

# AgrAbility e·Note

**July 2024**

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

Planning continues for the 2025 NTW. Remember to save the dates of March 24th -27th in Las Cruces, NM, at the [Hotel Encanto](#) with sessions at the [New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum](#). A link for room reservations and the call for presentations and posters will be coming out soon.



A regional workshop related to assistive technology, worksite assessments, and preparing for the RESNA ATP exam is being held in Ann Arbor, MI, July 16-18. Look for a workshop summary in the next month's e-Note.



The next regional workshop will be held in Guam from October 29-31, 2024, in cooperation with the Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP). If you would like to present, this is the last chance to send in your proposal. Registration and hotel information will be coming out by the beginning of August. If you have any questions, please reach out to Tess [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org).

The upgraded AgrAbility Publication Database, which links to publications developed by NAP and by the SRAPs, is now live at [www.agrability.org/pub-database](http://www.agrability.org/pub-database). Based on SRAP feedback, a keyword search function was added. Please contact NAP if you have publications you would like to link to the database.

AgrAbility NTW Encore Webinar: "Building Capacity for Farm Stress Resilient Communities," Wednesday, July 24, 3:00 p.m. EDT. [www.agrability.org/ntw-encore](http://www.agrability.org/ntw-encore)



Are you interested in marketing and media? Join the Marketing & Media Community of Interest meeting next Monday, July 22 at 2:00 p.m. EDT for a discussion on various aspects of public awareness. Contact [jonesp@purdue.edu](mailto:jonesp@purdue.edu) for log-in information.

Brian French recently distributed the summary of the 2023 Annual Staff Needs Assessment (ASNA) results, and it has been posted at [www.agrability.org/extranet/evaluation](http://www.agrability.org/extranet/evaluation) along with past ASNA summaries. Thank you to everyone who provided input. Look for a follow-up email from NAP soon.

Newly archived virtual events:

- NTW Encore Webinar: "How to Develop Financial Sustainability for Your Organization" [www.agrability.org/training-category/archived](http://www.agrability.org/training-category/archived)
- Zoom Discussion: "AT Expos" [www.agrability.org/resources/discussions](http://www.agrability.org/resources/discussions)

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## Toolbox Spotlight



A [Smartphone Endoscopic/Borescopic Camera](#) can be a valuable yet relatively inexpensive tool around the farmstead (workshop, garage, home). With this technology, one can inspect small or otherwise hard-to-access areas that need repair or maintenance, e.g., vehicle engine, equipment undercarriage, electrical wiring, HVAC, sewer drainpipe. In addition to the smartphone app, some kits consist of a cable with a camera and light at one end and the smartphone connector at the other; others have more complex camera controllers.

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## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### Alaska

Staff participated in a number of large events in the past month. These included ATLA's open house for partners, the public, and the Division of Vocational Rehab; a large annual health fair in Anchorage; a professional presentation at a health/resource fair for a tribal-serving medical system; and a health fair in Juneau. Plans were made for outreach at numerous summer events (local agricultural fairs, veteran's stand down, disability pride festival).

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### California

California AgrAbility was recently invited by the Sustainable Herbs Lab to present for the Learning Journey cohort in preparation for their herbs learning tour. Participants were on their way to the southwest Oregon herb farms that employ migrant farm workers. [More](#)

Later in the month, California AgrAbility presented at the Center for Land Based Learning (CLBL) staff retreat. The presentation highlighted topics of disability and veterans in agriculture. The presentation concluded with a Q&A about disability in agriculture.



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### Florida



On June 14th, AgrAbility staff members presented at the 26th Family Café in Orlando. The Family Café exists to provide individuals with disabilities and their families an opportunity for collaboration, advocacy, friendship, and empowerment. [More](#)

Another staff member attended the Monticello Watermelon Festival on June 14th. This event attracts local farmers, industry professionals, and farmworkers. [More](#)

From June 17th to the 21st, the Florida AgrAbility case coordinator attended the 2024 Florida Cattlemen's Association in Marco Island. This event brings in several hundred farmers, ranchers, and those working in the agriculture field to improve the Florida cattle industry and foster connections.





On June 27th, Vanessa Spero worked a booth at the 15th Annual UF/IFAS Range Cattle REC Youth Field Day. This event had 114 registrants interested in all areas surrounding beef cattle production in Florida.

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## Georgia

Veteran outreach and engagement continued across the state as AgrAbility in Georgia's veteran coordinator attended multiple events aimed at educating their veterans on disability services, educational benefits, and employment opportunities at the We Care Vet Fair in Rome, GA,... [More](#)

Georgia AgrAbility hosted a webinar titled "Make AT in Minutes with specialty tapes" with Therese Willkomm as the instructor. Participants got an in-depth look at many different kinds of tapes and their uses when making assistive technology. [More](#)

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## Indiana

Indiana AgrAbility held their spring advisory team meeting June 26. Seven advisors, six staff, two consultants, two partners, and three guests were in attendance, including Mr. Jerry Alexander, the East Central Indiana regional director for Senator Mike Braun. [More](#)



The Bridging Horizons Community Service Contest provides a community-oriented service experience that gives groups the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained and make a positive impact by helping community members overcome physical barriers. Congratulations to the East Central FFA Chapter and to Veterans IN Farming, which will both receive a \$500 cash prize (from non-AgrAbility funds) and a certificate... [More](#)



Indiana AgrAbility veteran outreach is partnering with two nonprofits (At Ease Orchard and Veterans IN Farming) to provide a national webinar series on beginning farming/ranching tailored to a veteran audience. The summer lunchtime webinar series is packed with insightful programming designed to help enhance farming practices and expand market reach. Anyone is welcome to attend any of the webinars. [More](#)

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## Maine

ME AgrAbility program staff attended the Maine Military and Community Network Conference in Portland. Staff connected with numerous service providers of military and veteran services, sharing AgrAbility services and program information. [More](#)

AgrAbility program coordinator and staff member Brie Weisman connected with Safety and Environmental Compliance staff from Pleasant River Lumber and A+A Brochu Logging to learn more about logging sites, a typical logging workday, standard logging equipment, logging injuries, and job-related pain. [More](#)

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## Michigan

The Extension educator in Michigan who plans to organize the monthly meeting of Extension staff working with AgrAbility will send out a scheduling poll to those who have expressed interest within the next week. If you have not yet done so, please contact Sam at wolfesa4@msu.edu. [More](#)

MI AgrAbility leadership held its quarterly meeting in-person in East Lansing. Major topics included strategic planning at the next in-person meeting and hosting an OTD capstone student in 2025.

MI AgrAbility staff joined the MSU Extension field crops team virtual meeting and two other 1:1 Extension staff in different institutes, provided an overview, answered questions, and encouraged staff to mention the program when meeting with growers.

Extension staff attended a Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) event for outreach workers who provide resources and programs to migrant communities. They staffed an exhibit table, provided dozens of resources, and had fruitful conversations with the other attendees that will likely lead to further connections and speaking engagements.

The team in Michigan also continues to prepare for the regional training workshop and is excited to welcome everyone to Ann Arbor in mid-July.

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## Missouri

Emily Doosing, 4-H specialist and outreach coordinator with Missouri AgrAbility, continues to work on 4-H Clown Colleges in summer school programs throughout the Southeast region, including Butler, Carter, Oregon, Reynolds, Ripley, and Shannon counties. Staff are beginning to transition planning to "4-H Days at the Lake" in collaboration with the Army Corp of Engineers at Lake Wappapello. [More](#)

Mackenzie Bevins, occupational therapy student with the department of occupational therapy at the University of Missouri continues to complete her doctoral capstone with Missouri AgrAbility. [More](#)

On June 20, Lincoln University Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program Farm Outreach Worker Mary Keeter conducted a drip irrigation workshop at the African Methodist Church small-scale farm and garden plots. Participants included volunteers with limited mobility who are now able to water their garden plots without assistance.

Missouri AgrAbility was incorporated into the BIA-MO Camp for Survivors of Brain Injury and Family Members as the agriculture track sponsor. The featured arts and crafts project was planting marigolds. [More](#)

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## Nebraska

Emily Jacobson, program manager, Nebraska AgrAbility, co-presented with Pearson Physical Therapy in Broken Bow, Nebraska. Five staff and 15 other individuals learned more about AgrAbility and how the program can assist farmers and ranchers. [More](#)

Nebraska AgrAbility is excited to be sending Kara Brichacek and Teresa Duffek to the Michigan regional workshop in July. Kara and Teresa are Nebraska AgrAbility's new rural rehabilitation specialists. [More](#)

Emily and Teresa have been busy with client services throughout the state. It has been a very busy spring and beginning of summer for Nebraska AgrAbility.

Easterseals Nebraska just signed another yearly contract to provide AgrAbility assessments for Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation. This continues to allow the program to serve more clients, and staff are grateful for this continued opportunity to provide VR with these assessments.

The Nebraska AgrAbility team met in-person on June 28 in Kearney, Nebraska. This meeting was an opportunity for the team to plan for the program year and get to know new team members Kara Brichacek,



Teresa Duffek, and Ashley Ahrens.

Emily and Kara are beginning to research more about creating a monthly newsletter that can be sent out featuring Nebraska AgrAbility. If anyone currently does this and has any tips for us, please reach out!!

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## New Mexico

The NM AgrAbility summer 2024 newsletter is published to the project website: [https://agrability.nmsu.edu/documents/2024\\_NMAP\\_SummerNewsletter.pdf](https://agrability.nmsu.edu/documents/2024_NMAP_SummerNewsletter.pdf)

Seven farm apprentices continue to learn farm techniques at the NM AgrAbility Albuquerque farm sites and at partnering organic farms in the community. With flash-flood rains and 100+ temperatures, the work is hard. [More](#)

Incoming farm site evaluator Carmen McClelland just became official. Carmen brings a wealth of assistive technology and task analysis experience and is a welcome addition to the team.

NMAP director Robert Hagevoort has been strengthening relationships with the Navajo Sustainable Agriculture II Project (NSAII) in support of Navajo farmers and ranchers.

NM team members are diligently planning details for the "a day on the farm" event for NM DVR workers in the fall and for the 2025 NTW in beautiful Las Cruces, NM.

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## North Carolina

NC AgrAbility continues to expand its impact through strategic partnerships and dedicated outreach efforts. A new partnership with Ag Mediation NC & VA, a program of Western Carolina University, has provided valuable services, including business planning, credit review, heirs' property assistance, and farm planning, enhancing our support for clients. [More](#)

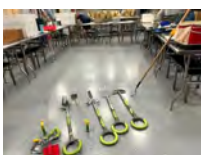


The NC A&T agromedicine team engaged with NC AgrAbility non-profit partner Easterseals UCP on a social care farming project as a means to better understand the impact of an accessible garden site on the well-being of residents and staff at a resident home. Partnerships have been developed with Home Depot and Scott's to provide additional volunteers, plants, and materials for an install. [More](#)

NCA&T researchers Crystal Cook Marshall and Sydney Davis Richardson presented on their nine-person research project on BIPOC farmer stress/anxiety, extreme weather, and leadership to 25 section attendees at the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH) Conference in Portland, OR, in June 2024.



Marshall and Richardson also presented on their research project on BIPOC farmer stress/anxiety, extreme weather, and leadership to 125 section attendees at the American Meteorological Society Broadcasters Communicating Extreme Weather conference in Myrtle Beach, SC June 2024.



NC AgrAbility director Crystal Cook Marshall presented on NC AgrAbility and discussed partnering with farmers on an ergonomic and/or repetitive stress reducing "toolkit" to be piloted and researched for efficacy through NC AgrAbility's current SARE grant.

Crystal Cook Marshall stocked a set of items to prevent or reduce injury to farmworkers for assessment and feedback with Vecinos, a farmworker-serving medical agency in western NC. Using a grasstops assessment approach, medical professionals

advised on best interventions for farmworkers to reduce pain, risk of injury, and reduce incidence of repetitive stress. [More](#)

Crystal Cook Marshall trained farmworker health workers from Access East in Stop the Bleed, which they plan to bring to 30 producers and more than 600 farmworkers in July alone. Cook Marshall and Access East discussed additional lower costs interventions to prevent farmworker injury and will pilot a similar approach to interventions in July as that started with Vecinos in June.

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## Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility staff started the summer strong with outreach and AT. OAP staff presented "Gardening with Arthritis" to a variety of groups, from a garden club at a Columbus retirement residence to the American Conifer Society. [More](#)

Disability Services Coordinator Laura Akgerman passed the RESNA AT Professionals exam and is excited to join the growing ranks of AgrAbility ATPs. Laura was one of several SRAP staff who participated in the RESNA ATP exam preparation classes sponsored by NAP in fall 2023. [More](#)

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## Tennessee

Happy Summer from TN! Farmers are busy planting (been a wet spring) and trying to stay cool.

TN AgrAbility and UT MANAGE had a joint meeting with the Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Program (DVR). DVR is the main state funding source for assistive technology that assists people in getting back to their work and careers. [More](#)

A Giles County livestock farmer with back/knee/mobility issues received a feed bin to assist with feed flow in to his UTV cake box. The feed bin and UTV cake box was funded by TN Vocational Rehabilitation Services.



TN AgrAbility exhibited at the Fruits of the Backyard Field Day, displaying assistive technology gardening tools.

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## Utah

On June 4, AgrAbility of Utah staff were excited to set up a table at the USU Dairy Producer Field Day in Logan, Utah, and meet with many dairy producers from northern Utah. Some of the many classes included milking technology, irrigation technology, and risk management. [More](#)

AgrAbility staff were able to present to participants of the Sustainable Grazing Institute in Kaysville, Utah, on June 5th. In this hands-on, two-day class, members learned about grazing cell design, forage estimation, weed management, and many other topics.

On June 13th, AgrAbility of Utah staff met with staff from the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation to address any barriers and learn more about each other's organization.

AgrAbility staff presented to members of the Cache Interagency Council in Logan, UT on June 24th.

On June 28th, AgrAbility staff set up a table and assisted with the Roads To Independence Community Partner's Fourth of July BBQ. This event is designed to let the public know about the various community partners, and the services offered. [More](#)

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## Virginia

As the peak of summer approaches, the Virginia team continues to share AgrAbility throughout the state. Field staff attended the Amelia County Fair where more than 570 attendees passed through and learned about AgrAbility Virginia in the mobile education unit.

Meanwhile, final preparations were made for an assistive technology workshop at Virginia State University in July. In collaboration with NAP and the Life Project, it provided hands-on demonstrations, thought-provoking discussions, and a chance to explore cutting-edge technologies that enhance the quality of life for individuals with diverse needs.

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## Washington

Don McMoran was in Yap, Micronesia, doing a farmer focus conference with Dr. Kuan Chen of the University of Guam. Don was able to spend one night on the Island of Guam to view the hotel that has been selected to host the western region AgrAbility conference, and it looks like a great location. The University of Guam is pulling out all the stops, so make sure to book early as October is right around the corner.

In June, Deb Eidsness and Kyrstin Szewczyk, OTR/L, went to Carnation Farms and focused on four main subjects for a class. The first focus of the class was planting/field work; recommendations were made for improving body mechanics, and ergonomic tools were trialed by the farmers while actively planting. [More](#)

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## Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin staff exhibited at the Wisconsin FFA Convention Expo on June 12th. AAW staff had the opportunity to speak with a number of FFA members and shared examples of assistive technology and provided information for attendees to take home to family members that could benefit from AgrAbility services.

AgrAbility of Wisconsin's outreach program coordinator, Michelle Bachand, presented an overview of the AAW program at a regional field day on June 25th that provided professional development opportunities to Extension agriculture educators.

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### Staff Changes and Recognition

## Washington

As co-coordinators Alyssa Wade and Emily Whittier have accepted new positions, their previously held part-time positions have been combined into one position that has been advertised and interviewed for, and the position has been offered and verbally accepted. Their first day is Monday, July 8th so stay tuned to the next e-Note as we release the contact information of our new full-time Washington State AgrAbility co-coordinator located in Yakima County of Washington State.

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### AgrAbility in the News

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

- [Dairy Spotlight: Samantha Wolfe](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
- [UGA boot camp trains military veterans to start farms](#) (AgrAbility in Georgia)
- [AgrAbility Provides More Resources, Expands Chronic Disease Webinar Series](#) (Illinois AgrAbility)
- [AgrAbility: Cultivating Support and Independence For Farmer's with Disabilities](#) (Florida AgrAbility Project; Colorado AgrAbility Project)
- [The Georgia AgrAbility program offers a local farm family a new path forward](#) (AgrAbility in Georgia)

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## OtherNews

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

- Extension Educator Samantha Wolfe joined the MSU Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine team to conduct farm safety activities during 4-H Exploration Days on-campus in East Lansing. The hands-on activities included a PTO model, grain bin safety, safe cattle handling, and a tractor rollover demonstration using model tractors with and without ROPS, and eggs. About 35 students and chaperones participated in the activities, which they agreed were highly effective and engaging teaching tools.
- Lincoln University ISFOP's Mary Keeter coordinated a hands-on chicken processing workshop for small-scale farmers on Thursday, June 27, 2024. Topics included proper PPE and safe handling of equipment.
- [A Family Farm May Be More Than It Seems](#)
- [Drones Take to the Sky, and They're Altering Farming and Growing Food Forever](#)
- [GROW SMARTER NOT HARDER WITH COMPANION PLANTING](#)
- [Sister finds her farm safety voice as a student and athlete](#)
- [What's the Best Way to Store Tomatoes?](#)
- [Lightning season is here: Fast facts and how to stay safe, from a meteorologist](#)
- [Opinion: Good biosecurity critical to mitigating the spread of H5N1](#)
- [Farmland weeds help to combat pests](#)
- [THE USDA EXPANDS CROP INSURANCE OPTIONS FOR SPECIALTY AND ORGANIC GROWERS](#)
- [First of its kind study shines light on LGBTQ+ farmer mental health](#)

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## UpcomingEvents

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

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

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July 2024

## California

California AgrAbility was recently invited by the Sustainable Herbs Lab to present for the Learning Journey cohort in preparation for their herbs learning tour. Participants were on their way to the southwest Oregon herb farms that employ migrant farm workers. Presenters shared case studies and discussed AgrAbility and Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program services and their role in sustainability. <https://sustainableherbsprogram.org/>

Submitted by Angelina Padilla

July 2024

## Florida

On June 14th, AgrAbility staff members presented at the 26th Family Café in Orlando. The Family Café exists to provide individuals with disabilities and their families an opportunity for collaboration, advocacy, friendship, and empowerment. The low employment rates for people with disabilities are a prevalent reality in the disability community. Florida AgrAbility presented "Pathways to Careers" for career development through non-traditional means, which are one way to address the lack of opportunities and training. The focus was primarily on finding ways to improve learning for individuals aiming to enter the workforce, with a particular emphasis on developing skills essential for careers in agriculture.



Another staff member attended the Monticello Watermelon Festival on June 14th. This event attracts local farmers, industry professionals, and farmworkers. This staff member made direct contact with more than 50 attendees to spread awareness about Florida AgrAbility.

Submitted by Lindsey Head

July 2024

## Georgia

Veteran outreach and engagement continued across the state as AgrAbility in Georgia's veteran coordinator attended multiple events aimed at educating their veterans on disability services, educational benefits, and employment opportunities at the We Care Vet Fair in Rome, GA, and the Let's Connect Summit in Pine Mountain, GA, highlighting the efforts across the state to promote positive mental health and connecting resources and programs to fight the suicide epidemic in the veteran communities across GA.

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Georgia AgrAbility hosted a webinar titled "Make AT in Minutes with specialty tapes" with Therese Willkomm as the instructor. Participants got an in-depth look at many different kinds of tapes and their uses when making assistive technology. Georgia AgrAbility will be hosting the third and final webinar in this series on July 16th at 1pm EST. This webinar will be "Assistive Technology and Aging." If interested, sign up at <https://form.jotform.com/240393973718063>

Submitted by AgrAbility in Georgia

July 2024

## Indiana

Indiana AgrAbility held their spring advisory team meeting June 26. Seven advisors, six staff, two consultants, two partners, and three guests were in attendance, including Mr. Jerry Alexander, the East Central Indiana regional director for Senator Mike Braun.



Business items included reports on Indiana veterans activities, work being done by the IN AgrAbility partners, Easterseals Crossroads, client visits, event participations, Bridging Horizons Contest, Old Order/Amish outreach, AgVets Project, media outreach, and an update on the National AgrAbility Project work. Following the reports, Mark Carter, and advisor with Purdue Extension, shared some ideas on improving IN AgrAbility's outreach through short video clips. And, prior to closing, a short challenge was given to the team to come up with auction items for the 2025 NTW to benefit farmers/ranchers with disabilities, and to help find funding for stipends to help enable these farmers/ranchers/caregivers to attend the NTW.

It was a lively meeting with many good ideas shared and great participation by everyone there.

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin

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The Bridging Horizons Community Service Contest provides a community-oriented service experience that gives groups the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained and make a positive impact by helping community members overcome physical barriers.

Congratulations to the East Central FFA Chapter which will receive a \$500 cash prize (from non-AgrAbility funds) and a certificate for constructing four accessible raised garden beds for the Southeast Indiana Community Gardens. The raised garden beds will be placed at assisted living centers, a community mental health center, Central Elementary School, Batesville Intermediate School, and the YES Home for abused, neglected, and abandoned youth. The FFA chapter will be applying for additional grants to continue construction of accessible, raised garden beds for distribution to organizations in the county.

Congratulations to the Veterans IN Farming who will receive a \$500 cash prize (from non-AgrAbility funds) and a certificate for constructing 10 accessible, raised garden beds at its demonstration farm, Jack's Farm, in Anderson, IN. These garden beds are specifically designed to accommodate veterans with physical limitations and mobility constraints. The hands-on learning environment will provide opportunities for veterans and their family members who come to the demonstration farm for classes and veteran events.

Submitted by Steve Swain

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Indiana AgrAbility veteran outreach is partnering with two nonprofits (At Ease Orchard and Veterans IN Farming) to provide a national webinar series on beginning farming/ranching tailored to a veteran audience. The summer lunchtime webinar series is packed with insightful programming designed to help



enhance farming practices and expand market reach. Anyone is welcome to attend any of the webinars.

- "Getting Your Farm Products into Indiana Public Schools": Discover the steps and requirements for supplying fresh, local produce to Indiana's public school system. Learn about the benefits, challenges, and success stories from fellow farmers who have successfully navigated this process.
- "NRCS Conservation Programs": Gain a comprehensive understanding of the various conservation programs offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Learn how to access these resources to enhance the sustainability and productivity of your farm.

And more! Stay tuned for additional topics that will provide the knowledge and tools needed to thrive in today's agricultural landscape.

How to Participate:

- Platform: Webinars are hosted on Zoom, making it easy to join from the comfort of home or farm.
- Preregistration: To ensure access to these valuable sessions, please preregister. Registrants will receive an email with the link to join the meetings.
- Cost: These webinars are free of charge, providing high-quality educational content at no cost.
- Accessibility: Webinars include captions to ensure accessibility for all participants.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with experts and fellow farmers, gain new insights, and improve farming operations. Sign up today and make the most of lunchtime this summer!

Hosted by Kate Bowen, an AgrAbility client and farmer.

For more information and to register, visit <https://vetsinfarming.wildapricot.org/>.

Submitted by Kate Graves and Joe Ricker

July 2024

## Maine

ME AgrAbility program staff attended the Maine Military and Community Network Conference in Portland. Staff connected with numerous service providers of military and veteran services, sharing AgrAbility services and program information. Maine's program coordinator attended two educational sessions on communicating with the veteran community and moral injury.

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AgrAbility program coordinator and staff member Brie Weisman connected with Safety and Environmental Compliance staff from Pleasant River Lumber and A+A Brochu Logging to learn more about logging sites, a typical logging workday, standard logging equipment, logging injuries, and job-related pain. Staff had the opportunity to visit numerous logging sites in the North Maine woods and speak directly with loggers at each site about their experiences and the LogAbility program, and also learned more about equipment operation.

Submitted by Bella Russo

July 2024

## Michigan

The Extension educator in Michigan who plans to organize the monthly meeting of Extension staff working with AgrAbility will send out a scheduling poll to those who have expressed interest within the next week. If you have not yet done so, please contact Sam at [wolfesa4@msu.edu](mailto:wolfesa4@msu.edu). These meetings aim to be informal yet helpful, to create space for questions, discuss unique situations, and talk about anything else that comes up.

Submitted by Samantha Wolfe



July 2024

## Missouri

Emily Doosing, 4-H specialist and outreach coordinator with Missouri AgrAbility, continues to work on 4-H Clown Colleges in summer school programs throughout the Southeast region, including Butler, Carter, Oregon, Reynolds, Ripley, and Shannon counties. Staff are beginning to transition planning to "4-H Days at the Lake" in collaboration with the Army Corp of Engineers at Lake Wappapello. The 4-H days at the Lake Day Camp series will include shooting sports safety; wilderness survival; first aid basics; fire prevention/safety and how to put out a fire; drowning prevention; wildlife safety: snakes, ticks, and other threats; boat safety; ATV roll-over prevention; poisoning prevention; grain bin safety; suicide prevention; and equity and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. Collaborators include Butler County 4-H Shooting Sports, Twisted Arrow Archery, Melvin Boyer's Survival, Stoddard County EMS, Butler County Fire and Rescue, Missouri Water Patrol, Missouri Department of Conservation, the Army Corp of Engineers, Missouri Highway Patrol, Butler County Health Department, Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center, and Ozark Independent Living. This 4-H series will begin August 7th. The 4-H program is funded by the Summer Enrichment Grant.

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Mackenzie Bevins, occupational therapy student with the department of occupational therapy at the University of Missouri continues to complete her doctoral capstone with Missouri AgrAbility. Karen Funkenbusch with the University of Missouri Extension serves as doctoral capstone site mentor and is project director for Missouri AgrAbility while Dr. Gina Pifer serves as doctoral capstone coordinator, also with the department of occupational therapy at the University of Missouri.

Submitted by Emily Doosing, Elizabeth Picking, Brenda Schreck, and Karen Funkenbusch

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Missouri AgrAbility was incorporated into the BIA-MO Camp for Survivors of Brain Injury and Family Members as the agriculture track sponsor. The featured arts and crafts project was planting marigolds. Participants enjoyed learning about growing marigolds and planting marigold seeds in an AgrAbility labeled container for growing their initial marigold plant for harvesting seeds for future growing.

Submitted by Maureen Cunningham

July 2024

## Nebraska

Emily Jacobson, program manager, Nebraska AgrAbility, co-presented with Pearson Physical Therapy in Broken Bow, Nebraska. Five staff and 15 other individuals learned more about AgrAbility and how the program can assist farmers and ranchers. The presentation was live-streamed on the Pearson Physical Therapy Facebook page. Plans are to do another virtual session in October. Emily said, "It was a fun day!"

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Nebraska AgrAbility is excited to be sending Kara Brichacek and Teresa Duffek to the Michigan regional workshop in July. Kara and Teresa are Nebraska AgrAbility's new rural rehabilitation specialists. This is a terrific opportunity for them to learn more about worksite assessments and RESNA.

Submitted by Soni Cochran

July 2024

## **New Mexico**

Seven farm apprentices continue to learn farm techniques at the NM AgrAbility Albuquerque farm sites and at partnering organic farms in the community. With flash-flood rains and 100+ temperatures, the work is hard. The new NM AgrAbility apprenticeship program coordinator, Sylvan Rose, is planting roots in the program.

Submitted by New Mexico AgrAbility Project

July 2024

## North Carolina

NC AgrAbility continues to expand its impact through strategic partnerships and dedicated outreach efforts. A new partnership with Ag Mediation NC & VA, a program of Western Carolina University, has provided valuable services, including business planning, credit review, heirs' property assistance, and farm planning, enhancing our support for clients. Recent events have further strengthened community engagement: Crystal Cook-Marshall's presentation on "Agricultural Safety" and "Stop the Bleed" at Forsyth Urban Growers School was well-received by 20 farmers, while the Frontline to Farm Dinner Presentation saw 55 farmer veterans in attendance. As the project continues in its no-cost extension year, NC AgrAbility has optimized service delivery, resulting in significant client growth—currently serving 41 farmers with plans to reach 60 by summer's end.



The NC A&T agromedicine team engaged with NC AgrAbility non-profit partner Easterseals UCP on a social care farming project as a means to better understand the impact of an accessible garden site on the well-being of residents and staff at a resident home. Partnerships have been developed with Home Depot and Scott's to provide additional volunteers, plants, and materials for an install. Nine home residents, six home staff, four Home Depot volunteers, three Scott's volunteers, four Easterseals staff, and two NC A&T Cooperative Extension staff participated in the installation of the accessible gardens on June 28.



Crystal Cook Marshall stocked a set of items to prevent or reduce injury to farmworkers for assessment and feedback with Vecinos, a farmworker-serving medical agency in western NC. Using a grasstops assessment approach, medical professionals advised on best interventions for farmworkers to reduce pain, risk of injury, and reduce incidence of repetitive stress. Efficacy will be assessed through a cohort model of farmworker feedback facilitated by the medical clinic. Results will be collated for this grant to SARE and incorporated as part of a research paper on interventions to reduce farmworker pain and ergonomic and/or repetitive stress injury.

Submitted by Crystal Cook Marshall

July 2024

## Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility staff started the summer strong with outreach and AT. OAP staff presented "Gardening with Arthritis" to a variety of groups, from a garden club at a Columbus retirement residence to the American Conifer Society. Both were new audiences, and OAP staff demonstrated tools and work habits and shared information about AgrAbility services.

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Disability Services Coordinator Laura Akgerman passed the RESNA AT Professionals exam and is excited to join the growing ranks of AgrAbility ATPs. Laura was one of several SRAP staff who participated in the RESNA ATP exam preparation classes sponsored by NAP in fall 2023. The classes were invaluable in helping to prepare for the exam. Thanks for the support, NAP!

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

July 2024

## Tennessee

Happy Summer from TN! Farmers are busy planting (been a wet spring) and trying to stay cool.

TN AgrAbility and UT MANAGE had a joint meeting with the Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Program (DVR). DVR is the main state funding source for assistive technology that assists people in getting back to their work and careers. AgrAbility works with the DVR counselors to help guide the farmers to a successful case closure that allows farmers to continue their farming profession. The TN VR policy team received a better understanding of how the financial side for farmers looks different than financial information typically reviewed for other jobs. Counselors often review income/tax info and are looking at the financial need as well as if the work counts as "competitive integrated employment." TN AgrAbility shared the white paper or "Serving Agricultural Workers with Disabilities through State VR Services." Eryn Bell, an ag economist with UT MANAGE, recommended three resources to help with business planning and to use with AgrAbility VR farmer cases:

- **Schedule F** (shows profit and loss) = **Past** finance
- **Balance sheet** = shows **Present** finance
- **Cash flow** = 3-5 years expected **Future** finance

A case-by-case review determines if a self-employment business plan is needed with VR or if a case is viewed as retention. The financial needs assessment (FNA) is the financial eligibility component that determines if VR will pay for the assistive technology. When technology is needed to retain employment, all other avenues must be exhausted, including relevant health insurance coverages. Documentation must be provided to VR verifying all other avenues for technology have been pursued, but the financial component is still present and may require customer participation. Farmers are always eligible for TN AgrAbility/Extension services and a farm visit to evaluate their barriers to work. It was a very informative meeting. TN AgrAbility staff appreciates Kim Lilley with TN Technology Access Program for leading the way and bringing everyone together for a chance to learn from one another. TN AgrAbility has fostered connections and a wonderful team across the state who want to help farmers with disabilities and streamline the funding process. The meeting continued to strengthen the working bond between TN AgrAbility/UT TSU Extension, UT MANAGE, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

July 2024

## Utah

On June 4, AgrAbility of Utah staff were excited to set up a table at the USU Dairy Producer Field Day in Logan, Utah, and meet with many dairy producers from northern Utah. Some of the many classes included milking technology, irrigation technology, and risk management. Participants were able to tour Utah State University's dairy farm and dairy plant.

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On June 28th, AgrAbility staff set up a table and assisted with the Roads To Independence Community Partner's Fourth of July BBQ. This event is designed to let the public know about the various community partners, and the services offered. Roads To Independence is an Independent Living Center that serves Morgan, Weber, and Davis counties in Northern Utah and partners with AgrAbility of Utah.

Submitted by Randall Bagley

July 2024

## Washington

In June, Deb Eidsness and Kyrstin Szewczyk, OTR/L, went to Carnation Farms and focused on four main subjects for a class. The first focus of the class was planting/field work; recommendations were made for improving body mechanics, and ergonomic tools were trialed by the farmers while actively planting. The second was packing/harvesting with a focus on joint protection in general and specifically on injuries of the farmers. Third was livestock handling and grazing with a focus on pasture rotation with sheep and a focus on ergonomics and alterations to existing equipment. Fourth was to briefly discuss and provide written materials on farmworker mental health. Written materials were also provided with additional tools and resources for the physical aspects of farming. This fall, additional classes and information will be provided to Carnation Farms when they are outside their busy season.

Submitted by Don McMoran



July 2024

## Upcoming Events

- Name** New Battleground to Breaking Ground Phase 1 Course  
**Dates** Rolling admission  
**City, State** Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://agrillifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/new-phase-1-battleground-to-breaking-ground/01t4x000002ciNKAAAY>
- Name** Assistive Technology Webinar: AT and Aging  
**Dates** July 16, 2024, 1:00 p.m. EST  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.farmagain.com/webinars>
- Name** Agricultural Community QPR for Farmers and Farm Families  
**Dates** July 18, 2024, from 1:00 - 2:30 EDT  
**City, State** Online training  
**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_cl992sJoR1mRMKS9BAAXAg#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cl992sJoR1mRMKS9BAAXAg#/registration)
- Name** Musculoskeletal & Ergonomic Safety for Forest Workers  
**Dates** July 24, 2024  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_EDTn1XJqSZS1iTdVOPARNw#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EDTn1XJqSZS1iTdVOPARNw#/registration)
- Name** Farm Science Review  
**Dates** September 17-19, 2024  
**City, State** London, Ohio  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://fsr.osu.edu/>
- Name** Western Region AgrAbility Conference  
**Dates** October 29-31, 2024  
**City, State** Tamuning, Guam

**Contact** [henkj@triton.uog.edu](mailto:henkj@triton.uog.edu)  
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