

# AgrAbility e•Note

September 2024

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

### NTW Updates

- Staff from Goodwill have visited the [Hotel Encanto](#) and [New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum](#) (where most sessions will be held) and are excited for the opportunity that this new format holds. [More](#)
- Rooms can be reserved now at the [Hotel Encanto](#) via this link: [2503AGRABI](#). The federal per diem rates will potentially be changing on October 1st, so if you make your reservations before then, you should be able to lock in the \$107 rate. [More](#)
- There are only two accessible rooms at the Hotel Encanto. Staff are working on blocking more at nearby hotels. [More](#)
- Submit proposals for presentations and posters November 4. [More](#)



Time is running out to register for the next regional workshop, which will be held in Guam, October 29-31. Rooms have been blocked at Hyatt Regency Guam at a rate of \$159 per night plus taxes/fees. [More](#)

NAP would love to host a Regional Workshop with you. If you think that you might be interested, please contact Tess [tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:tmckeel@goodwillfingerlakes.org) or JoBeth [jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org](mailto:jbrath@goodwillfingerlakes.org), for more information.

NAP's Advisory Team has one rotating spot for a SRAP staff member and one for a farmer/rancher. For 2024-25, the SRAP staff member is Serap Gorucu from Florida AgrAbility, and the farmer/rancher couple is Mike and Sheila Koepke from Montana.

Next AgrAbility NTW Encore Webinar: "Creating Reliable Plans for DIY Assistive Technology," Wednesday, September 25, 3:00 p.m. EDT. Presenters are Ned Stoller from Michigan AgrAbility and Jeff Kratochwill from AgrAbility of Wisconsin. [More](#)



Many thanks to AgrAbility in Georgia for representing NAP and AgrAbility at the 2024 Amputee Coalition Annual Conference in Atlanta. See more in the



Steve Etheridge, NAP's vocational rehabilitation consultant, and Chuck Baldwin, underserved populations outreach coordinator, staffed an AgrAbility exhibit at the National Amish Amputee Gathering in Shipshewana, IN, August 31. It was held at an Amish home in a nice outbuilding made for gatherings, weddings, and various reunions. [More](#)

Newly archived virtual events:

- NTW Encore Webinar: [“Creating a Program to Educate OTs & PTs on Rehabbing Farmers and Ranchers”](#)
- [AgrAbility all-staff meeting 9/9/24](#)
- For anyone who didn't get to see and hear Laura Adams present on "Farm Dog of the Year" at the Atlanta NTW, Laura has uploaded a video of her presentation to YouTube. It can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2hxfWo8cW0>

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## Toolbox Spotlight

The [LapStacker Retractable Wheelchair-Carry System](#) is designed to allow the user to secure many types, shapes, and sizes of objects on his/her lap. Affixed to the chair's left and right front vertical frame, the system includes tensioned straps, retractors (that house the straps), brackets/clamps (that hold retractors to frame), and magnetic buckles (that fasten straps together). To operate, one pulls the straps from the retractors, brings them toward each other over the item(s), and joins the magnetized buckles together. When the buckles are unhooked, the straps retract back into their housings.



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## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### Colorado

The Colorado AgrAbility Project has had a busy summer! Ashley Buchanan, CAP's rural rehabilitation specialist, is back from maternity leave and has met with 20 clients and opened 9 new cases in the last three months. [More](#)

CAP's behavioral health specialists have been busy providing trainings and support for mental health across rural Colorado. Jim Kummerle, eastern region behavioral health specialist, received funding from the Boetcher Foundation to create an eastern Colorado strategic plan to address behavioral health workforce shortages; [More](#)

Colorado AgrAbility CSU campus-based faculty Melissa Fenton, Ph.D., and Paula Yuma, Ph.D., recently completed a comprehensive needs assessment with over 300 rural-serving behavioral health providers. This assessment included a survey and three focus groups aimed at understanding the specific needs and challenges faced by these professionals. [More](#)

Check out the [2023-24 AgrAbility Behavioral Health Impact Report](#) to learn more about CAP's behavioral health work, funded by the CO State Legislature.

Finally, Colorado AgrAbility is still searching for a program supervisor. Please share the job posting with networks: [AgrAbility Program Supervisor | Opportunities \(ultiopro.com\)](#).

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## Florida



The Florida AgrAbility case coordinator co-presented “Accessible Beekeeping” at the 2024 UF/IFAS Summer Bee College in Panama City. Attendees learned about the AgrAbility program, modifications to make their apiaries more accessible, and new technologies available to them to improve their beekeeping operation.

Florida AgrAbility team members attended the 2024 Extension Professional Associations of Florida (EPAF) Conference in Daytona Beach to continue fostering the relationship between AgrAbility and state extension agents. [More](#)

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## Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility was able to represent National AgrAbility at the 2024 Amputee Coalition National Conference held in Atlanta, GA from August 7-9. It was a wonderful conference to let people know about AgrAbility services and connect with other organizations who were exhibiting at the conference. [More](#)



AgrAbility staff trained 20 professionals in Mental Health First Aid on August 7. The attendees were from a variety of agencies serving rural communities in northeast Georgia.

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## Indiana



Chuck Baldwin spoke and exhibited Saturday, August 17, at the Indiana Amish Handicap [sic] Gathering in Monroe, IN. At least 200 Amish, all of them impacted personally or through family members, came to share, encourage, and learn how to better cope with the effects of disability. [More](#)

Indiana AgrAbility staffed a display in the Indiana FFA Pavilion for the entire 2024 Indiana State Fair, August 2-18. The booth featured assistive technology examples, including an accessible tractor supplied by LifeLyfts, and staff were also able to participate in Ability Awareness Day, which was sponsored by subcontracting partner Easterseals Crossroads on Sunday, August 4.



## Maine



Maine Project Coordinator Bella Russo and OT Brie Weisman offered an ergonomics training for logging students at Kennebec Valley Community College. Two groups of students attended and discussed the ergonomics of logging equipment, strategies for injury prevention, and learned about the LogAbility program.

Potato Research Day was held in Fort Kent, ME, mid-August. The day was an opportunity for Extension staff to communicate with industry partners and farmers about their advancements in potato research. The AgrAbility program coordinator had the opportunity to address farmers at the event and share information.



ME Extension livestock and small business specialists partnered with AgrAbility for a seminar on livestock farming in Maine. AgrAbility staff presented information on the program with farmer attendees from the mid-coast area.

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## Michigan

The monthly Extension meetup scheduling poll was sent out recently to those who expressed interest. If you have not yet, but would like to be on the list, please reach out to Samantha at [wolfesa4@msu.edu](mailto:wolfesa4@msu.edu).

Michigan AgrAbility staff tabled at the AgroExpo in St. Johns, MI, in mid-August where they met several potential clients and attended grain bin and manure pit safety demonstrations with the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS). [More](#)

On the other end of the scale of agriculture and agribusiness, Extension staff also contributed to the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference (NMSFC). Different components of the conference took place at various farms across northwest lower Michigan,... [More](#)

Staff shared information about AgrAbility with the Michigan Beekeeper's Association office hours through MSU Extension.



Michigan AgrAbility hosted a demonstration and vendor table at the first Farm Bureau Safety Summit on Friday, August 23. Farmers and first responders at the summit learned how to respond to emergencies on logging operations and farms and how AgrAbility can help in the long-term recovery of agricultural workers who have injuries and disabilities.

AgrAbility will sponsor a fall project with the mechanical engineering capstone course, and the team looks forward to working with the students on the design, which will be practical and replicable at a low cost to support farmers with back and lower extremity impairments so they can continue producing low-growing fruits and vegetables.

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## Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility partnered with Show-Me Farm Safety committee to showcase health, safety, and well-being interactive hands-on props at the annual state fair in Sedalia. 345,643 visitors attended the state fair, which was held August 8-18. [More](#)

Emily Doosing with 4-H hosted a mock show in collaboration with TJ Swift's Honest Imagination Day Habilitation Center in Alton, MO, and Stock Show Stars out of Arkansas. This mock show provided 4-H members an opportunity to practice safe showmanship while sharing their knowledge with individuals with disabilities. [More](#)



Mackenzie Bevins with the University of Missouri occupational therapy program completed her doctoral capstone project with MO AgrAbility in August. Her time as an occupational therapy student has helped her recognize the importance of client-centered, evidence-based practice. [More](#)

Mary Keeter demonstrated the Jesup Wagon 2.0 at the Missouri Institute on Minority Aging conference August 26th-27th, sharing information on ergonomic tools and stress prevention.

Utilization of the Brain Injury Resource Kits with Missouri AgrAbility marketing is expanding. The Rehabilitation Institute of St. Louis's new rehab hospital in Charles County is providing the Brain Injury Resource Kits with a *Living with Brain Injury* book, caregivers guide, *Brain Injury Recovery Step by Step* brochure, and Missouri AgrAbility *Diary for Hope* free of charge for Missouri AgrAbility clients.

Future farmers and ranchers learned about the prevention of concussions and other brain injuries at the St. Louis Cardinals Redbird Rookies Health Fair at Busch Stadium on August 10.

Maureen Cunningham, BIA-MO executive director and Missouri AgrAbility co-PI, participated in the St. Louis VA Mental Health Summit on August 16.

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## Nebraska



Nebraska AgrAbility had a strong presence during "Older Nebraskans Day" at the Nebraska State Fair. The booth was in the Raising Nebraska Building, and the team had many opportunities to engage with fairgoers.

[More](#)

Emily Jacobson attended Becknology Days in Goehner, Nebraska. Emily shares that she learned about Beck Hybrids and had the opportunity to visit with their organization to share information about AgrAbility and about getting program information to their customers.



Emily has been working with Nebraska AgrAbility advisory member Jay Ferris on the legislative bill to continue funding assistive technology for farmers and ranchers. Jay is a member of the Nebraska Farm Bureau.

[More](#)

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## New Mexico

The NMAP team continues to look forward to the 2025 NTW in beautiful Las Cruces, NM. Staff hope to incorporate the stories of NM farmers and ranchers as well as beautiful agricultural locations in New Mexico.

NMAP hopes to let the community know about its invaluable farm site evaluations at three events in the fall: September - NM Falls Coalition Event and NM OT Association Conference; October - Los Lunas Farm Fest; and November - Conference on Aging.

Seven farm apprentices continue to learn farm techniques at the NM AgrAbility Albuquerque farm sites and partner organic farms in the community. Summer monsoons are starting to reduce the hot summer temperatures at the farm sites.

Two level II occupational therapy students started their 12-week rotations September 9.

NM team members are diligently planning details for the "a day on the farm event" for NM DVR workers in the fall.

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## North Carolina (affiliate)

The North Carolina Assistive Technology Program is sponsoring the 2024 NC AT Expo "Breaking Boundaries, Empowering Lives" on October 3. Registration is free and open to the public. [More](#)

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## Ohio

The Ohio AgrAbility team had a productive August, participating in various outreach events. One highlight was their presence at Farm Days, hosted by the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus from August 9th to 14th. [More](#)

The OAP staff introduced a new educational resource: *OAP Coloring Pages*. These vibrant illustrations depict farm and garden scenes, providing children with a fun and engaging way to learn about farming while incorporating information about disability-inclusive practices.

[More](#)



The OAP team continues to actively engage with the community by attending inclusive livestock shows across the state. These events provide valuable opportunities to connect with county development disability staff and initiate discussions about potential partnerships in education and workforce development. [More](#)

## Pennsylvania

The PA team has been at many events these past weeks to educate attendees and fellow exhibitors about AgrAbility PA and services. Ag Progress Days was a great opportunity to meet with others in the community and discuss all that AgrAbility does and has to offer.



While attending the Rodale Institute Field Day event, Marci Walborn was interviewed by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry about AgrAbility PA initiatives and how others can partner with us.

Abbie Spackman provided an AgrAbility PA presentation to Pennsylvania's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRSC) staff during a statewide conference call. The presentation focused on how NRCS staff can make referrals to AgrAbility or share AgrAbility resources while doing fieldwork.

Suzanna Windon delivered the "Managing Stress on the Farm" program to urban youth in Harrisburg, PA, as part of their summer community stewardship project. In addition to learning how to lead a community gardening initiative, participants were introduced to the AgrAbility PA program and discussed stress factors in agriculture, including common work-related injuries.

Greg Shaw and Abbie Spackman worked together to shoot and produce an "Assistive Technology How-To" video series. Each episode focuses on a different piece of AT equipment and how it can be used. Episodes have been being released weekly on AgrAbility PA social media sites.



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## Tennessee

Some TN AgrAbility farmers are beekeepers and build their apiaries for honey production as well as mental and physical well-being. The Heroes to Hives alumni map was established to assist with finding local honey bee needs: honey, bees, candles, skin care products and so much more: [Heroes to Hives Alumni Business Map](#)

TN AgrAbility exhibited at the annual UTIA Steak and Potatoes Field Day. TNAP staff interacted with producers and land managers at the Plateau AgResearch and Education Center in Crossville to get the latest research updates and best practices from [UT AgResearch](#) and [UT Extension](#) experts. [More](#)



TN AgrAbility staff, partnering with Farmer Veteran Coalition TN, attended the Summer 2024 VetFest. The day was spent networking and learning about all the Veteran services available.

A Giles County, TN, AgrAbility farmer with mobility issues received his new mobility device, UTV cake box, and feed bin to assist in finishing out fall/winter calves. Assistive technology equipment was purchased through TN Vocational Rehabilitation Services with farm assessment by TN AgrAbility and STAR Center staff.



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## Texas

Texas AgrAbility began August with a dynamic presence at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension State Conference. This event offered the team valuable continuing education and a chance to connect with fellow Extension programs and agents.

Later in the month, staff also participated in the Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course. This annual event is a key opportunity for staff to stay updated on the latest developments in the cattle industry and enhance knowledge to better serve clients. Staff eagerly anticipate these events each year for the insights and connections they provide.

In July, Texas AgrAbility was delighted to welcome OT intern Kara Smallegan to the team. Kara quickly immersed herself in her work, participating in a variety of events throughout her time in Texas. [More](#)

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## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah staff set up a table at the Stockmanship and Stewardship Conference in Richfield, Utah, on Aug. 23-24th and visited with many ranchers from central Utah. Classes included "Beef Quality Assurance," "Nutrient Cycling in Grazing Systems," "Animal Health and Technology," and live cattle handling demonstrations.

On Aug. 24th, AgrAbility staff set up a table at the Utah Assistive Technology Program's 35th Anniversary Fair in Logan, Utah, and were able to interact with many of the attendees. Events included a wheelchair obstacle course, art activities, assistive gaming and more. UATP's mission is to put assistive technology into the hands of people who need it.

AgrAbility staff presented to members of the Cache Interagency Council in Logan, UT, on August 26th.

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## Virginia

August was a whirlwind of activity and engagement for AgrAbility Virginia! The team took center stage at several high-profile events, starting with the National Urban Agriculture Conference in Detroit, where more than 700 people participated via in-person and online.

Staff also made a big splash at the MEU Rockingham County Fair in Harrisburg, VA, an event drawing in over 700 people, and at the VSU College of Agriculture Field Day at Randolph Farm, where staff were in front of more than 600 attendees. [More](#)

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## Washington (affiliate)



The Washington State AgrAbility grant terms on September 30th, 2024. Washington State would like to thank everyone for allowing the team to administer the AgrAbility program in Washington for the past five years. [More](#)

Staff look forward to the Western Region AgrAbility meeting in Guam.

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## Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin (AAW) staff exhibited at Farm Technology Days from August 13-15. Farm Technology Days is an annual event that showcases the latest advancements in farming technology and practices with nearly 50,000 people attending over the three days this year. [More](#)



AgrAbility of Wisconsin Outreach Program Coordinator Michelle Bachand created a video titled "AgrAbility of Wisconsin: Cultivating Accessible Agriculture" that is geared towards beginning farmers for the Extension Farm Management video series "[Getting Started with your Food or Farm Business](#)". [More](#)

AgrAbility of Wisconsin Intern Julianne Renner has created a series of Facebook posts that introduce and highlight each of the AAW staff. Check out [#GetToKnowAgrAbilityWI!](#)

AgrAbility of Wisconsin is thrilled to announce the launch of its newly redesigned website! The goal with this new design is to create a user-friendly and accessible browsing experience for all. [More](#)

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## International AgrAbility Network News

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## AgrAbility for Africa



AgrAbility for Africa staff have been working with plastics recycling organizations to design and produce the first set of assistive technologies from recycled plastic waste from Lake Victoria. Production of assistive technologies started with walking sticks and outdoor pit-latrine sanitation stools made from plastic - all low-tech assistive technologies - and the results were great. [More](#)

On the 28th of August, the AgrAbility staff joined the Global Ghost Gear

Initiative webinar series "Let's Talk Ghost Gear" to promote inclusion in programs and activities by sharing Africa regional experiences and initiatives to inspire and enhance connections and collaborations. It is hoped that these actions will increase accessibility and wellbeing for persons with disabilities in isolated islands and rural Africa.

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## Staff Changes and Recognition

### Texas

Texas AgrAbility extends its warmest congratulations to our program manager, Makenzie Thomas, on the arrival of her baby boy. Our entire team is thrilled for Makenzie and her family and sends heartfelt best wishes during this joyous time. We eagerly anticipate her return and look forward to celebrating this wonderful new addition together.

### Washington

A special thanks to Washington State AgrAbility Co-Coordinators Deb Eidsness, Debbie Fredricks and Cheryl Reese, Grant Coordinator Beth Meenaghan, Spanish Translator Gracia Puerto, and Marketing Specialist Allen Bush.

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## AgrAbility in the News

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

- [Making a Difference - Empowering Lives: AgrAbility and Farm Boot Camp Programs Amplify Support for Farmers and Veterans](#) (AgrAbility in Georgia, Illinois AgrAbility)
  - [Regional Training Workshop Reflections](#) (Michigan AgrAbility Project)
  - [Leveraging Farm Dog Fame for a Good Cause](#) (AgrAbility in Georgia)
- 

## Other News

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

- TN AgrAbility staff, partnering with TN Association of Rescue Squads and UT TSU Extension, began August with the 14th TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness Training. Fifty-two rescue personnel and farmers from the following Tennessee counties were in attendance: [More](#)
- [Black, Minority Farmers Are Getting \\$2 Billion From USDA After Years of Discrimination](#)
- [Fridays on the Farm: Making a Difference with Honeybees](#)
- [Conservation under the sun!](#)
- [Can Agriculture Improve Water Quality? With Data-Driven Voluntary Conservation, the Answer is Yes.](#)
- [American Farmland Trust releases bilingual land transfer training](#)
- [USDA Updates Farm Loan Programs to Increase Financial Freedom, Resilience and Profitability for Producers](#)
- [Rep. Flood Introduces the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Information Act](#)
- [Report: Despite extreme heat, migrant workers keep Americans fed](#)

- [Validated simulations optimize solar power generation with row-crop agriculture](#)
- [The State of A Fair: History of State Fairs](#)

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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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September 2024

## National AgrAbility Project

The 2025 NTW dates are March 24th -27th. We will be staying at the [Hotel Encanto](#) and holding sessions at the [New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum](#). Goodwill staff visited the hotel and museum and are excited for the opportunity that this new format holds. The hotel is beautiful with lots of southwestern flair, and the museum is amazing. Staff saw the plans and some of the pieces for the AgrAbility exhibit and can't wait to see the finished product.



You can make your room reservation now. Rooms at the Encanto have been blocked for us 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: [2503AGRABI](#). This link is only valid during the specified room block dates, the arrival and departure dates must be selected from the drop-down menu. The Federal per diem rates will potentially be changing on Oct. 1st, so if you make your reservations before Oct. 1st, you should be able to lock in the \$107 rate. Alternatively, individuals may contact our reservations team directly at (866) 383-0443 and provide the group code: 2503AGRABI

There are only two accessible rooms at the Hotel Encanto. Staff are working on blocking more at nearby hotels. The Hotel Encanto does have some rooms with a walk-in shower (1-2in lip) that may be able to be made accessible with a shower chair and removable grab bars. Please let Tess know if you are in need of these items.

Submit proposals for presentations and posters using the Google forms below by November 4th. These forms are also available on the NTW website.

[Call for Presentation](#)

[Call for Poster](#)



Time is running out to register for the next regional workshop, which will be held in Guam, October 29-31. Rooms have been blocked at Hyatt Regency Guam at a rate of \$159 per night plus taxes/fees. This is a two-day conference with a tour on day three focusing on mental health, wellness, and resiliency. The registration and hotel reservation link along with more information can be found at [agrability.info/regional](http://agrability.info/regional).

Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes

Steve Etheridge, NAP's vocational rehabilitation consultant, and Chuck Baldwin, underserved populations outreach coordinator, staffed an AgrAbility exhibit at the National Amish Amputee Gathering in Shipshewana, IN, August 31. It was held at an Amish home in a nice outbuilding made for gatherings, weddings, and various reunions. Roughly 270 participants were there, the vast majority of them Amish, and all of them impacted directly or indirectly by amputation. The Amish came from as far away as Canada and from 11 states: IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, ME, MO, OH, PA, VA, and WI. Those with amputations ranged in age from four years old to the very elderly and,



as with any such gathering, the disabilities were the result of a wide variety of incidents and a few diseases.

The spirit of the gathering was amazing, with people sharing not just their struggles, but their faith and their many victories. Joy was a fairly constant companion in the conversations that were held. Chuck was amazed to watch many of those affected take off their prosthetics to hand them to someone else for inspection and discussion - whole legs handed out from under dresses or arms from shirtsleeves! There was keen discussion on whether it was better to have a standard prosthetic or an "implant" connected directly to the remaining bone. Some prosthetics were old and simple, while others were very high-tech with functioning joints and circuits that controlled fingers. Many people came by the AgrAbility table and good discussions on AgrAbility's services resulted in new interest on the part of a number of attendees. Some asked for specific guidance on such things as ramps to get into vans or up stairs. Others spoke of accessibility for horse-drawn vehicles. Both Steve and Chuck enjoyed the opportunity to meet with this group and to be in a position, through AgrAbility, to offer help and hope.

The next National Amish Amputee Gathering will take place in the summer of 2025 in Penn Yan, New York, and AgrAbility has been welcomed to attend.

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin

September 2024

## Colorado

The Colorado AgrAbility Project has had a busy summer! Ashley Buchanan, CAP's rural rehabilitation specialist, is back from maternity leave and has met with 20 clients and opened 9 new cases in the last three months. She also received an iBot training and gained hands-on experience with the new mobility device. Ashley is excited to offer this as an option to clients in need of mobility support. Natalie Bachmeier (AgrAbility coordinator) and Ashley spent the day at the Colorado State Fair on Friday, August 23rd to promote AgrAbility and CSU Extension resources. They are now getting ready and for Winter Workshops.

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CAP's behavioral health specialists have been busy providing trainings and support for mental health across rural Colorado. Jim Kummerle, eastern region behavioral health specialist, received funding from the Boetcher Foundation to create an eastern Colorado strategic plan to address behavioral health workforce shortages; and Kirsten Wulfsberg, mountain region behavioral health specialist, provided an art therapy workshop to rural female veterans. Watch a brief video about this event [here!](#)

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Colorado AgrAbility CSU campus-based faculty Melissa Fenton, Ph.D., and Paula Yuma, Ph.D., recently completed a comprehensive needs assessment with over 300 rural-serving behavioral health providers. This assessment included a survey and three focus groups aimed at understanding the specific needs and challenges faced by these professionals. The survey received an outstanding response, meeting the target of 300 responses within just 24 hours. Additionally, focus groups were conducted in Morgan, Chaffee, and Mesa counties, engaging 17 rural behavioral health providers in in-depth listening sessions. The valuable information gathered from this assessment will inform AgrAbility's dissemination of future training programs tailored to the needs of behavioral health providers serving rural communities.

Submitted by Natalie Bachmeier

September 2024

## Florida

Florida AgrAbility team members attended the 2024 Extension Professional Associations of Florida (EPAF) Conference in Daytona Beach to continue fostering the relationship between AgrAbility and state extension agents. EPAF is a coalition of the Florida Association of County Agricultural Agents, the Florida Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, the Florida Association of Extension 4-H Agents, Epsilon Sigma Phi – Alpha Delta Chapter, and the Florida Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals.

Submitted by Lindsey Head

September 2024

## Georgia

Georgia AgrAbility was able to represent National AgrAbility at the 2024 Amputee Coalition National Conference held in Atlanta, GA from August 7-9. It was a wonderful conference to let people know about AgrAbility services and connect with other organizations who were exhibiting at the conference. We even got to see Nebraska AgrAbility advisory board member Dave Paschold (Go Big Red!).



Submitted by AgrAbility in Georgia

September 2024

## Indiana



Chuck Baldwin spoke and exhibited Saturday, August 17, at the Indiana Amish Handicap [sic] Gathering in Monroe, IN. At least 200 Amish, all of them impacted personally or through family members, came to share, encourage, and learn how to better cope with the effects of disability. There was no set program other than the sharing of a common meal at noon. People began arriving around 8:30 a.m., and they all just visited and circulated from family to family throughout the day. Around 1:30 p.m., someone began to sing a hymn and the others joined in. Several songs were sung a cappella. The children played with each other around the fringes of the gathering. At one point, while visiting with an Amish gentleman outside about the difference between the buggies of the Amish community around Monroe (Adams County) and the larger communities in Lagrange and Elkhart Counties (most buggies in Adams County are open, without any top, while the communities further north primarily used closed-in box-style buggies), there was a sudden disturbance when one of the horses harnessed to a buggy and tied to a hitching rail jumped and fell on its knees with its head coming to rest on the railing - effectively cutting off its ability to breathe. Two men jumped to its rescue, quickly unharnessing it and helping the animal to get back up. According to them, such occurrences aren't uncommon, and their quick action gave testimony to their care for their animals and their neighbors; neither of the men who saved the horse was its owner. The event ended a little earlier than expected when winds blew in and it became apparent that it was going to rain, so most people were headed home by 2:30 p.m.

During the course of the event, Chuck had many good conversations with the participants. At the end of the day, three Amish men had come to Chuck with requests for help: two of them needing portable ramps to get a family member in a wheelchair up into hired vans to go to appointments, and the third was looking for wheelchair parts for an old Everest Jennings stainless steel wheelchair.

With good advice from Steve Swain and Ned Stoller, Chuck was able to locate a selection of portable ramps for the two families requesting them and a source of wheelchair parts for the other family. He returned to visit the families the following week, taking with him printouts of the requested information and all of the contacts Amish would be able to use in order to purchase the items if they chose to do so. Chuck spent time on the front porch of each of the families' homes, getting to know them and sharing more about AgrAbility.

Submitted by Chuck Baldwin

September 2024

## Michigan

Michigan AgrAbility staff tabled at the AgroExpo in St. Johns, MI, in mid-August where they met several potential clients and attended grain bin and manure pit safety demonstrations with the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS). With over 160 exhibitors and free attendance, the show is a significant agribusiness event in the region and great visibility for AgrAbility. Several past clients stopped by the booth, as well as a few potential future clients.

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On the other end of the scale of agriculture and agribusiness, Extension staff also contributed to the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference (NMSFC). Different components of the conference took place at various farms across northwest lower Michigan, and Extension Educator Samantha Wolfe participated in the "Farming Through All Ages and Transitions" roundtable discussion and the "Forest Bathing and Other Mindfulness Practices" farm tour. About 200 people attended the NMSFC with a total of 15 participating in these sessions.

Submitted by Samantha Wolfe

September 2024

## Missouri

Missouri AgrAbility partnered with Show-Me Farm Safety committee to showcase health, safety, and well-being interactive hands-on props at the annual State Fair in Sedalia. 345,643 visitors attended the State Fair, which was held August 8-18, 2024. The Missouri State Fair is the state's largest agriculture showcase, bringing people together each summer from across the state. In a survey of State Fair attendees, the family-friendly agriculture exhibits and shows, fair food, and the tradition of the Missouri State Fair ranked high on the list of why fairgoers came to the Fair in 2024. The mild temperatures experienced during the early days of the Fair were a bonus, with more than 50,000 individuals in attendance on the first Saturday. The 2025 Missouri State Fair will be held August 7-17 in Sedalia. To learn more, visit [mostatefair.com](https://mostatefair.com).



Emily Doosing with 4-H hosted a mock show in collaboration with TJ Swift's Honest Imagination Day Habilitation Center in Alton, MO, and Stock Show Stars out of Arkansas. This mock show provided 4-H members an opportunity to practice safe showmanship while sharing their knowledge with individuals with disabilities. Each 4-H member was partnered with a consumer from TJ Swift's Day Habilitation Center and was tasked with teaching



their partner about animals and how to be safe around them. The 4-H members were critiqued by individuals from Stock Show Stars, a group that provides inclusive livestock day camps. The mock show had 13 4-H members partnering with 17 individuals from the Day Habilitation Center. Ania Bradley, pictured in mock show, is a member of Oregon County 4-H and was the announcer for the day and distributed awards to each participant.



Mackenzie Bevins with the University of Missouri Occupational Therapy Program completed her doctoral capstone project with MO AgrAbility in August of 2024. Her time as an occupational therapy student has helped her 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 partnered with Missouri AgrAbility at the University of Missouri Extension. She is the creator 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. Her doctoral capstone podcast can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#).

Submitted by Emily Doosing, Linda Geist, and Karen Funkenbusch



September 2024

## Nebraska

Nebraska AgrAbility had a strong presence during "Older Nebraskans Day" at the Nebraska State Fair. The booth was in the Raising Nebraska Building, and the team had many opportunities to engage with fairgoers. People learned about AgrAbility services and safety on the farm and ranch, and the team networked with other organizations to share information about AgrAbility. Walk-through traffic at the event was down from previous years as a public forum was being held in the same building led by Nebraska senator and former Nebraska governor Pete Ricketts. Emily Jacobson, Kara Brichacek, Teresa Duffek, and Soni Cochran teamed up to represent Nebraska AgrAbility at the fair! It was a great time!



Emily has been working with Nebraska AgrAbility advisory member Jay Ferris on the legislative bill to continue funding assistive technology for farmers and ranchers. Jay is a member of the Nebraska Farm Bureau. Emily also shares that she got to hang out with AgrAbility clients and the RFD-TV crew to capture a client success story! Staff can look forward to more of these stories in the future.



Submitted by Soni Cochran

September 2024

## North Carolina

The North Carolina Assistive Technology Program is sponsoring the 2024 NC AT Expo "Breaking Boundaries, Empowering Lives" on October 3. Registration is free and open to the public. Highlights include hybrid sessions (for presentations only), over 45 exhibitors onsite, nationally known speakers on aging, AI, augmentative communication (AAC), employment, and 3D printing. LifeLyfts will be onsite in the exhibit hall, and NC A&T will be onsite representing AgrAbility services. [Click here](#) for more information. . Register for virtual sessions [here](#).

Submitted by Tammy Koger

September 2024

## Ohio

The Ohio AgrAbility team had a productive August, participating in various outreach events. One highlight was their presence at Farm Days, hosted by the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus from August 9th to 14th. Their engaging Farm Hazard Hunt, a farm diorama showcasing over 20 safety hazards, proved to be a popular attraction. Children were captivated by the miniature farm scene and its realistic dangers, while adults from diverse fields like power companies, OSHA, factory supervision, nursing, and insurance recognized hazards relevant to their own work.

Farm Days also featured other hands-on exhibits, such as farm machinery demonstrations, a life-sized dairy cow for simulated milking, and interactive seed planting activities guided by OSU Master Gardener volunteers. The Ohio AgrAbility staff actively engaged with attendees, discussing the organization's valuable work in assisting farmers with disabilities and receiving positive feedback and appreciation for their efforts.



The OAP staff introduced a new educational resource: *OAP Coloring Pages*. These vibrant illustrations depict farm and garden scenes, providing children with a fun and engaging way to learn about farming while incorporating information about disability-inclusive practices. The back of each



coloring page features kid-friendly explanations about the challenges and solutions associated with farming with a disability, fostering understanding, and empathy.



The OAP team continues to actively engage with the community by attending inclusive livestock shows across the state. These events provide valuable opportunities to connect with county development disability staff and initiate discussions about

potential partnerships in education and workforce development. By participating in these shows, OAP demonstrates its commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities and fostering inclusive agricultural practices.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

September 2024

## Tennessee

TN AgrAbility exhibited at the annual UTIA Steak and Potatoes Field Day. TNAP staff interacted with producers and land managers at the Plateau AgResearch and Education Center in Crossville to get the latest research updates and best practices from [UT AgResearch](#) and [UT Extension](#) experts. Attendees wrapped up the day with delicious steak sandwiches. Thank you to everyone who joined us for this fun, informative field day!

Submitted by Tennessee AgrAbility Project

September 2024

## Texas

In July, Texas AgrAbility was delighted to welcome OT intern Kara Smallegan to the team. Kara quickly immersed herself in her work, participating in a variety of events throughout her time in Texas. This month, she began her hands-on experience by joining the program director and disabilities specialist, Dr. Cheryl Grenwelge, on multiple farm visits. Following each visit, Kara presented her observations and recommendations to the team's occupational therapist, Megan Skidmore, for thorough discussion and review. Staff are excited to share Kara's internship experiences through a collaboration with Michigan AgrAbility.

Submitted by Texas AgrAbility

September 2023

## Virginia

Staff also made a big splash at the MEU Rockingham County Fair in Harrisburg, VA, an event drawing in over 700 people, and at the VSU College of Agriculture Field Day at Randolph Farm, where staff were in front of more than 600 attendees. These events provided a fantastic platform to reconnect with farmers and former clients, reinforcing the team's commitment to agricultural support. Back at home, staff are actively working on 37 farmer client cases, including helping a beef farmer find assistive technology to help feed his cattle.

Submitted by Leslie Lawrence

September 2024

## Washington

The Washington State AgrAbility grant terms on September 30th, 2024. Washington State would like to thank everyone for allowing the team to administer the AgrAbility program in Washington for the past five years. The staff enjoyed getting to know everyone, learning, and helping Washingtonians continue to do what they love...farming. The team is going to miss administering the grant but will always support the program anyway they can. All the best!



Submitted by Don McMoran

September 2024

## Wisconsin



AgrAbility of Wisconsin (AAW) staff exhibited at Farm Technology Days from August 13-15. Farm Technology Days is an annual event that showcases the latest advancements in farming technology and practices with nearly 50,000 people attending over the three days this year. AAW staff had the opportunity to speak with a number of farmers and shared examples of assistive technology, as well as providing information for attendees to take home. Additionally, AAW's outreach program coordinator, Michelle Bachand, networked with other vendors at the event, sharing information and materials about the AAW program.

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AgrAbility of Wisconsin Outreach Program Coordinator Michelle Bachand created a video titled "AgrAbility of Wisconsin: Cultivating Accessible Agriculture" that is geared towards beginning farmers for the Extension Farm Management video series "Getting Started with your Food or Farm Business". The goal of the video series is to connect food and farm business entrepreneurs with the resources they need to be successful.

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AgrAbility of Wisconsin is thrilled to announce the launch of its newly redesigned website! The goal with this new design is to create a user-friendly and accessible browsing experience for all. The team hopes everyone enjoys the new uncluttered design that is easy to navigate, more user-friendly, and accessible to everyone. Check it out at <https://agrability.bse.wisc.edu/>!

Submitted by AgrAbility of Wisconsin

September 2024

## AgrAbility for Africa



AgrAbility for Africa staff have been working with plastics recycling organizations to design and produce the first set of assistive technologies from recycled plastic waste from Lake Victoria. Production of assistive technologies started with walking sticks and outdoor pit-latrine sanitation stools made from plastic - all low-tech assistive technologies - and the results were great. Staff are now working with recipients to monitor usability to prevent secondary

injuries as well as assess defects, if any, in order to improve quality of equipment.



Submitted by Mutumba Faisal



September 2024

## Other News

### TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness Training

TN AgrAbility staff, partnering with TN Association of Rescue Squads and UT TSU Extension, began August with the 14th TN Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness Training. Fifty-two rescue personnel and farmers from the following Tennessee counties were in attendance: Cheatham, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart and KY Counties: Christian, Logan, Trigg, and Todd. What was unique about this training? This was the first training to have the PowerPoint presentation translated into Spanish, and our first Spanish interpreter, retired Cheatham County UT Extension ANR agent Ronnie Barren, was in attendance with 10 Hispanic farm workers.



A HUGE thank you to: Montgomery Co. Farm Bureau Women's Leadership, Montgomery Co Soil & Water Conservation District; Long Vue Farms; UT TSU Extension Logan Lewis & Cody Parker; Dickson Co. UT TSU Extension Vicki Witcher; Robertson Co UT TSU Extension Timmy Mann, Cheatham Co Retired UT TSU Extension Ronnie Barren (interpreter); TN Association of Rescue Squads (TARS) and all the rescue personnel & ag producers who took time from their busy schedule & time away from family to attend the training.

September 2024

## Upcoming Events

- Name** Application (2024-2027) - BattleGround to Breaking Ground  
**Dates** Due by December 6, 2024 for spring 2025 session  
**City, State** Online  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://agrillifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/application-20242027-battleground-to-breaking-ground/01t4x000008VcPbAAK>
- Name** National Farm Safety & Health Week Free (AgriSafe) 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/>
- 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/>

**link**

**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 Info/Web link** <https://www.blackfarmers.org/>

**Name** Angus Convention  
**Dates** November 1-4, 2024  
**City, State** Fort Worth, Texas  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://angusconvention.com/>

**Name** Triumph of Ag Expo  
**Dates** November 20-21, 2024  
**City, State** Omaha, Nebraska  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://showofficeonline.com/triumph/>

**Name** Lincoln University Small Farmers Conference 2025  
**Dates** March 3-5, 2025  
**City, State** Jefferson City, Missouri  
**Contact** <https://www.lincolnu.edu/college-of-agriculture-environmental-and->

