

AgrAbility e·Note

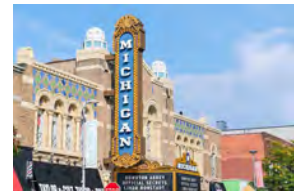
May 2024

A monthly update for AgrAbility projects and friends of AgrAbility

National AgrAbility Project News

Farm Bill update: both the Senate and the House agriculture committees have included continuation of the AgrAbility in their initial drafts of the new Farm Bill. The House version also recommends increased funding for the program. [More](#)

Registration is open for the regional workshop/assistive technology professional training in Ann Arbor, MI, July 16-18. This workshop is provided in conjunction with MI AgrAbility and will focus on assistive technology and preparing for the RESNA Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) exam. Registration is limited to 50 people, so please register early to guarantee your spot. Registration will be open through Tuesday, July 9th or until space is filled. [More](#)



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



AgrAbility was represented at the 32nd Annual Midwest Stream Forum for Agricultural Worker Health held in Albuquerque, NM, April 16-18. Kimber Nicoletti-Martinez and Esmerelda Mandujano gave the presentation "Effective Collaborations for Addressing Mental Health Needs of Migratory and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Populations" and staffed an AgrAbility display.

Congratulations to Broderick Peters who won the \$25 gift card for filling out the NTW evaluation survey! Thank you to all who filled out the evaluation. Your input helps continually improve the NTW.

A few of the wonderful comments NAP has received from farmers attending this year's NTW in Atlanta:

- North Dakota - "I can't thank you and your team enough for the incredible experience at the AgrAbility National Training Workshop. It's a community that it feels so wonderful to belong to that we didn't even know existed. Truly, a life-changing trip, albeit shorter than we had planned. Thank you all for your patience as we navigated our journey to Atlanta after/during the blizzard. I am SO glad we stayed determined to attend!" [More](#)



Newly archived virtual events:

- AgrAbility/North Central FRSAN webinar: "[Agricultural Stress, Resiliency, and Mental Wellness: A Nevada Case Study](#)"
- AgrAbility Zoom Discussion: "[Outreach to Vocational Rehabilitation](#)"
- [AgrAbility All-Staff Meeting: 5/15/24](#)

Toolbox Spotlight



A dual-keyboard [UbiDuo Communication Device](#) is designed to allow deaf or hard-of-hearing users to communicate with anyone face-to-face in real time. Several models are available: the UbiDuo 3 allows users to type messages back and forth with others (in both wireless and wired versions), while the UbiDuo 3 Text to Speech 1 and the UbiDuo 3 Text to Speech 2 convert typed text into audible

speech.

State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

California

California AgrAbility had the pleasure of attending the Midwest Stream Farm Forum for Agricultural Worker Health in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The 32nd annual conference, hosted by the National Center for Farmworker Health, featured sessions on clinical topics, health outreach, health equity, social determinants of health, and much more.

[More](#)



Florida



The Center for Independent Living (CIL) of Broward/Gulf Coast committed more than \$100,000 to Florida AgrAbility to assist farmers with infrastructure repair, financial loss, and other miscellaneous damages occurred on the farms due to 2022 category 5 Hurricane Ian that caused an estimated \$1 billion in agricultural-production losses. [More](#)

Florida AgrAbility was nominated by the UF/IFAS Extension Dean's group for the National Team Excellence in Extension Award, and the award application was submitted in April.

Vanessa Spero presented at the 2024 Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE) Conference in Orlando, FL, on April 23. Her presentation was "Best Practices for Working with People with Disabilities in the Agricultural Sectors."

Georgia

UGA Farm Again hosted a tractor operator and safety workshop for new and beginning farmers on April 27th. The morning session included an overview of tractor controls, operating practices, and safety presentations led by Dr. Glen Rains, a co-director of Georgia AgrAbility and Georgia's farm safety Extension specialist. [More](#)



Georgia AgrAbility hosted a webinar on April 29th taught by Dr. Therese



Willkomm. The topic of the webinar was "Making, Mounting, and Modifying in Minutes." Attendees were able to get a first-hand look at many different solutions that can be made very quickly for clients that they are working with. [More](#)

Indiana

At Ease Orchard partnered with AgrAbility, Purdue, and Heroes to Hives provided bees and Beekeeping supplies to over 20 veterans, first responders, and their family members to begin their journey in beekeeping. The partnered organizations will continue to support them through monthly virtual bee club meetings to help them succeed.



Maine



Maine AgrAbility staff connected with the Merrymeeting Food Council group to present a safe movement and ergonomics workshop to beginning and new farmers. Staff presented about joint mobility, compressive forces, and posture and offered helpful information on moving safely in farming work. [More](#)

AgrAbility staff presented at the Professional Logging Contractors' safety training day in Strong, ME. Three sessions were held throughout the day. [More](#)



The Maine Occupational Therapy Association held its spring conference. AgrAbility staff worked a display table. AgrAbility staff discussed the program with other occupational therapists in attendance as a resource for their clients.



Maine AgrAbility staff have participated in youth tractor safety classes in Kennebec County, ME. AgrAbility staff demonstrated ROPS and seatbelt safety to participants with models. [More](#)

AgrAbility staff tabled at the annual Franklin County, ME, Fiddlehead Festival. Staff connected with other community groups and members, including NRCS, regarding AgrAbility services.



Michigan

The proceeds from the annual AGR Beef Preview Show at Michigan State University were donated to AgrAbility staff members Bev Berens and Denise Durkee on April 11. The total sum was over \$34,000, the largest amount ever raised by the fraternity to benefit AgrAbility.

Michigan State University's mechanical engineering capstone students presented their portable swarm trap lifter design at [Design Day](#) on April 19. The portable design can lift a trap from three to seven feet and costs under \$400 to build. The team wrote step-by-step instructions that will be published online and made available to other beekeepers in the future.

Extension Educator Samantha Wolfe spoke with WTVB on "Delaney in the Morning's Extension Update" and provided an overview of AgrAbility and common assistive technology solutions in agriculture.

AgrAbility staff also continue to work with clients on their farms and is preparing for the upcoming regional training workshop in July.

Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility's, "Taking agriculture to new heights: Using drones to help Missouri farmers with disabilities overcome barriers and improve efficiency" video, produced by MU Extension, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (LUCE ISFOP) and Poole Communications, was launched and published on [Facebook](#): and [YouTube](#).

Missouri AgrAbility exhibited at the Power Up Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) Conference & Expo April 8 - April 9, in Columbia, Missouri. The Power Up 2024 agenda, sessions and handouts, sponsors, presenters, keynote, exhibitors, and general information is at <https://at.mo.gov/power-up-conference/>.

Women in Dairy learned about MU Extension's USDA NIFA grant-funded 2501 OPPE "ABCs of USDA Programs," [Farm Stress](#), [Missouri AgrAbility](#) and, [Heroes to Hives Missouri State Chapter](#) accessible beekeeping programs on Wednesday, April 10.

4-H received grant money through the Missouri Afterschool Network to host 4-H Clown College. This initiative is about positive mental health palatably woven into a clown-themed day camp to reach 75 youth from underserved communities who are at an increased risk for experiencing mental health challenges.

This month's 4-H Save Your Brain Ambassadors' meeting provided training to eight 4-H Save Your Brain Ambassadors who championed destigmatizing mental health in their schools and communities. Ambassadors assisted with 4-H Clown College. [More](#)



[Lincoln University Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program](#) staff Maurice Theriot, Susan Jaster, Penny Wilson, Haze Gaddie, and Mary Keeter presented at a train-the-trainer small-scale farming and gardening program in St. Louis, MO, on April 19th and 20th for 95 minority beginner farmers. [More](#)

ISFOP Farm Outreach Worker Izula Maximillen hosted a soil health workshop for 38 beginner farmers and farmer apprentices at [Sankara Farm](#) in Kansas City. LUCE's Dr. Tunsisa Hurisso presented on "Digging Deep: Uncover the Secrets of the Soil with Quantitative Measures" while ISFOP's Mary Keeter presented... [More](#)



Missouri AgrAbility partnered with the [Brain Injury Association of Missouri \(BIA-MO\)](#) to implement the "Brain Injury Fact of the Day" media campaign during March 2024 for Brain Injury Awareness Month. [More](#)

Missouri AgrAbility featured two brain injury-related sessions at the NTW. Staff partnered with internationally known researcher Dr. Brick Johnstone for a session on "Improving Vocational Outcomes for Persons with TBI." [More](#)

Dr. Jill Dougherty with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shared data about brain injury in rural communities throughout the United States. The CDC provides valuable data about the prevalence and causes of brain injury.

Marketing of Missouri AgrAbility continued at the BIA-MO Survivor and Family Seminars in southwest (March 23) and western Missouri (April 20). Nearly 150 AgrAbility clients became aware of assistance available through the Missouri AgrAbility and BIA-MO partnership. [More](#)

Staff exhibited at the [KeeleyLife](#) Health Fair on April 24 and raised awareness among construction workers, many of whom are veterans, about Missouri AgrAbility. Stress in

farming was discussed as well as the prevention of brain injury and other injuries in construction, military and agriculture professions. [More](#)

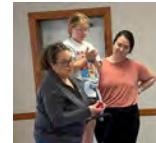
Nebraska



Nebraska AgrAbility would like to thank three capstone students for their hard work this semester in learning the program's needs and creating projects for us. They used a lot of time outside of AgrAbility to educate themselves and find the research necessary for their projects to excel.

[More](#)

Nebraska AgrAbility Program Manager Emily Jacobson presented at Youth Safety Days in Albion, Nebraska. The educational focus was teaching ATV/UTV safety to third grade youth. [More](#)



The 2024 OT/PT training was held this month, and it was another success! OTs and PTs, OTAs, PTAs and students joined the team from across Nebraska to learn best practices in rehab for their farmers and ranchers. [More](#)

New Mexico

Staff are planning a "day at the farm" to provide training for DVR about AgrAbility and the specific needs of farmers and ranchers.

Staff are continuing to collaborate closely with the NM Farm and Ranch Museum for an exhibit that will feature AgrAbility.

A NMTAP colleague attended an AgrAbility training in Wisconsin to learn best practices to bring to New Mexico.

Staff members from UNM, NMSU, Mandy's Farm (non-profit partner) and NM TAP had a great learning experience at the National Training Workshop. Staff loved interactions with the audiences at the presentations they offered.

Staff will be publishing a newsletter full of pictures of presentations by NMAP partners, of work completed by NMAP farm apprentices working at Mandy's Farm, and of work that OT fieldwork students have been completing on the NMAP clinical rotations soon!

Ohio

On Wednesday, April 17th, the Ohio State Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering (FABE) held its annual Student Scholarship and Awards Banquet. The banquet, held at the Nationwide 4-H Center on campus, honors faculty, staff, students, and alumni for contributing to the department's advancement in 2024. [More](#)



OAP staff presented on AgrAbility services to students at Wilmington College's masters in OT rural focus program. This annual presentation is always a great chance to share AgrAbility services with future rural health professionals.

South Carolina

The month was filled with many activities for the South Carolina team.



The first activity was to introduce the Clemson Life Program, located at Clemson University, to agriculture and activities they can achieve.

[More](#)

Another activity for the month was a visit from a middle school where the students were introduced to aquaponics and the ability for the system to be designed with disabilities in mind. The AgrAbility team was present to allow the students to ask questions to understand the system's functions.



The month ended with South Carolina AgrAbility hosting an advisory meeting to bring together those who want to see the South Carolina AgrAbility team succeed in bringing services to the state. [More](#)

Tennessee



TN AgrAbility showed, via recognition on social media, its nonprofit partner The STAR Center's OTs during April's National Occupational Therapy Month.

TN AgrAbility supported friends at the TN Department of Intellectual and Development Disabilities via social media as they celebrated the [#IAmASDinTN](#) campaign in collaboration with the TN Council on Autism Spectrum Disorder. They shared the stories of Tennesseans with autism doing what they love, reaching for their dreams, and improving their communities!

On April 17, the U.S. Congress and the disability community celebrated National Assistive Technology (AT) Awareness Day. The day honored people with disabilities who require AT to access their education, workplace, community, and recreational activities. [More](#)

TN AgrAbility partnered with the University of Tennessee's Center for Literacy, Education & Employment and with TN DHS/Division of Rehabilitation Services by presenting via Zoom, "Raising Hope by Bringing Awareness Right Now (BARN)" to over 80 participants. [More](#)

The command added another garden activity in April, so therapeutic gardening will be held twice a week this season. Charley Jordan, TN AgrAbility farmer veteran, appreciates having the full command team support on this project. Charley and participating soldiers were busy in April getting the ground ready, pulling some tulips, and mowing grass.



There was another successful "Pass It On" day for 200 recipients who received used medical equipment, technology, or low-vision devices. The STAR Center, TN AgrAbility's nonprofit partner, had a variety of gently used items available for free. [More](#)

TNAP exhibited and spoke at the 2024 Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN annual meeting in Murfreesboro, TN. FVC TN networked and planned several events for the future as 2024 looks to be a big year, and the group obtained non-profit status. There were 20 in attendance at the annual meeting.

TN AgrAbility presented and exhibited at the Urban Agriculture Small Farm Symposium in Nashville in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Services. Forty participants learned, engaged and networked with federal agencies and industry experts.

TN AgrAbility exhibited at the first of three Middle TN Community Resource Fairs hosted by the Vocational Rehabilitation team. This fair was a one day/one stop event to provide services and supports for individuals and families in Perry County. It was a beautiful sunny day for the 56 attendees.

2024 TSU TN New Farmer Academy (NFA) started classes in March and April in

West/Middle/East Tennessee. NFA is a seven-month certificate program designed for those with an interest in becoming agriculture entrepreneurs. [More](#)



A total of 267 TN Farm Bureau women, Farm Bureau staff, Extension staff, and vendors attended the 76th TN Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Conference at the Farm Bureau Expo Center in Wilson County. [More](#)

Texas

Erin Kimbrough, Dr. Cheryl Grenwelge, and Meghan Skidmore, OT, trained 29 students in the healthcare field on farm and ranch assessments, secondary injury prevention, and assistive technology for farmers and ranchers. The training was hosted on the Hadley Ranch in Cleburne, Texas, where students were able to access tractors and operate traditional farm equipment.



Cene Cleaton, Total Farmer Health Coach, hosted a QPR suicide prevention training for agricultural communities where she trained 11 service providers and Extension agents working with farmers and ranchers.

Cene Cleaton also trained over 300 law enforcement, public service officials, and social workers at the Fort Bend Community Prevention Coalition annual conference. She shared the top five stressors and shared resources for stress management and the AgriStress Helpline.

Texas AgrAbility hosted the quarterly peer group call to discuss peer group engagement and established a plan for the next year's topics.

Utah

The AgrAbility of Utah staff was excited to conduct an AgrAbility training workshop for the Provo Utah Vocational Rehabilitation district's staff on April 16. Several case studies were reviewed, leading to some great discussion. The training was attended by 16 employees.

On April 23, AgrAbility staff conducted a training workshop for the St. George Utah Vocational Rehabilitation district's staff. Case studies were reviewed, and insightful discussion followed. The training was attended by 15 VR employees. The St. George district is one of ten VR districts within Utah.

Virginia

Dr. Niewolny had the unique opportunity to highlight AgrAbility Virginia in a presentation for the Farm Finance and Conservation Planning Seminar hosted by the Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry at the Virginia Tech Campus.

Additionally, the program coordinator presented about the AgrAbility VA project to 25 VT undergraduates on a class dealing with "Identity and Inclusion in Ag." Field staff participated in multiple community events, including the VA Beef Expo in Harrisonburg, ag days at several local schools, and supporting the mobile unit at the Beef Expo!

Washington

Deb Eidsness and Debbie Fredricks, Washington AgrAbility co-coordinators, were trained

to be trainers of COMET (Changing Our Mental & Emotional Trajectory) by the Colorado State University staff. They hope this training, along with Mental Health First Aid and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer), will help aid farmers and farm workers across Washington.

Deb Eidsness also tabled at the WSU/WSDA event at Evergreen State Fairgrounds with AgrAbility resources and AT.

International AgrAbility Network News

AgrAbility for Africa

Following the acquisition of specialty equipment, AgrAbility for Africa is to begin testing the design of low-technology assistive devices made out of recycled aquatic plastic debris that is recovered from Lake Victoria by Uganda Junior Rangers, an environmental organization, to enhance AT equipment access as a way of promoting agriculture and social community participation for persons with disabilities.

Because of the increased need for safety while aging and farming with disabilities, AgrAbility for Africa staff are partnering with assistive technology experts to increase awareness to eliminate slips and falls by farmers with disabilities and seniors in rural farming communities in Uganda.

Staff Changes and Recognition

Nebraska



Kara Brichacek has been with the Nebraska AgrAbility team for several weeks now and has also served on the council this past year! She serves as a rural rehab specialist and communication specialist for AgrAbility under our non-profit partner, Easterseals Nebraska. Kara works to provide effective rural client services as well as promote resources through social media and client stories. [More](#)

Teresa Duffek is a new employee with the Nebraska AgrAbility team as of mid-April 2024. Teresa is a rural rehabilitation specialist for AgrAbility. She will be working to ensure partnerships across Nebraska are available to clients to benefit from. Teresa is passionate about ranching and farming with a goal of providing Nebraska ranchers and farmers the services needed to modify their ranching/farming practices so ranchers can keep ranching and farmers can keep farming and continue the lifestyle they live and love. [More](#)



AgrAbility in the News

Click titles below for news stories featuring AgrAbility projects .

- [AGR Makes Record Contribution to AgrAbility](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
- [A Tale of Caution](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [Wisconsin programs create support system for farmers with mental, physical health barriers](#) (AgrAbility of Wisconsin)

- [Clemsonlife FRIDAY FEATURE](#) (AgrAbility in South Carolina)
- [Presentation highlights adaptive technologies](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project, National AgrAbility Project)
- [Agribusiness Today: Illinois AgrAbility offers education and assistance to farmers](#) (Illinois AgrAbility)
- [Michigan AgrAbility to host regional workshop](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
- [New film on rural mental health is a teaching tool for counselors](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [AgrAbility Regional Workshop- Assistive Technology Professional Training](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
- [AgrAbility mechanical engineering capstone project designs portable swarm trap lifter for veteran beekeeper](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
- [Extension announces Michelle Bachand as new AgrAbility and Youth Tractor Outreach Program Coordinator](#) (AgrAbility if Wisconsin)

OtherNews

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

- [Talking Total Farmer Health Podcast: Heart Health for Farmers.](#) Episode 33, 1st May 2024.
- [New Beginning for Tribal Students Program](#)
- [From One Generation to the Next: Celebrating National Agriculture Day with Family-Owned Ranches](#)
- [Food, Fiber, & The Female Farmer](#)
- [USDA Researchers Use an Edible Blue-Green Algae to Protect Honey Bees Against Viruses](#)
- [Through sweet sampling across states, UMaine-led research aims to help maple industry tap new markets](#)
- [Systematic review of agricultural injuries can help inform safety measures](#)
- [Harvesting Resilience: Soil Health, Worker Safety, and FARM Program Updates](#)
- [As Food Costs Rise, More and More Americans Are Looking To Their Yards To Save Money in 2024](#)
- [OSU offers farm bill curriculum for high school students](#)

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](#)

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May 2024

National AgrAbility Project

Farm Bill update: both the Senate and the House agriculture committees have included continuation of the AgrAbility in their initial drafts of the new Farm Bill. The House version also recommends increased funding for the program.

Below are links to the respective summary documents:

- Senate: "Extends the authorization of appropriations through fiscal year 2029 for the Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities."
https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/rural_prosperity_and_food_security_section-by-section.pdf p. 54
- House: "Improves and reauthorizes the Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities (AgrAbility) based on a concept from H.R. 4586"
https://agriculture.house.gov/uploadedfiles/detailed_summary_.pdf p. 23

For details on H.R. 4586, see <https://www.congress.gov/118/bills/hr4586/BILLS-118hr4586ih.pdf>

Submitted by Paul Jones

Registration is open for the regional workshop/assistive technology professional training in Ann Arbor, MI, July 16-18. This workshop is provided in conjunction with MI AgrAbility and will focus on assistive technology and preparing for the RESNA Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) exam. Registration is limited to 50 people, so please register early to guarantee your spot. Registration will be open through Tuesday, July 9th or until space is filled. Sessions will include disability etiquette; medical conditions; assessment models, interview, observations, and reports; and assistive technology for farming. The group will complete an assessment at a local farm to apply lessons learned in the training.

All attendees will receive a one-year RESNA membership (\$185 value) and may be eligible for up to 10 RESNA-certified CEU's after successful completion of the training.

More information is available on the NAP website regional workshop page <https://bit.ly/4aWfxZx>, including the registration link, hotel information, and agenda.

Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes

A few of the wonderful comments NAP has received from farmers attending this year's NTW in Atlanta:

- North Dakota - "I can't thank you and your team enough for the incredible experience at the AgrAbility National Training Workshop. It's a community that it feels so wonderful to belong to that we didn't even know existed. Truly, a life-changing trip, albeit shorter than we had planned. Thank you all for your patience as we navigated our journey to Atlanta after/during the blizzard. I am SO glad we stayed determined to attend!"
- Indiana - "I want to thank you again for the invite. It really opened my



eyes to a few things. Met some interesting, intelligent, and hard-working people. I appreciate that!!"

- Washington D.C. - "...thank you so much for everything. I have been sharing my experiences with the AgrAbility conference to everyone and making changes to the farm. I have farmers who are interested in the next conference."
- Georgia - "I really enjoyed the conference and the connections that I made are invaluable. Attending allowed me to meet some people in person that I had worked with virtually... Thank you again for a great experience."
- Hawaii - "It was the best conference ever. Hope to go next year. "
- New Mexico - "We had an amazing time at NTW - please thank all who worked so hard to hold the event."

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin

May 2024

California

California AgrAbility had the pleasure of attending the Midwest Stream Farm Forum for Agricultural Worker Health in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The 32nd annual conference, hosted by the National Center for Farmworker Health, featured sessions on clinical topics, health outreach, health equity, social determinants of health, and much more. Program Manager Esmeralda Mandujano participated in a presentation with other WRASAP partners on aggregate data from the farmworker baseline study to community health professionals. It was an education-packed week aimed at providing a professional development opportunity for individuals specializing in disciplines within migrant health.



Submitted by Angelina Padilla

May 2024

Florida



The Center for Independent Living (CIL) of Broward/Gulf Coast committed more than \$100,000 to Florida AgrAbility to assist farmers with infrastructure repair, financial loss, and other miscellaneous damages occurred on the farms due to 2022 category 5 Hurricane Ian that caused an estimated \$1 billion in agricultural-production losses. So far, AgrAbility Case Coordinator Lindsey Head has collaborated with CIL Broward/Gulf Coast to locate seven farmers in need of financial assistance. A total of \$75,000 has been given to farmers in South Florida to help restore their farms. The funds distributed have been used to plant citrus trees, repair livestock infrastructure, and repair greenhouse structures.



Submitted by Lindsey Head

May 2024

Georgia

UGA Farm Again hosted a tractor operator and safety workshop for new and beginning farmers on April 27th. The morning session included an overview of tractor controls, operating practices, and safety presentations led by Dr. Glen Rains, a co-director of Georgia AgrAbility and Georgia's farm safety Extension specialist. In the afternoon, participants split into two groups. Each group went through a hitching exercise where



they learned to hitch 3-point and drawbar implements as well as connect hydraulic lines and PTO shafts as well as safety protocols while hitching implements. As well, each group also drove a tractor with an instructor through a course that included learning the controls on the tractor, shifting ranges and gears, and steering and backing maneuvers.

Georgia AgrAbility hosted a webinar on April 29th taught by Dr. Therese Willkomm. The topic of the webinar was "Making, Mounting, and Modifying in Minutes." Attendees were able to get a first-hand look at many different solutions that can be made very quickly for clients that they are working with. There were 37 attendees for this wonderful webinar. Georgia AgrAbility will be having two more webinars this summer. Please sign up by using the QR code in the picture.



Submitted by AgrAbility in Georgia

May 2024

Maine



Maine AgrAbility staff connected with the Merrymeeting Food Council group to present a safe movement and ergonomics workshop to beginning and new farmers. Staff presented about joint mobility, compressive forces, and posture and offered helpful information on moving safely in farming work. A discussion on ergonomic tools and a movement/micro-break session was led. Participants had the opportunity to explore

ergonomic tools and try stretches featured on the "Yoga for Farmers" poster.



AgrAbility staff presented at the Professional Logging Contractors' safety training day in Strong, ME. Three sessions were held throughout the day. Loggers and logging contractors discussed injuries, shoulder joint mobility, and protecting the shoulder as they work. Staff observed and participated in throwing strap and cable over loaded logging trucks with attendees.



Maine AgrAbility staff have participated in youth tractor safety classes in Kennebec County, ME. AgrAbility staff demonstrated ROPS and seatbelt safety to participants with models. Additionally, staff gave a presentation on general farm safety and tractor safety including pinch, shear, wrap, and crush points.



Submitted by Bella Russo

May 2024

Missouri

This month's 4-H Save Your Brain Ambassadors' meeting provided training to eight 4-H Save Your Brain Ambassadors who championed destigmatizing mental health in their schools and communities. Ambassadors assisted with 4-H Clown College. Additionally, 4-H Save Your Brain Ambassadors worked to install stress relieving "Take 5 Stations" throughout their schools. Teens sought donations/raised funds to purchase coloring books, stress balls, headphones, and tech to listen to guided meditations, cards with coping strategies, etc. The teens also solicited support of administrators and school boards at Summersville, Eminence, and Mountain View/Birch Tree school districts to install "Take 5 Stations" in the cafeteria, library, outside the counselor's office, and/or other areas in their schools. Overall goal is to help students access stress-relieving tools in between classes, while waiting to visit with the guidance counselor/school psychologist, and during lunch breaks.

Submitted by: Karen Funkenbusch, Emily Doosing, Susan Jaster, and Willard Downs



[Lincoln University Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program](#) staff Maurice Theriot, Susan Jaster, Penny Wilson, Haze Gaddie, and Mary Keeter presented at a train-the-trainer small-scale farming and gardening program in St. Louis, MO, on April 19th and 20th for 95 minority beginner farmers. Topics included: "everyone can have a green thumb"; tool ergonomics, selection, and maintenance; accessible container gardening; and square foot gardening. Participants also received [988](#)



[Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Missouri](#) information and the [Show-Me Strong Farm Families](#) Farm and Ranch Stress bag of mental health resources.



ISFOP Farm Outreach Worker Izula Maximillen hosted a soil health workshop for 38 beginner farmers and farmer apprentices at [Sankara Farm](#) in Kansas City. LUCE's Dr. Tunsisa Hurisso presented on "Digging Deep: Uncover the Secrets of the Soil with Quantitative Measures" while ISFOP's Mary Keeter presented a hands-on session on the Jessup Wagon 2.0 giving demonstrations on tool ergonomics, tool



selection and maintenance, and construction options for low tunnels.

Submitted by: Mary Keeter



Missouri AgrAbility partnered with the [Brain Injury Association of Missouri \(BIA-MO\)](#) to implement the "Brain Injury Fact of the Day" media campaign during March 2024 for Brain Injury Awareness Month. Website and social media ads were utilized to increase awareness of brain injury across rural Missouri. Visits to the BIA-MO website increased knowledge about Missouri AgrAbility as a resource for AgrAbility clients.

Missouri AgrAbility featured two brain injury-related sessions at the NTW. Staff partnered with internationally known researcher Dr. Brick Johnstone for a session

on "Improving Vocational Outcomes for Persons with TBI." Missouri AgrAbility Project Director Karen Funkenbusch had partnered with Dr. Johnstone on previous research related to brain injury and vocational outcomes. The Missouri AgrAbility collaborative research has expanded to a continued focus of vocational outcomes for persons with brain injury at Shepherds Center in Atlanta, GA.

Marketing of Missouri AgrAbility continued at the BIA-MO Survivor and Family Seminars in southwest (March 23) and western Missouri (April 20). Nearly 150 AgrAbility clients became aware of assistance available through the Missouri AgrAbility and BIA-MO partnership. Missouri AgrAbility was featured in promotional material, the printed event program, signage, and during the seminar welcome.

Staff exhibited at the [KeeleyLife](#) Health Fair on April 24 and raised awareness among construction workers, many of whom are veterans, about Missouri AgrAbility. Stress in farming was discussed as well as the prevention of brain injury and other injuries in construction, military and agriculture professions. Approximately 100 AgrAbility clients participated in the KeeleyLife Health Fair.

Submitted by Maureen Cunningham

May 2024

Nebraska



Nebraska AgrAbility would like to thank three capstone students for their hard work this semester in learning the program's needs and creating projects for us. They used a lot of time outside of AgrAbility to educate themselves and find the research necessary for their projects to excel. Congratulations to Ethan, Hannah, and Jesse! Wishing them all the best in the future.

Nebraska AgrAbility Program Manager Emily Jacobson presented at Youth Safety Days in Albion, Nebraska. The educational focus was teaching ATV/UTV safety to third grade youth. Youth learned about proper riding gear, what size of ATV they should be riding for their age range, "1 seat - 1 rider," how to ride on a slope, how quickly a roll over can occur on a slope, and what happens to the brain when a rollover occurs and a helmet is not in place! It was a fun day, and the students all seemed to have learned a bunch while having fun!



The 2024 OT/PT training was held this month, and it was another success! OTs and PTs, OTAs, PTAs and students joined the team from across Nebraska to learn best practices in rehab for their farmers and ranchers. A farm site visit was a hit and at the top of treatment ideas for farmers and ranchers.



Staff Changes and Recognition

Kara Brichacek has been with the Nebraska AgrAbility team for several weeks now and has also served on the council this past year! She serves as a rural rehab specialist and communication specialist for AgrAbility under our non-profit partner, Easterseals Nebraska. Kara works to provide effective rural client services as well as promote resources through social media and client stories. Her goal is to spread the great word of Nebraska AgrAbility to ensure rural residents of all abilities will never feel alone or discouraged. Kara grew up on and is still very involved with her family's farm in northeast Nebraska. They produce cow/calf pairs, feeder cattle, corn, soybeans, and alfalfa. She holds a bachelor's degree in communication studies. Kara is passionate about creating relationships with clients to ensure an uplifting experience and provide the support needed to ensure the clients will continue working towards their dreams in the agriculture industry.



Teresa Duffek is a new employee with the Nebraska AgrAbility team as of mid-April 2024. Teresa is a rural rehabilitation specialist for AgrAbility. She will be working to ensure partnerships across Nebraska are available to clients to benefit from. Teresa is passionate about ranching and farming with a goal of providing Nebraska ranchers and farmers the services needed to modify their ranching/farming practices so ranchers can keep ranching and farmers can keep farming and continue

the lifestyle they live and love. Teresa grew up on a ranch in central Nebraska and has continued to be heavily involved in ranching and rodeo her entire life. She continues to compete in the Extreme Cowboy Racing Association. Teresa transitioned from a ranching environment to a farming operation nine years ago when she met her husband who farms in eastern Nebraska, raising corn and soybeans. Teresa operates the combine, tractor, and grain trailer and anything else to help on the farm. She is a strong advocate of safety around the farm. She also holds a master's degree in nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Submitted by Soni Cochran

May 2024

Ohio

On Wednesday, April 17th, the Ohio State Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering (FABE) held its annual Student Scholarship and Awards Banquet. The banquet, held at the Nationwide 4-H Center on campus, honors faculty, staff, students, and alumni for contributing to the department's advancement in 2024. Ohio AgrAbility is very proud that Dr. Dee Jepsen's capstone team won the FABE Outstanding Innovator Award for their project "Obstacles in Designing Assistive Technology within a Skid Loader for Low-Mobility Individuals." They also presented this topic at NTW in Atlanta and will be presenting it at the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers conference in Anaheim, California, in August.



Submitted by Laura Akgerman

May 2024

South Carolina



The month was filled with many activities for the South Carolina team. The first activity was to introduce the Clemson Life Program, located at Clemson University, to agriculture and activities they can achieve. The activity consisted of the group learning the use of tools to create a raised bed. The Clemson Life group was excited to make the raised bed and discover what could be grown in the bed. Another activity was to examine a tractor, and the AgrAbility team was there to explain the different parts of the tractor and how they work. The day was concluded with a trivia game where the Clemson Life students were to answer questions about agriculture. The winning team was given a prize.

The month ended with South Carolina AgrAbility hosting an advisory meeting to bring together those who want to see the South Carolina AgrAbility team succeed in bringing services to the state. The emphasis was to form a relationship with the assistive technology team in South Carolina to look at ways to work together for the benefit of the state. Able SC facilitated this meeting.

Submitted by South Carolina AgrAbility

May 2024

Tennessee

On April 17, the U.S. Congress and the disability community celebrated National Assistive Technology (AT) Awareness Day. The day honored people with disabilities who require AT to access their education, workplace, community, and recreational activities. The day recognized the innovation of researchers, educators, and the dedication of AT specialists and program providers who operate AT programs so that millions of individuals can acquire and use low-cost and often no-cost AT. TN recognized some of its Assistive Technology specialists with the STAR Center for their hard work and dedication to serving individuals with disabilities seeking proper AT so they can continue to live, learn, and work. TN appreciates the AT knowledge and guidance shared with TN AgrAbility from Kim Lilley, the executive director of the TN Technology Access Program and partner with TN AgrAbility. Learn more about TN AT Act program: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/ds/ttap.html>

TN AgrAbility partnered with the University of Tennessee's Center for Literacy, Education & Employment and with TN DHS/Division of Rehabilitation Services by presenting via Zoom, "Raising Hope by Bringing Awareness Right Now (BARN)" to over 80 participants. Thank you to guest speakers Dr. Cheryl Witt, Sr., ag nurse, University of Kentucky, Extension specialist and Lindsey B. Wilkerson, M.S., clinical mental health counseling and manager of assistive technology services with the Star Center (TN AgrAbility's nonprofit partner). The goal of the webinar was to improve mental health and well-being by increasing awareness and offering tools to reduce mental health challenges, farm stress, and suicide.

There was another successful "Pass It On" day for 200 recipients who received used medical equipment, technology, or low-vision devices. The STAR Center, TN AgrAbility's nonprofit partner, had a variety of gently used items available for free. Many times, insurance does not pay for durable medical equipment. Through a partnership with the Tennessee Technology Access Program and donations from individuals and businesses, the STAR Center provides items to individuals throughout the area for no cost. (Examples of items available include wheelchairs, walkers, canes, bedside commodes, shower seats/benches, computer keyboards and mice, vision aids, and communication devices.) Thank you to everyone that came out and the 1280 who shared about the day on social media!

2024 TSU TN New Farmer Academy (NFA) started classes in March and April in West/Middle/East Tennessee. NFA is a seven-month certificate program designed for those with an interest in becoming agriculture entrepreneurs. TN AgrAbility staff presented program information about the AgrAbility project in these initial meetings. There are a total of 133 participants throughout the state. TN AgrAbility arranged accessible accommodations for a farmer who is legally blind with a job coach to help navigate the class and the farms. Another farmer who is deaf is using an app to interpret and take notes.

A total of 267 TN Farm Bureau women, Farm Bureau staff, Extension staff, and vendors attended the 76th TN Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Conference at the Farm Bureau Expo Center in Wilson County. TN AgrAbility had the pleasure of setting up a booth and speaking to ladies (and a male or two) about the back saver, magnetic hammer, anti-vibration gloves, chair yoga, and the Worx wheelbarrow while learning from those who stopped by the booth



about devices they used to make their tasks at home and on the farm/garden easier.

Submitted by TN AgrAbility

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May 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/01t4x000002ciNKAAAY>
- Name** Assistive Technology Webinar: "Make AT" 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** "Sow to Grow" Therapeutic Summer Program for Teens with Disabilities
Dates June 3-24, 2024
City, State Knoxville, Tennessee
Contact Info/Web link <https://utgardens.tennessee.edu/locations/knoxville/horticultural-therapy-outreach/sow-to-grow/>
- 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>