," indicating that understanding the motivation of farmers can be crucial in developing effective programs and interventions to support them in production agriculture.



Overall, the team gained a wealth of information and experiences that will be valuable in supporting PA farmers with disabilities.

AgrAbility Case Coordinator Abbie Spackman provided six comprehensive worksite assessments in March for new and returning clients across the state of Pennsylvania. The assessments resulted in assistive technology recommendations, referrals to additional service providers, and other tangible takeaways. Assistive technology recommendations included highlights such as:

- A Poultry Hawk system to assist with turkey care for a farmer with joint and mobility impairments
- A cooling vest to assist with heat management for a farmer with burn scarring
- Grain bin level indicators to increase independence for a farmer who is not able to climb his grain bins
- Multiple equipment accessibility modifications including tractor steps with handrails



AgrAbility PA staff member Marci Walborn (non-profit partner), OTR/L, ATP, attended the 2024 AOTA annual conference in Orlando, FL, along with staff members from Texas AgrAbility, Florida AgrAbility, and LifeLyfts to talk with OT professionals who visited the booth in the exhibit hall. Professionals who stopped by the booth included students, new graduates, seasoned professionals, and those working in academia who wanted to learn more about the AgrAbility Projects, how OTs can support individuals in this emerging field of

practice, and how they might be able to get involved/connected in their state. Visitors had the opportunity to experience how a lift on a tractor would be operated and to connect with AgrAbility project staff to learn more.

Submitted by Joyce Brkopac

April 2024

South Carolina

South Carolina AgrAbility's new associate and a graduate student traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to attend the national conference and training workshop. The new associate attended training for new staff and enjoyed the essential information to use in the program. Staff acquired important information on all aspects of AgrAbility and the opportunities it can bring to the state. The team was also able to attend informative sessions that broadened understanding of AgrAbility and the many purposes it serves. Overall, the conference was successful in the associate's eyes and brought home important information for the program's success.

The team also conducted a site survey with an individual inquiring about assistance. The person initially asked about getting an equestrian lift to be used by the particular education class at West Oak High School to allow students with mobility disabilities to mount and dismount the horses at WOHS. Discussions were had about either a lift mounted to one of the existing structures on-site or a lift mounted to the school's horse trailer. Following phone conversations, a site visit was conducted to assess the viability of this as an AgrAbility case. After discussions with Dawn, it was determined that this project was outside of the scope of AgrAbility, as this would be for a school, not a full-time farmer in South Carolina. The next step in this process is to work with AbleSC to help find potential funding sources outside of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Submitted by South Carolina AgrAbility

April 2024

Tennessee

THANK YOU to GA AgrAbility FARM AGAIN for being gracious hosts, and to Tess McKeel and the NTW planning committee for hours of calls and work toward the AgrAbility National Training Workshop (NTW) in Atlanta, Georgia. There were 15 attendees (seven TN AgrAbility farmers and eight professionals) from Tennessee. Along with further training and open discussions about the future of accessible farming, attendees were offered the opportunity to tour Shepherd Center, the renowned spinal cord and brain injury rehabilitation hospital. The STAR Center, TNAP non-profit partner, presented two conference breakout sessions: "Physical Accommodations and Vehicle Modifications," and "Assistive Technology to Support Vision and Hearing Loss in a Farm Setting." Jason Barber, TNAP Bedford County farmer, spoke at three different sessions about assistive technology that helps visually impaired farmers and promoted "Farming Blind with Duck." Thank you to the TN AgrAbility team who presented at two sessions plus the two TN farmers who told their farm stories on the farmer veteran panel, Stephanie Trost and Mark and Kate Bowen. Tesha Humphreys with UT Family and Consumer Sciences shared resource updates from the regional SAgE (Southern Ag Exchange Network - USDA's Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network).



Thank you to Pokeadot Hops Cabin and the Trosts (TNAP farmers) for donating a two-night stay to their cabin for the live auction. Staff believe networking with other state projects and farmers is the best part every year, but T-bone, feature bull at the NTW photo booth, was a close second this year. Staff are grateful for the Tennessee AgrAbility team and the opportunity to share with attendees about this amazing program! Thank you to sponsors Farm Credit Mid-America and National AgrAbility for Tennessee farmer stipends to attend the 2024 National AgrAbility Training Workshop.



Eileen Legault, TNAP area specialist, was honored for being one of five recognized nationally with the AgrAbility Breaking New Ground Achievement Award. She has worked for the University of TN Extension since 2014 for a total of 15 years with UT TSU Extension/TN AgrAbility Project. Congratulations to Eileen on her well-deserved recognition, her dedication and hard work

with TN AgrAbility.

Agricenter International is immersed in the heart of agriculture in Memphis on over 1000 acres. Thank you to Agricenter for hosting a great learning experience at the TSU Farmer Veteran Bootcamp. Attendees were able to network, visit tenants on Agricenter property, and learn from industry professionals like AgrAbility. Thank you to TSU, Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN, and TN AgrAbility for organizing the annual event.



UT TSU Extension Carter County, SAgE TN Network (Southern Ag Exchange Network/USDA's Farm and Ranch Assistance Network/stress assistance program), TN Farm Bureau Insurance-Elizabethton, and Carter County Cattleman's Association partnered to honor TN farm families with a

"Farmer's Night Out" at Stateline Drive-in Movie Theater. It was a huge hit for local farm families. The movie was about stress and how to overcome challenges that many farmers and their families face. Farming is not easy and these producers are thankful for the programs offered by UT Extension. Giveaways were provided by the SAgE TN grant. Thank you to all the sponsors, who made this event a huge success. Quotes from attendees:

- "Each Community feels similar, conditions, problems, and stressful situation. We need to be more considerate of problems that come up with the people we are around daily & offer help & considerations to work to help solve each other's problems"
- "I learned the value of a strong community relationship"
- "No matter which type of farming we all struggle to make ends meet, stress is always there"
- "That we are in this together, that we are not the only ones with problems." "This is something that every farmer and non-farmer needs to see. They might be from down in the country, but they are dealing with the same trials and errors that we are for raising cattle and putting up hay. Does not matter what you farm, boys, it affects everyone. We all need to know that we are not alone in this farming deal."

Paulus P. Shelby, age 88, retired in July of 2001 as Extension professor of plant and soil science. Mr. Paulus served as specialist for cotton and small grains. He modified his zero-turn mower with assistance from his son Philip Shelby and a close friend who is a welder. Modifications were made to help Mr. Paulus mount/dismount his mower with little to no assistance. TNAP staff and Madison County ag agent Hunter Goodman made a farm visit for an evaluation, but Mr. Paulus and Philip already had a design in mind, and with the assistance of a welder, their vision became a reality. A "farmer/engineer hat" was worn for this project. (Photo credits to Beverly Shelby, Mr. Paulus daughter and leaning tree before the modifications.)



For the fourth year, the 113th General Assembly of Tennessee proclaimed March 11th #DisabilityAdvocacyDayTN! Staff honored the importance of advocacy in the lives of Tennesseans with disabilities and continue to work to improve access to equal opportunities across the state. Landmarks all around Tennessee were lit in blue for support and recognition of Tennessee Advocates and the Americans with Disabilities Act. A special thanks to the @Tennessee Disability Coalition for keeping the spotlight on advocacy in this community!

March is Extension month in Tennessee. To highlight Tennessee AgrAbility's impact with UT/TSU Extension and the STAR Center, Tennessee AgrAbility highlighted a new video clip on a local farmer/client. Jim Stapleton of Hawkins County faced mobility issues after an accident leading to several surgeries and including nerve damage. TN AgrAbility partnered with the TN Technology Access Program and the TN Department of Human Service/Division of Rehabilitation Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Program to make it possible for him to receive a lift for his tractor. [Watch the video clip here.](#)

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

April 2024

Texas



Texas AgrAbility staff attended the AgrAbility NTW in Atlanta, Georgia, to network with other projects and gain education and resources. Staff members were able to interact with assistive technologies and connect with other projects to collaborate on initiatives. Texas AgrAbility Occupational Therapist Megan Skidmore and Total Farmer Health Coach Cene Cleaton also attended the AgrAbility NTW. They gained useful information to assist farmers and ranchers with disabilities.

Texas AgrAbility staff presented with Ohio AgrAbility staff at the AgrAbility NTW. The presentation "Cultivating a Peer and Mentorship Network in Your State" included testimonials from peer group members from each state. Ideas and strategies were shared from multiple states on how to engage peer and mentorship networks for AgrAbility clients.



Submitted by Makenzie Thomas

April 2024

Utah

On March 1, the AgrAbility of Utah staff was 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."

AgrAbility staff set up a table at the Meet the Specialists session of the Utah State University Extension Conference on March 6 and met with many of the Extension agents and staff from across the state. This three-day annual conference was held at the Event Center in Logan, Utah.

AgrAbility staff set up a table at the Morgan County Disability Fair in Morgan, Utah, on March 16. This first ever event was sponsored by Roads to Independence Independent Living Center and featured over 25 organizations that work with people with disabilities.

On March 22, AgrAbility presented at the Annual Pork Producers Convention in Lehi, Utah. Utah has over 560 hog farms and ranks 15th among U.S. states in pork production.

Thanks to AgrAbility of Georgia and the planning committee for the wonderful and enjoyable NTW conference. The speakers, presentations, and food were amazing! Thank you so much!

Submitted by Randall Bagley

April 2024

Washington

Debbie Fredricks, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinator, has been busy putting the finishing touches on her "Farmer Wellness" event on April 5th in Lewis County, WA. It is going to be a magnificent event with loads of resources for local farmers. Debbie has also been working with a blind farmer looking for services and assistive technology options. She attended a virtual training with AgriSafe titled, "The Importance of Presence," she spoke with a visually impaired farmer from Arkansas and reached out to AgrAbility coordinators across the U.S. to learn about different resources and services.

Submitted by Alyssa Wade

April 2024

Upcoming Events

Name New Battleground to Breaking Ground Phase 1 Course
Dates Rolling admission
City, State Online
Contact Info/Web link <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/new-phase-1-battleground-to-breaking-ground/01t4x000002ciNKAAY>

Name 2024 Midwest Stream Forum for Agricultural Worker Health
Dates April 16-18, 2024
City, State Albuquerque, New Mexico
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.ncfh.org/midwest-stream-forum.html>

Name Combating Heat and Cold Stress for Forestry Workers
Dates April 24, 2024, from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. EDT
City, State Webinar Online
Contact Info/Web link https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_k_Kuu-mOS2WVaGV5RGqBMQ#/registration

Name QPR for Farmers and Farm Families
Dates April 25, 2024, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. EDT
City, State Webinar Online
Contact Info/Web link <https://www.agrisafe.org/courses/qpr/>

Name Assistive Technology Webinar: Making, Mounting and Modifying In Minutes
Dates April 29, 2024, 1:00 p.m. EST
City, State Webinar Online
Contact Info/Web link <https://form.jotform.com/240394777951166>

Name QPR for Farmers and Farm Families
Dates May 8, 2024, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. EDT
City, State Webinar Online
Contact <https://www.agrisafe.org/courses/qpr/>

**Info/Web
link**

Name Assistive Technology Webinar: "MakeAT" in Minutes with specialty tapes

Dates June 3, 2024, 1:00 p.m. EST

City, State Webinar Online

Contact Info/Web link <https://form.jotform.com/240394855124054>

Name Assistive Technology Webinar: AT and Aging

Dates June 16, 2024, 1:00 p.m. EST

City, State Webinar Online

Contact Info/Web link <https://form.jotform.com/240393973718063>

Name Heroes to Hives Beekeeping Conference

Dates June 27-28, 2024

City, State Chaska, Minnesota

Contact Info/Web link <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/etahsdf/lp/84a082fe-52d4-44e4-9d76-9de53ef443bd>