

# AgrAbility e·Note

**August 2024**

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

Next AgrAbility all-staff virtual meeting: Monday, September 9, 3:00 p.m. EDT. Look for email details coming soon.

Rooms have been blocked for the 2025 NTW at a rate of \$107.00 per night plus a \$10 amenity fee and applicable taxes. Please use the following link to book your accommodations online. This link is only valid during the specified room block dates, the arrival and departure dates must be selected from the drop-down menu.



Booking Link: [2503AGRABI](#). Alternatively, individuals may contact the reservations team directly at (866) 383-0443 and provide the group code 2503AGRABI.

Submit NTW presentation and poster proposals using these Google forms : [Call for Presentations](#); [Call for Posters](#).



The next regional workshop will be held in Guam, October 29-31, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel Guam. Rooms have been blocked at a rate of \$159 per night plus taxes/fees. This conference involves two classroom days with a tour on day three that focuses on mental health, wellness, and resiliency. The registration and hotel reservation link along with more information can be found at [agrability.info/regional](#).

AgrAbility NTW Encore Webinar Series: "Creating a Program to Educate OTs & PTs on Rehabbing Farmers and Ranchers." Wednesday, August 28, 3:00 p.m. ET. Presenter: Emily Jacobson, Nebraska AgrAbility. [More](#)



AgrAbility/North Central FRSAN webinar: "Farm Stress Voucher Programs: A Three-State Overview." Wednesday, September 4, 3:00 p.m. ET. [More](#)



National AgrAbility's video "AgrAbility: Renewing Hope, Restoring Productivity with Laurie Hayn" received a Blue Ribbon in the Educational Aids Blue Ribbon Awards Competition sponsored by the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) during its annual meeting in July.

NAP is starting a supplemental funding working group, and SRAP staff

members are welcome to participate. The first meeting is anticipated in late August or early September. Email details to follow.

The Ann Arbor regional workshop/assistive technology professional training was a success. Forty-four attendees learned about disability etiquette, medical conditions, assistive technology for farming, and assessment models, interviews, observations, and reports. [More](#)



National AgrAbility Assistive Technology Specialist Steve Swain, ATP, presented an AgrAbility module to doctoral students in physical therapy at Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma, from July 17 through 19. [More](#)

Newly archived virtual events:

- NTW Encore Webinar: "Building Capacity for Farm Stress Resilient Communities" [www.agrability.org/training-category/archived](http://www.agrability.org/training-category/archived)
- Zoom Discussion: "Working with Amish/Old Order Communities" [www.agrability.org/resources/discussions](http://www.agrability.org/resources/discussions)

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## Toolbox Spotlight



The battery-powered [Drivable Scissor-Lift Cart](#) elevates the standing platform from 32 inches up to 72 inches, and its 26-inch-wide wheelbase allows navigation through doorways and narrow walkways. The product features twin motors on the dual-direct-drive the rear wheels, electronic controls, safety accelerator pedal, auto-engaging electromagnetic braking system, full-surround operator's cage, emergency stop mechanism, and is engineered to provide proper weight distribution to prevent tipping. Maximum carrying capacity is 350 pounds, maximum speed is 3 mph, and the turning radius is 50 inches.

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## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### Alaska

The Alaska AgrAbility Project staff participated in multiple outreach events in July. The non-profit, Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA), delivered a program to the Older Person Action Group at a breakfast meeting in Anchorage. [More](#)

Art Nash and Debu Misra of AgrAbility provided outreach at the Deltana State Fair, held in a strongly agricultural community in interior Alaska. Their discussions with fair attendees resulted in two clients requesting support services. [More](#)

Art Nash attended the Alaska Academy of Physician Assistants annual meeting on July 30 & 31 and spoke with many primary care providers interested in AgrAbility.

Debu Misra, Leslie Shallcross, and a community occupational therapist, Pauline Gannon, attended the July 16-18 AgrAbility-sponsored regional assistive technology professional training in Michigan. This was an excellent training and very valuable for Alaska project staff and project leads.

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### California

California AgrAbility and the Center for Land Based Learning hosted a



second Pizza for Producers. The event was held for farmer veterans (and families) and aspiring ones. [More](#)

Later in the month, staff joined partners from Migrant Education at an annual outreach event. Farmworkers from all over the state migrate to the greater Sacramento region for a few weeks during the pear harvest. [More](#)



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## Florida



Vanessa Spero taught at the 2024 Florida Youth Leadership Forum, a unique leadership-training program for high school students with disabilities to connect and learn about leadership and social skills.

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## Georgia

On July 2nd, staff participated in NAP's Zoom discussion on AT expos. They were glad to be able to share ideas with other states about how they have had success with the AT expos that they have done. [More](#)

Staff hosted the final webinar in their series with Therese Willkomm on July 17th. The series focused on making low-cost assistive technology one can make or purchase for people who are aging and need more assistance with tasks. Thank you to all of those who participated in the webinars.

Georgia AgrAbility hosted two webinars this month as part of its commitment to providing learning opportunities for veterans getting into agriculture. The first webinar was on July 17th, and the topic was "Farm Marketing," with 28 people attending. [More](#)

Staff assisted in training professionals in Mental Health First Aid on July 25th. Fourteen people attended the class, and they work for a variety of different agencies serving rural communities in northeast Georgia.

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## Illinois

Illinois AgrAbility is hosting a virtual, six-week chronic disease self-management class for participants across the state of Illinois who are farmers, members of farming families, veterans who farm, and anyone who deals with a chronic disease of some sort. This class began July 15 and goes through August 19.

Illinois AgrAbility presented about the program and its resources on July 30th at the Edwards County Fair in Albion, IL. This hour-long presentation served as the keynote for the evening events that night at the fair.

Illinois AgrAbility added six more program ambassadors (volunteers) from its partner organization, Community Health Partnerships of Illinois, who will focus their time and efforts on the migrant farmworker population in IL.

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## Indiana

Though client visits and participation in various agricultural-related events continued for Indiana AgrAbility staff, July was also a packed month for the administrative duties of reporting and planning. Using the input from all Project staff, Chuck Baldwin prepared the Project's year-end REEport and continuation proposal for USDA/NIFA. [More](#)

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## Maine

AgrAbility program coordinator Bella Russo co-hosted the "Small Tools for Small-scale Farming" workshop with the Maine New Farmer Project at Rustic Roots Farm in Farmington, ME. Programming was provided about small tools and proper use from an efficiency, ergonomic, and injury prevention standpoint on highly physical small farm tasks. [More](#)



ME AgrAbility staff participated in the aquaculture learning day in Franklin, ME. Extension staff got a tour of the National Coldwater Marine Aquaculture Center and the UMaine Center for Aquaculture research. [More](#)



The Michigan regional training workshop was attended by the ME AgrAbility program coordinator. It was a positive experience to connect with other SRAPs and related professionals about their programs, as well as learn more about conducting successful on-site farm visits.

Maine AgrAbility joined the Cooperative Extension pasture specialist for a pasture walk learning day at Springside dairy farm in New Vineyard, ME. It was a good opportunity to learn more about logistics dairy farmers in Maine are working with, as well as an opportunity to network with other producers and service providers about AgrAbility.



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## Michigan



The Michigan AgrAbility Project was thrilled to host the regional training workshop in Ann Arbor in July. There was a great mix of 44 participants from both the medical and ag worlds who attended - and thank you for making the trip from eleven different states and Saipan to be there in person! [More](#)

Staff also met with the [Michigan Center for Rural Health](#) in July and looks forward to collaborating and connecting with more rural healthcare providers through this network.

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## Missouri

Mackenzie Bevins is a doctoral capstone student from the University of Missouri occupational therapy program. Her time as an occupational therapy student has helped her to recognize the importance of client-centered, evidence-based practice. Her passion for supporting underserved populations has driven her to focus on bridging the gap between healthcare professionals and the agricultural sector. [More](#)



Emily Doosing and her 4-H team worked in the planning and implementation of 4-H Days at the Lake. This day camp included 77 participants for the two days ranging from ages 5 - 18. 4-H day camp included the following health, safety, and well-being sessions: [More](#)

On July 17th, Karen Funkenbusch presented an "Adapting Ergonomic Hand Tools for Women" to the Women Owning Woodland lunch and learn.



LU ISFOP's Dr. Abusrewil and Bryan de Valdivia demonstrated market gardening tools from the Jesup Wagon 2.0 during a tour of Busby Organic Farm for a group of farm apprentices on July 30th.

Lincoln University Innovative Small Farmers' outreach program farm outreach worker Mary Keeter joined MU's Karen Funkenbusch to present "Practical Demonstration on Safety and Ergonomic Tools" at the Annie's Project Empowering Women in Urban Agriculture class at the University of Missouri Urban East Regional Office in St. Louis on July 29th to a group of beginner women farmers including Mo AgrAbility customers.

Missouri AgrAbility was discussed as resource during each of the BIA-MO Networking Coffees for Professionals in St. Louis (June 4), Springfield (June 11) and Kansas City (June 12). [More](#)

During the "Technology Thursday" online meeting (June 20), Maureen Cunningham, BIA-MO executive director, highlighted the use of assistive technologies for farming and ranching through Missouri AgrAbility. [More](#)

Maureen Cunningham also discussed Missouri AgrAbility at the Starling Missouri Membership (formerly Missouri Association of Rehab Facilities) meeting, July 16 and 17. The Brain Injury Resource Kits that include Missouri AgrAbility resources were distributed to 40 Case Managers at Mercy Hospital - Springfield on July 31, as part of their staff training regarding brain injury resources.

## Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility was promoted in the most recent Nebraska Farm Bureau newsletter. This print publication reaches 16,000 subscribers. The ad was created by the Nebraska AgrAbility team and highlights services, provides contact information, and features photos of AgrAbility clients.



Nebraska AgrAbility rural rehabilitation specialists Kara Brichacek and Teresa Duffek attended the regional training hosted by the National AgrAbility Project in Ann Arbor, Michigan. They shared their experiences... [More](#)

Program Manager Emily Jacobson shared that Nebraska AgrAbility has had a busy summer working with clients and reporting. The team recently hit client number 634!

Fall is quickly approaching, and the team is getting ready for major public outreach events, including the Nebraska State Fair and Husker Harvest Days!

## New Mexico

A New Mexico AgrAbility Project (NMAP) representative will meet with the Los Lunas science center to plan our "Autumn Day at the Farm" event.

The [New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum](#) hopes to open an AgrAbility exhibit on November 1, 2024.

*El Palacio* magazine is planning a story about NM AgrAbility.

NMAP's apprentice program supervisor Sylvan is settling into her role. Eight apprentices transitioned into job placements or creation of their own farms. NMAP's non-profit partner, Mandy's Special Farm, has been awarded a grant through the health soils program with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture.

NM Technology Assistance Program and NMAP presented about assistive technology at the ABQ Master Gardner's meeting on July 23.

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## Ohio

Summer is county fair time, and Ohio AgrAbility Project (OAP) staff have been all over the state attending inclusive livestock shows and celebrating "Independence through Agriculture" for people with disabilities. Many of the county fairs in Ohio host ExtraOrdinary Livestock Shows where people with disabilities are partnered with 4-H or FFA mentors to show an animal at the fair. [More](#)



Dr. Dee Jepsen's capstone team presented their award-winning capstone project "Obstacles in Designing Assistive Technology within a Skid Loader for Low-Mobility Individuals" for the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers at the annual ASABE conference in Anaheim, California in July.

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## Tennessee



TN AgrAbility, TN Association of Rescue Squads (TARS), Southern Ag Exchange Network (SAGe), TriGreen Equipment, and Farm Credit Mid-America partnered for the 13th TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness Training for 55 rescue personnel and ag producers with a special program, with 116 in attendance, added to the agenda: "Bringing Purpose Through Pain - Legacy of Shawn Hudson Corum." [More](#)

Shelby Bawcum, one of the STAR Center's newest assistive technology specialists, and Eileen Legault, one of University of TN AgrAbility area specialists, represented TN at the 2024 assistive technology professional training in Arbor, MI. Thank you to Ned Stoller, Tess McKeel, and MI AgrAbility for hosting - plus the Mamarow family for sharing their stories and opening their farm. [More](#)



UT Gardens, Frontline Gardens, Appalachian Sustainable Development, and TNAP hosted a veteran horticultural therapy (HT) workshop with three Virginia and five TN farmers. Veterans exposed to nature and gardening have been shown to improve mental health outcomes. [More](#)

Congratulations to the STAR Center, TN AgrAbility's nonprofit partner, on winning the Tennessee Chapter of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) award at the 2024 Outstanding Chapter of the Year Award at the International AER Conference in North Carolina! [More](#)



TN AgrAbility promoted on July 4th the new merged Pick TN Products and Homegrown by Heroes logo on social media posts to help promote local agricultural products produced by Tennessee farmer veterans and to support veterans who farm and products were produced in TN. [Pick Tennessee Products Partners with Homegrown By Heroes](#)

Four TSU OT students and TNAP staff toured the Saddle Up equine therapy

facility for their end of summer field work with TN AgrAbility. [Saddle Up](#) is a year-round program that gives youth/children with disabilities the opportunity to grow and develop through therapeutic, educational, and recreational activities with horses.



TN AgrAbility, STAR Center, the Ky Raising Hope Team, and Gibson County Farm Bureau Women's Leadership group partnered to exhibit safety, health, rescue, and nutrition (ice cream on a hot day) at the 33rd Milan No-Till Field Day, with 1257 in attendance. [More](#)

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## Texas

Texas AgrAbility staff members Makenzie Thomas and Mary Kate Hivnor conducted a 4-H training covering disability in agriculture and agricultural safety for youth. Participants did a relay with different types of disabilities to increase awareness of how to complete farm tasks with different types of disabilities.



Texas AgrAbility presented at the BattleGround to Breaking Ground bootcamp for 35 veteran and beginning farmers and ranchers. Topics included Texas AgrAbility services, Vocational Rehab, and assistive technology for farmers and ranchers.

Texas AgrAbility Program Manager Makenzie Thomas conducted the webinar "Resources for Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities." The webinar covered different resources available in Texas to assist farmers and ranchers with disabilities and chronic health conditions. The webinar was attended by 15 people and is recorded for later viewing on the Texas AgrAbility YouTube channel.

Texas AgrAbility hosted the webinar "Vocational Rehab for Farmers and Ranchers." It covered ways that farmers and ranchers can access VR services. The webinar was attended by 17 participants and is recorded for later viewing.

Texas AgrAbility hosted the webinar "Getting Started with USDA NRCS." It covered different resources available in Texas to assist farmers and ranchers with disabilities and chronic health conditions. The webinar was attended by 15 people and is recorded for later viewing on the Texas AgrAbility YouTube Channel.

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## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah was able to present at two FFA chapter officer leadership training events this month. The first one was in Orem, Utah, on July 16, and the second one was in Morgan, UT, on July 17. Over 400 FFA students and advisors attended these trainings from central and northern Utah.

On July 29, AgrAbility staff set up a table and visited with many of the 100 plus attendees at the annual Utah Wool Grower's Convention in Heber City, Utah. Some of the many topics included predator control, risk management, and effective grazing. Utah ranks 5th in the nation in sheep and lamb production.

AgrAbility was able to present to many farmers and ranchers at Utah State University Extension's Field Days in Cedar City, UT on July 29. Topics included alternative crops, sainfoin, and irrigation research.

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## Virginia

In July, Virginia AgrAbility was actively engaged in various initiatives underscoring its commitment to supporting the agricultural community. The team presented at the Virginia Dairy Expo and conducted a farmer stress workshop in partnership with the Rockingham County Farm Bureau, addressing relevant mental health issues.

At VSU Randolph Farms, they hosted a Life Project/AgrAbility assistive technology workshop where 63 attendees explored topics such as heirs property, farm stress, and assistive technology, thus fostering valuable learning and networking opportunities. Former and current AgrAbility Virginia clients sat on a farmer panel and shared valuable insight into their operations and resources.



Currently, Virginia AgrAbility is managing 37 open cases and is assisting two farmers with applications for funding through Easterseals PORT Health to secure equipment alterations to improve usability.

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## Washington

Washington State AgrAbility Co-Coordinator Deb Eidsness recently completed COMET training to become an instructor. She also completed MHFA training and is in the middle of the instructor training for veteran certification and looking forward to youth certification. She later completed a farm assessment and was able to provide some needed A.T.

Deb Eidsness is in full fair mode heading into August. She will participate in five county and regional events including terminal market shows and sales. These events can be very stressful for many of youth exhibitors, mentally and physically. [More](#)

Cheryl Reese, the new eastern Washington co-coordinator, is currently working to find a way to partner with another organization to be at the Central Washington State Fair in Yakima that runs September 20th-29th. She has been going to monthly Grange meetings, as well as monthly board meetings, at the Central Washington Agricultural Museum in Yakima. [More](#)

Meanwhile, Debbie Fredricks, farm stress and AgrAbility co-coordinator, tabled for two days at the Cowlitz Fair.

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## Wisconsin



AgrAbility of Wisconsin staff attended a movement workshop hosted by Labor-Movement where participants learned about movement health and wellness for injury prevention, increased efficiency, and career longevity.

AgrAbility of Wisconsin's outreach program coordinator, Michelle Bachand, presented about AgrAbility of Wisconsin at two virtual meetings this month to spread awareness of the program. The first was for the Extension Agriculture Institute staff on July 10th, and the second was for Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and Tribal ADRC directors on July 24th. Between the two meetings, there were nearly 200 participants.

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**International AgrAbility Network  
News**



AgrAbility for Africa staff have been fairly successful in connecting rural children to rehabilitation services in urban communities. However, during follow-ups, staff often learn that many of these children have dropped out of the programs due to logistical challenges. [More](#)

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## StaffChanges and Recognition

### Florida

Lindsey Head transferred from the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida to the University of Florida. Lindsey's duties within the AgrAbility program as the case coordinator will remain the same. The email address for Lindsey is now [lhead3@ufl.edu](mailto:lhead3@ufl.edu).

### Texas

Texas AgrAbility welcomes Kara Smallegan, OTD capstone student, to our project. Kara will be working with Texas AgrAbility and Easterseals Michigan to develop a guidebook for occupational therapists working with farmers and ranchers with disabilities. We are excited to have Kara on the project this semester!

### Washington

Cheryl Reese is the new eastern Washington co-coordinator and Kathy Stilwell is retiring. Cheryl had this to say about her new position; "I am thrilled to be back at Extension working with a program that focuses on a subject that I am very passionate about."

Kathy Stilwell, when asked about her retirement, said this: "While I'm looking forward to retirement, I will treasure my nearly 20 years in Extension and have been very proud to spend the last 2-1/2 years working with our team in the agricultural community to find ways to help reduce stress and help farmers who need assistance."

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## AgrAbilityin the News

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

- [Bill Field puts farm safety in focus](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
  - [Program addressing mental health needs of Colorado farming communities](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
  - [Colorado's rural communities struggle with mental health care access — and stigma](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
  - [CSU Health Extension expanding support in rural Colorado, leading national efforts](#) (Colorado AgrAbility Project)
  - [Guam AgrAbility Regional Workshop](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
  - [Illinois AgrAbility provides assistive technology to farmers statewide](#) (Illinois AgrAbility)
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## OtherNews

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

- [Talking Total Farmer Health Podcast: All About Ag Youth and Vaping. Episode 35, 1st July 2024.](#)
- [USDA Invests \\$5.2 Million in 17 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Projects](#)
- [NARO developed a novel method to analyze “forever chemicals” in the soil](#)
- [Olympic-Level Dairy Farming: with Ellie and Jamie St. Pierre](#)
- [From Fields to Podiums: Famous Farmer Olympians](#)
- [Future of Dairy Farming Highlighted in World Dairy Expo Virtual Farm Tours](#)
- [Farming under the influence: Study finds 1 in 3 farmers have multiple drinks a week](#)
- [The “greenhouse effect”: How an oft-touted climate solution threatens agricultural workers](#)
- [OSHA proposes first-ever federal heat standard to protect employees from heat exposure](#)
- [USDA Introduces Resources on Urban Agriculture for Farmers, Non-profits, and Planners](#)

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## Upcoming Events

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

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Problems? Contact Chuck Baldwin, National AgrAbility Project, [baldwi19@purdue.edu](mailto:baldwi19@purdue.edu)  
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August 2024

## National AgrAbility Project

The Ann Arbor regional workshop/assistive technology professional training was a success. Forty-four attendees learned about disability etiquette, medical conditions, assistive technology for farming, and assessment models, interviews, observations, and reports. They toured a MI AgrAbility client farm to witness a sample assessment and apply lessons learned in the training. Attendees were able to receive up to 10 hours of training, each of which equals one CEU through RESNA if quizzes at the end of each day's sessions were passed.



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National AgrAbility Assistive Technology Specialist Steve Swain, ATP, presented an AgrAbility module to doctoral students in physical therapy at Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma, from July 17 through 19. The module presented the National AgrAbility Project, AgrAbility services and resources, the Toolbox Assistive Technology Database, assistive technology for the farm, and how to conduct farm assessments. The group then participated in an on-farm accessibility assessment.

Submitted by Steve Swain

August 2024

## Alaska

The Alaska AgrAbility Project staff participated in multiple outreach events in July. The non-profit, Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA), delivered a program to the Older Person Action Group at a breakfast meeting in Anchorage. This meeting included various organizations and provided information about AgrAbility services and assistive technology (AT). ATLA also hosted a table and shared assistive technologies at the annual Disability Pride Celebration; this event drew more than 250 attendees

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Art Nash and Debu Misra of AgrAbility provided outreach at the Deltana State Fair, held in a strongly agricultural community in interior Alaska. Their discussions with fair attendees resulted in two clients requesting support services. The Tanana Valley State Fair Extension booth also offered information about AgrAbility and adaptive gardening and farming.

Submitted by Leslie Shallcross

August 2024

## California

California AgrAbility and the Center for Land Based Learning hosted a second Pizza for Producers. The event was held for farmer veterans (and families) and aspiring ones. There were free activities, including a tomato sampling station from Tomatoberry Farm, a tour of The Maples, and more. The California Chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition was there to share resources and information.



Later in the month, staff joined partners from Migrant Education at an annual outreach event. Farmworkers from all over the state migrate to the greater Sacramento region for a few weeks during the pear harvest. California AgrAbility staff also met with a former program participant who received assistance in obtaining vision care and new bifocal glasses.

Submitted by Angelina Padilla

**August 2024**

## **Georgia**

On July 2nd, staff participated in NAP's Zoom discussion on AT expos. They were glad to be able to share ideas with other states about how they have had success with the AT expos that they have done. Staff also learned some great ideas from Wisconsin and Indiana. Please feel free to reach out with any further questions on how Georgia AgrAbility does AT expos.

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Georgia AgrAbility hosted two webinars this month as part of its commitment to providing learning opportunities for veterans getting into agriculture. The first webinar was on July 17th, and the topic was "Farm Marketing," with 28 people attending. The second webinar had 20 attendees and gave participants an in-depth look at the GATE program in Georgia, which allows agricultural producers to receive a tax exemption when buying inputs for their operations.

Submitted by AgrAbility in Georgia

**August 2024**

## **Indiana**

Though client visits and participation in various agricultural-related events continued for Indiana AgrAbility staff, July was also a packed month for the administrative duties of reporting and planning. Using the input from all Project staff, Chuck Baldwin prepared the Project's year-end REEport and continuation proposal for USDA/NIFA. Planning for the Indiana State Fair which takes place in August was on the weekly staff meeting agenda in July. And a new proposal by Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation to hire one of Indiana AgrAbility's non-profit partner staff part-time to help with farmer-client follow-up required several meetings to iron out details.

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin

August 2024

## Maine

AgrAbility program coordinator Bella Russo co-hosted the "Small Tools for Small-scale Farming" workshop with the Maine New Farmer Project at Rustic Roots Farm in Farmington, ME. Programming was provided about small tools and proper use from an efficiency, ergonomic, and injury prevention standpoint on highly physical small farm tasks. Participants were able to ask questions about the program and were provided brochures.



ME AgrAbility staff participated in the aquaculture learning day in Franklin, ME. Extension staff got a tour of the National Coldwater Marine Aquaculture Center and the UMaine Center for Aquaculture research. The program was an opportunity for Maine AgrAbility to learn more about aquaculture research in ME and connect to other service providers there, including USDA and FSA.

Submitted by Bella Russo



August 2024

## Michigan



The Michigan AgrAbility Project was thrilled to host the regional training workshop in Ann Arbor in July. There was a great mix of 44 participants from both the medical and ag worlds who attended - and thank you for making the trip from eleven different states and Saipan to be there in person! The classroom sessions were informative across disciplines, and the farm visit was invaluable. One attendee even shared that it was the longest they had spent on a farm.

Submitted by Samantha Wolfe

August 2024

## Missouri

Mackenzie Bevins is a doctoral capstone student from the University of Missouri occupational therapy program. Her time as an occupational therapy student has helped her to recognize the importance of client-centered, evidence-based practice. Her passion for supporting underserved populations has driven her to focus on bridging the gap between healthcare professionals and the agricultural sector. To better address the perceived need for more comprehensive resources about agriculture for healthcare practitioners, she has partnered with the Missouri AgrAbility Project at the University of Missouri Extension. She is the creator and host of the "Leaders in the Field Podcast," a podcast that aims to educate healthcare practitioners on the unique needs and challenges faced by the agricultural community to increase quality of care and practitioner competency when serving the agricultural population. Hosted by Mackenzie Bevins, each episode delves into various aspects of healthcare and agriculture, featuring discussions with agricultural workers and their families, rural health experts, healthcare practitioners, and other leaders in their field. Access her [doctoral capstone podcast here](#).



Emily Doosing and her 4-H team worked in the planning and implementation of 4-H Days at the Lake. This day camp included 77 participants for the two days ranging from ages 5 - 18. 4-H day camp included the following health, safety, and well-being sessions: 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, and Suicide Prevention. As she moves into the school year, Emily will work with teachers in several agricultural school districts to offer health, safety, and wellness programs for youth.



Submitted by Karen Funkenbusch and Emily Doosing

Missouri AgrAbility was discussed as resource during each of the BIA-MO Networking Coffees for Professionals in St. Louis (June 4), Springfield (June 11) and Kansas City (June 12). During these three Missouri AgrAbility marketing events, 30 healthcare, rehabilitation, community supports, and agricultural professionals became more familiar about Missouri's customized technical on-the-farm assessments through case studies, discussions, and cited examples.

During the "Technology Thursday" online meeting (June 20), Maureen Cunningham, BIA-MO executive director, highlighted the use of assistive technologies for farming and ranching through Missouri AgrAbility. This networking provided an opportunity to raise awareness about Missouri AgrAbility and continued during the "Show Me Falls Free Missouri" online networking (July 9) with Maureen Cunningham sharing information about falls being the number cause of brain injury, including in rural communities.

Submitted by Maureen Cunningham



August 2024

## Nebraska



Nebraska AgrAbility rural rehabilitation specialists Kara Brichacek and Teresa Duffek attended the regional training hosted by the National AgrAbility Project in Ann Arbor, Michigan. They shared their experiences...

Kara shares, "The first day we discussed disability etiquette, nonprogressive and progressive medical conditions. The second day we learned tips and guidelines for farm assessment interviews and observations. We were able to see this executed later that day as we traveled to a local farm and performed an assessment on a farmer named Jane. The final day we learned about the vast variety of assistive technology and apps that are available. We were also able to follow up with the farmer we previously visited to share our questions and insights with her."



Teresa said "The regional meeting in Michigan was extremely insightful. We met a lot of people, networked, learned how states had different approaches to providing services. We visited a farm with a husband and wife that were both receiving AgrAbility services. On the last day we met a flower farmer who was an AgrAbility client. He had a very interesting history and story to tell. In Nebraska, we think about farmers growing corn, soybean, and wheat and raising hogs and poultry while ranchers raise cattle and grow hay. It was enlightening to see a flower farmer and meet people from Maine and Canada involved in the fishing and forestry farming. Farming is so diverse, and I met such interesting people. We also learned more about writing assessments and some very neat assistive technologies. Topics of the week included disability etiquette, non-progressive and progressive medical conditions. This is so important when doing an assessment because what you see today and what the needs of the farmer/rancher are at the time, may be completely different six months from now. It was a great learning experience."

Submitted by Soni Cochran

August 2024

## Ohio



Summer is county fair time, and Ohio AgrAbility Project (OAP) staff have been all over the state attending inclusive livestock shows and celebrating "Independence through Agriculture" for people with disabilities. Many of the county fairs in Ohio host ExtraOrdinary Livestock Shows where



people with disabilities are partnered with 4-H or FFA mentors to show an animal at the fair. Exhibitors get the chance to participate in the Extraordinary class at the



fair and care for and show an animal, and the mentors get to teach them how to show and also learn about disability advocacy. AgrAbility staff have been traveling to the shows, awarding medals to the exhibitors, and talking to the audience about AgrAbility. At the end of fair season, AgrAbility staff will lead a writing group to compile a best practices manual for show organizers.



Submitted by Laura Akgerman

August 2024

## Tennessee



TN AgrAbility, TN Association of Rescue Squads (TARS), Southern Ag Exchange Network (SAGE), TriGreen Equipment, and Farm Credit Mid-America partnered for the 13th TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness Training for 55 rescue personnel and ag producers with a special program, with 116 in attendance, added to the agenda: "Bringing Purpose Through Pain - Legacy of Shawn Hudson Corum." Shawn passed away June 2, 2018, at the age of five due to a grain auger accident. Carla Corum, Hudson's mom, said her faith in God has helped

her and her family cope with losing a son and brother. She is an advocate for farm safety programs and mental health trainings for family members dealing with loss as well as first responders who deal with tragedies every day. Through her voice and actions, Shawn Hudson Corum, an avid John Deere fan, will continue to be remembered and save lives. A panel consisted of onsite accident (Hudson) rescue personnel and farmers, TN Fire Chaplain, Carla Corum and a mental health professional and Brian Robinson (TARS) as moderator in Williamson County, TN. Each one told their story, their part and how they dealt with the accident. The latter program brought the mission and purpose of why these trainings, as well as advanced grain bin and mental health trainings, are necessary. TARS State Training Coordinator, Brian Robinson presented the idea to TNAP staff to bring these two programs together in one location, after Carla contacted him, stating she was ready to tell Hudson's story.

[Farm mom shares tragic loss to promote grain bin safety awareness - RFD-TV \(rfdtv.com\)](https://www.rfdtv.com)

Shelby Bawcum, one of the STAR Center's newest assistive technology specialists, and Eileen Legault, one of University of TN AgrAbility area specialists, represented TN at the 2024 assistive technology professional training in Arbor, MI. Thank you to Ned Stoller, Tess McKeel, and MI AgrAbility for hosting - plus the Mamarow family for sharing their stories and opening their farm. The training enabled attendees to enhance the level of services being provided and assist with the development of new resources for TN AgrAbility farmers. Technology is always improving and changing. A few highlights of the educational sessions included: new disability etiquette; medical conditions; assessment models, interview skills, observations, and reporting; and assistive technology for farming. Ned, an Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) with Michigan AgrAbility, is working with the National AgrAbility Project and the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) for additional specialized ATP trainings. Look forward to more training resources.



UT Gardens, Frontline Gardens, Appalachian Sustainable Development, and TNAP hosted a veteran horticultural therapy (HT) workshop with three Virginia and five TN farmers. Veterans exposed to nature and gardening have been shown to improve mental health outcomes. Attendees learned about garden planning and management, succulent planting, microgreens, propagation, hands-on HT activities and various resources, including the Farmer Veteran Coalition of TN and TNAP. Thank you to Northeast State Community

College Student Veteran Center for hosting us.

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Congratulations to the STAR Center, TN AgrAbility's nonprofit partner, on winning the Tennessee Chapter of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) award at the 2024 Outstanding Chapter of the Year Award at the International AER Conference in North Carolina! AER supports the professionals in the fields of low vision and blindness services for the end goal of better quality and access for the people we serve. Christie Elliott serves as the president-elect for this outstanding AER board and chapter for STAR Center! Staff are so proud of her and this accomplishment!



TN AgrAbility, STAR Center, the Ky Raising Hope Team, and Gibson County Farm Bureau Women's Leadership group partnered to exhibit safety, health, rescue, and nutrition (ice cream on a hot day) at the 33rd Milan No-Till Field Day, with 1257 in attendance. Those who received a handshake from Dale Dobson of KY more than likely received not only a handshake but a hug and challenge coin and were also told they are important, they matter, and they are loved, and if they ever begin to think any differently, there is help. A weed puller was demonstrated at the Milan No Till Field Day by Laine

McGee with USDA NRCS. See [video of the weed puller demonstration here](#).

Submitted by TN AgrAbility

**August 2024**

## **Washington**

Deb Eidsness is in full fair mode heading into August. She will participate in five county and regional events including terminal market shows and sales. These events can be very stressful for many of youth exhibitors, mentally and physically. Kids may be facing their first heartbreak, trying to talk to prospective buyers, facing pressures of the show ring, and making their stall cards. Many of these kids have spent well over a year working daily with these livestock projects. It's a hard time for them.

The fairs Deb Eidsness will be tabling at are the Stanwood Fair, the Skagit County Fair, the San Juan County Fair, and the Evergreen State Fair. She is very excited to outreach to potential AgrAbility clients in Washington State, and the fairs have been a proven way to connect.

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Cheryl Reese, the new eastern Washington co-coordinator, is currently working to find a way to partner with another organization to be at the Central Washington State Fair in Yakima that runs September 20th-29th. She has been going to monthly Grange meetings, as well as monthly board meetings, at the Central Washington Agricultural Museum in Yakima. She is planning to attend the Cherry Institute coming up in January, along with several smaller events in between.

Submitted by Don McMoran



August 2024

## **AgrAbility for Africa**

AgrAbility for Africa staff have been fairly successful in connecting rural children to rehabilitation services in urban communities. However, during follow-ups, staff often learn that many of these children have dropped out of the programs due to logistical challenges. As a result, AgrAbility for Africa staff are seeking support and doubling their efforts to maintain these rehabilitation connections. They are seeking to expand partnerships to prevent the increasing number of children who fall out of the programs due to the high cost of transportation and the lack of accessible transport options that enable them to attend their therapy sessions.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

August 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** Citrus Expo  
**Dates** August 21-22, 2024  
**City, State** Tampa, Florida  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://citrusexpo.net/>

**Name** Farwest Show  
**Dates** August 21-23, 2024  
**City, State** Portland, Oregon  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://farwestshow.com/>

**Name** Husker Harvest Days  
**Dates** September 10-12, 2024  
**City, State** Grand Island, Nebraska  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.huskerharvestdays.com/en/home.html>

**Name** National Farm Safety & Health Week Free Webinars  
**Dates** September 16-20, 2024 - 2 Webinars/Day  
**City, State** Webinar Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/national-farm-safety-and-health-week-tickets-909891188037?keep\\_tld=1](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/national-farm-safety-and-health-week-tickets-909891188037?keep_tld=1)

**Name** Farm Science Review  
**Dates** September 17-19, 2024  
**City, State** London, Ohio  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://fsr.osu.edu/>

**link**

**Name** World Beef Expo  
**Dates** September 19-22, 2024  
**City, State** West Allis, Wisconsin  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.worldbeefexpo.com/>

**Name** World Dairy Expo  
**Dates** October 1-4, 2024  
**City, State** Madison, Wisconsin  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://worlddairyexpo.com/>

**Name** Sunbelt Ag Expo  
**Dates** October 15-17, 2024  
**City, State** Moultrie, Georgia  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://sunbeltexpo.com/>

**Name** 97th National FFA Convention & Expo  
**Dates** October 23-26, 2024  
**City, State** Indianapolis, Indiana  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://convention.ffa.org/>

**Name** 2024 FARMER VETERAN STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE  
**Dates** October 27-29, 2024  
**City, State** Kansas City, Missouri  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://conference.farmvetco.org/>

**Name** Western Region AgrAbility Conference  
**Dates** October 29-31, 2024  
**City, State** Tamuning, Guam  
**Contact Info/Web link** [henkj@triton.uog.edu](mailto:henkj@triton.uog.edu)

**Name** 34th Annual NBFA (National Black Farmers Association) Conference  
**Dates** November 1-2, 2024  
**City, State** Columbus, Georgia  
**Contact** <https://www.blackfarmers.org/>

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** Angus Convention

**Dates** November 1-4, 2024

**City, State** Fort Worth, Texas

**Contact** <https://angusconvention.com/>

**Info/Web  
link**

**Name** Triumph of Ag Expo

**Dates** November 20-21, 2024

**City, State** Omaha, Nebraska

**Contact** <https://showofficeonline.com/triumph/>

**Info/Web  
link**