

# AgrAbility e·Note

November 2024

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

## National AgrAbility Project News

### NTW Updates

- The request for proposals has ended. The planning committee is reviewing the submissions this month, and NAP will notify presenters by December.
- Poster presentations will be accepted through December 31 using the form on the [NTW website](#) or [Call for Posters](#).
- Rooms at the Hotel Encanto have been blocked at a rate of \$110.00 per night, plus a \$10 amenity fee and applicable taxes. Booking Link: [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. Alternatively, individuals may contact the reservations team directly at (866) 383-0443 and provide the group code: 2503AGRABI
- There are only two accessible rooms at the Hotel Encanto. It does have some rooms with a walk-in shower (1-2in lip) that might be made accessible with a shower chair. Accessible rooms are also booked at the Comfort Suites University and Sleep Inn University. Please let Tess know if you need a shower chair or an accessible room from either of the other hotels.



AgrAbility Marketing & Media Community of Interest virtual meeting Wednesday, December 4 at 3:00 p.m. ET. If you are interested but not yet on the mailing list contact [jonesp@purdue.edu](mailto:jonesp@purdue.edu)



Goodwill and Purdue National AgrAbility Project staff members participated in the regional workshop in Guam, October 28-31, which was planned with and supported by the [University of Guam Cooperative Extension & Outreach](#) and the [Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program](#). Over 180 people from mainland U.S., Guam,

Taiwan, and the Federated States of Micronesia had the opportunity to participate in 28 different sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday... [More](#)

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

The National AgrAbility Project collaborated with the National Farm Medicine Center/Children's Center/UMASH, the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, AgriSafe, The Ohio State University SAY, University of Illinois, Progressive Agriculture Foundation, and Central States Center for Ag Safety and Health/University of Nebraska SAY in a youth safety exhibit at the National FFA Convention. [More](#)



The first AgrAbility/Extension meetup took place in October and was a great success with several participants and robust conversation. If anyone is interested in joining the conversation, meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 3 p.m. Eastern. Contact Sam Wolfe [wolfesa4@msu.edu](mailto:wolfesa4@msu.edu) for details. [More](#)



AgrAbility was well-represented at the 2024 annual conference of APRIL - the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living. In addition to a display at the Chicago conference, Kimber Nicoletti-Martinez gave a presentation on rural caregiving, and Paul Jones gave one on accessible gardening.

Newly archived virtual events:

- NTW Encore Webinar: "[Farming Like It's 2024: Equipment and Technologies for Disabled Farmers](#)"
- AgrAbility Zoom Discussion: "[Brain Injury Causes, Effects, and Suggestions](#)"

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## Toolbox Spotlight

The [Danuser T3 Post Driver Attachment](#), which is designed for skid-steer, tractor, mini-excavator, loader, or backhoe, will reportedly drive T-posts up to a 3-inch O.D. at a rate of six strikes per second. The top of the post is fully contained in the device to prevent kick out and is protected from damage by the strike plate. Mounting options include: (1) offset skid-steer quick-attach, allowing the operator to drive parallel to the fence line; (2) bolt-on/weld-on bracket that mounts to most any flat surface; and (3) tilt bracket with up to 20 inches adjustments left or right.



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## State and Regional AgrAbility Project News

### California



It's been a busy month for California AgrAbility. The project recently partnered with the Center for Land Based Learning to host the third Pizza for Producers event, a Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program network initiative. [More](#)

Together with Puentes Network colleagues, staff hosted the annual Encuentro Comunitario, a "Community Gathering," in Esparto, CA. The event was held in Spanish and attended by farmworkers from the surrounding areas. [More](#)



Staff kicked off the fall season with the YOLO Farmworkers Festival. They had the opportunity to table at the event and share information on arthritis, diabetes, and mental health. [More](#)



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## Colorado

Colorado AgrAbility Behavioral Health Specialist Chad Reznicek recently won the Office of Engagement and Extension's Rising Star Award at the CSU Extension annual Fall Forum. Chad has led Extension's efforts to expand and improve behavioral health supports for farmers, ranchers, and their families across Colorado. [More](#)



On October 19th, Kirsten Wulfsberg (behavioral health specialist), and Ashley Buchanan and Hannah Cefalo (rehabilitation specialists), attended and presented at the Women in Agriculture conference in Pueblo, Colorado. Kirsten presented on the "3 Bs of Resilience" and Ashley presented "AgrAbility 101," in which she described and shared about available resources.

Finally, behavioral health specialists Chad Reznicek and Jim Kuemmerle just returned from Guam where they presented about expanding behavioral health resources within AgrAbility at the regional training workshop. Fun was had by all!

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## Florida

On October 12th, Serap Gorucu attended Rooted in Inclusion, a disability awareness event organized by GROW HUB, a non-profit plant nursery supporting the lives of adults living with disabilities.



Vanessa Spero presented a poster "Opportunities in Agriculture for Youth with Disabilities" at the 2024 National Association of Extension-4-H Youth Development Professionals (NAE4-HYDP) Annual Conference, in Boise, ID, October 15th-17th.



Lindsey Head and Serap Gorucu attended the Sunbelt Ag Expo alongside the Georgia and South Carolina AgrAbility projects in Moultrie, Georgia, October 15th-17th. This event attracts more than 50,000 attendees annually.

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## Georgia

October has been a very busy month for Georgia AgrAbility. Multiple AgrAbility clients got hit pretty hard by Hurricane Helene. Staff have been assisting these farmers with clean-up efforts to get their farm operations secure.

The Georgia National Fair is held every October in Perry, GA. Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency had a large "Day at the Fair" aimed at getting students interested in agriculture. [More](#)



Georgia AgrAbility was thrilled to have Florida AgrAbility and South Carolina AgrAbility with them again this year at the 46th annual Sunbelt Ag Expo! It is wonderful to showcase the work and services of multiple programs to farmers in the Southeast. [More](#)

Georgia AgrAbility staff member Mason Dean presented to the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Agronomy Club about AgrAbility services. The group was very attentive and asked wonderful questions about accessibility. [More](#)



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## Indiana



Linda Tarr passed away at home on November 9. Linda worked for Hoosier Uplands Economic Development Corporation, an organization that partnered as a subcontractor on the Indiana AgrAbility Project grant for many years. Hoosier Uplands later became the lead organization for USDA's Indiana AgVets Program, which collaborates closely with AgrAbility, and Linda was the driving force behind that grant project. [More](#)

AgrAbility hosted a Boots to Business Reboot class for farmers and ranchers teaching them how to develop business plans and access the unique resources from USDA and other agencies and nonprofits to become farmers. Boots to Business is available for free in every state for veterans and their spouses. [More](#)



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## Maine



Maine AgrAbility staff attended the meat goat "Culling and Breeding" workshop held at Liberation Farms in Wales, Maine. The workshop covered herd management information on how to make culling decisions. [More](#)

The Low Tunnels for Organic Production workshop was attended by the Maine AgrAbility program coordinator. Staff were able to address an audience of farmers and service providers about program information and details.

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## Michigan

Michigan staff is working on the year-end bulletin for their partners, clients, and stakeholders, and preparing for outreach opportunities at educational events throughout the winter season.

Ned Stoller and Samantha Wolfe attended the NAP regional workshop in Guam, where they learned from and with the local veteran community, local farmers, and researchers from across Micronesia, Taiwan, and the U.S. Ned also presented two sessions during the conference.

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## Missouri

Emily Doosing, 4-H specialist, continues to fine-tune the Rodeo Clown College teaching module that includes physical and mental health, farm safety, well-being, and AgrAbility. More information to follow and to be showcased at 2025 AgrAbility National Training Workshop.

The [Leaders in the Field Podcast](#) series, hosted by Dr. Mackenzie Bevins, 2024 occupational therapy graduate who completed her capstone with Missouri AgrAbility Program, is dedicated to enhancing healthcare practitioners' understanding of the agricultural population, focusing on the



unique healthcare needs, challenges, and contextual factors of agricultural workers. [More](#)



Missouri AgrAbility team members from Lincoln University Cooperative Extension and MU Extension plus the Missouri onsite farmstead assessor presented "Farming Like It's 2024: Equipment and Technologies for Disabled Farmers" and facilitated Q&A for the [AgrAbility National Training Workshop Encore Webinars 2024](#) on Wednesday, October 23.

The [2024 Pearls of Production Conference](#) was a two-day conference for women in agriculture. Day one, October 29th, started via ZOOM at 6:00pm with a breakout session with four options and a keynote presenter. [More](#)

Maureen Cunningham, BIA-MO Executive Director, highlighted Missouri AgrAbility during a Kansas City VA Veterans CIT Training on Brain Injury Effects and Resources. The audience was Kansas City first responders.

AgrAbility was a topic of discussion with Maureen Cunningham and executive directors of Brain Injury Associations from across the country at the Brain Injury Association of America Leadership Conference 2024.

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## Nebraska

Students from the Albion, Nebraska, area attended a business and industry event hosted by the Boone County Development Agency at the Niewohner Arena. This event gave students the chance to connect with local businesses and explore the career paths available in the community. [More](#)



Nebraska AgrAbility was invited to be on the advisory group for the [Nebraska Farmer Veteran Coalition](#). Emily has been participating in its board meetings to help organize the group, and going forward, she will work to promote the organization at upcoming events. [More](#)



Members of the Nebraska AgrAbility team Kara Brichacek, rural rehabilitation specialist, and Emily Jacobson, program manager, attended the National Reinke Sales Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska. Over 650 dealers and their families from across the nation attended the event. [More](#)

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## New Mexico

The NM AgrAbility team continues to coordinate with NM Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum for the opening of an AgrAbility exhibit in early 2025. Their leader, Robert Hagevoort, will announce a date for the walk-through and grand opening of the exhibit when it is available.

Two OT fieldwork II students have completed their 8th week of their 12-week advanced fieldwork.

Staff are thrilled that the 2025 National Training Workshop will be in beautiful Las Cruces, NM, and several NM team members have submitted proposals to speak.

The farm apprentices working with non-profit partner Mandy's Farm are completing their training cycle this season. They have been installing grow tunnels for winter crops.

Athena Paguio, a population health student completing her capstone with the NM AgrAbility Project, presented a farm health research poster at the University of New Mexico scholarship of practice poster session on



## Ohio



Ohio AgrAbility was honored to help a farm family grant a final wish for a farmer with leukemia who wanted to have one last harvest. OAP staff took a lift that had been gifted to OAP by a retiring farmer and put it to use at a Newark, Ohio, farm so that the farmer could get into the combine and harvest. [More](#)

October was a busy month in Ohio for outreach and education. OAP staff had displays at Ag Days in Butler County and at the Goodwill Easterseals Vision Fair in Dayton. Both events presented opportunities for sharing OAP resources with new audiences. OAP staff also presented "Gardening as We Age" at two central Ohio conferences.

Disability Services Coordinator Laura Akgerman attended the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals conference in Boise, Idaho. She attended all of the disability themed sessions and met Vanessa Spero, Co-PI and outreach coordinator for Florida AgrAbility. [More](#)

## Pennsylvania

Abbie Spackman met with the PA NRCS disabilities special emphasis program manager to problem-solve and collaborate in providing NRCS and AgrAbility services to farmers across the state. This has become a recurring bi-monthly meeting to increase networking between these two organizations. [More](#)

Abbie participated in the PA Farm Link advisory board meeting held at Rohrbach's Farm. PA Farm Link operates a land and farmer linking database and provides succession planning to farm families. [More](#)

Abbie partnered with a Penn State Extension dairy educator to provide three farm assessments in Bradford County, PA. The partnership with the dairy educator, who is well-known and respected in his county, opened the doors for two of the farm assessments to occur. [More](#)

Marci Walborn participated in Senator Tartaglione's Disability Employment Awareness Day at the Harrisburg Capitol Rotunda on October 22. Capitol visitors and legislators and their staff visited to learn about the supports and services AgrAbilityPA provides. [More](#)



On October 26, Suzanna Windon delivered a "Managing Stress on the Farm" training for the Allegheny County Master Gardeners. In the audience were some new and prospective farmers. [More](#)

## Tennessee

[National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) was a time to celebrate and remember the commitment to ensure disabled workers have access to good jobs every month of every year. The STAR Center, TN AgrAbility's nonprofit disability partner, celebrates the incredible strength, resilience, and unique abilities of individuals with disabilities. Together,

this partnership builds a more inclusive and accessible world.

TN AgrAbility participated in the annual educational day at the TN Technology Access Program's Resource Ability Assistive Technology Fair. This event connects Tennesseans with disabilities, educators, employers, and practitioners with innovative assistive technology that can improve and increase their independence. [More](#)



It was a beautiful fall training day with the TN AgrAbility (TNAP) team at the Plateau AgResearch and Education Center in Crossville, TN, on October 29. Twenty-four Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors participated in agriculture assistive technology training that will enable farmers with disabilities to continue their farming operation. [More](#)

It was a bittersweet day delivering an Action Trackchair to Teresa, a sheep farmer in Hawkins County. This was a special day seeing her independently accessing the sheep barn and her hilly farm since her car accident that made her paraplegic in 2013. [More](#)



Thank you to Cheryl Tevis for the great article and Jason Barber, a TN AgrAbility legally blind cattle farmer who always advocates to help others and who shared his story in the [2024 AgrAbility Harvest: "A Closer Look": "Finding a Way Forward. Limited Sight Doesn't Limit Determination"](#). [More](#)

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## Texas

Kara Smallegan, University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences OTD student, worked with Texas AgrAbility over her 16-week OTD capstone project. She is a Michigan native that comes from a farming family. [More](#)

Texas AgrAbility was featured in Around Texas with Chancellor John Sharp on PBS. The episode highlighted the partnership with Texas AgrAbility and West Texas A&M University capstone students to modify a tractor for a farmer with an amputation. [You can view the episode here.](#)



Farm assessments were conducted in collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation for two Texas AgrAbility clients.

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## Utah

AgrAbility of Utah staff presented to members of the Cache Interagency Council in Logan, UT, on October 28th.

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## Virginia

This month, AgrAbility has been traveling across the beautiful state of Virginia, sharing its mission with communities far and wide. One of the highlights was a wonderful farm-to-table dinner at Esther Manor Farm in Beaverdam, VA, hosted by Dr. Patience Fielding and her family. [More](#)

Staff participated in an engaging in-person farm safety day at Cargill in



Harrisonburg, VA. This event provided essential safety training for farmers, ensuring a secure working environment.

AgrAbility also represented itself at the Cattlemen Association event in Lexington, VA, where valuable connections were forged within the farming community.

At the Virginia State Fair, the mobile ag education unit welcomed over 1,000 visitors eager to learn about AgrAbility's mission and services.

Currently, AgrAbility Virginia is working with 38 clients. One noteworthy case involves assisting a beef farmer in acquiring a truck hay spreader to ease the challenges of cattle feeding.

## Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin staff and NAP's Chuck Baldwin exhibited at World Dairy Expo from October 1-4th. World Dairy Expo is an annual event that includes a dairy cattle show, education, and the world's largest dairy-focused trade show with over 55,000 people attending the event. [More](#)



Easterseals Wisconsin FARM team members Jeff Kratochwill, director and Ami Bliefernicht, and Lindsey Prah, rural rehabilitation specialists, presented about AgrAbility to the occupational therapy associate program at Madison College in October.

AgrAbility of Wisconsin Outreach Program Coordinator Michelle Bachand adapted the Ohio AgrAbility document Making your events, festivals and agritourism accessible to the public into a [series of articles with a focus on Wisconsin Agritourism](#). [More](#)



Michelle Bachand exhibited at the FEED Summit (Food Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development) from October 27-28th. The FEED Summit is the only statewide conference in Wisconsin for early-state food and farming businesses. [More](#)

## International AgrAbility Network News

## AgrAbility for Africa

Since the start of October, the AgrAbility for Africa staff have taken great interest in the safety of farmers living on the islands of Lake Victoria, the second largest fresh water body in the world. When they are transporting goods to inland markets, there have been sky-rocketing cases of drowning following their boats capsizing due to the strong waves from the regular, violent storms. [More](#)



## StaffChanges and Recognition

## Colorado

The Colorado AgrAbility team welcomed two new members in October!

Hannah Cefalo will be serving as a rural rehabilitation specialist alongside Ashley Buchanan. Hannah recently graduated from the Colorado School of Public Health at Colorado State University with a master of public health degree concentrating in physical activity and healthy lifestyles. She is looking forward to meeting and building relationships with clients while connecting them to the resources they may need as well as providing recommendations to support their independence.

Clinton Wilson is joining the team as our behavioral health program and logistics specialist. He will be supporting our regional behavioral health specialists to help our team continue to expand our reach and impact. He was most recently the director of strategic initiatives for Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.

## Missouri

LUCE ISFOP welcomes to the team a new ISFOP director, Dr. Mark Lucas, and a new farm outreach worker in the central region, Bryan de Valdivia.

## Pennsylvania

Farm stress and mental wellbeing are topics and resources that we include in AgrAbility education and outreach activities through collaborations across Extension teams through the Penn State Extension Farm Stress Team. The Penn State Extension Stress Team received the EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK AWARD: first place national, first place regional, and first place state. [More](#)

## Tennessee

Congratulations to Derrick Stowell, PhD, HTR, CTRS, education and horticultural therapy program administrator with the University of Tennessee Gardens and a TN AgrAbility partner. Dr. Stowell received an honorary lifetime membership at the American Horticulture Therapy Association's annual meeting for outstanding service to the professional organization of horticulture therapy. [copied from UTIA Monday Notes]

## Texas

Texas AgrAbility bids farewell to Megan Peveto, Texas AgrAbility and BattleGround to Breaking Ground program coordinator. Megan worked for Texas AgrAbility for a little over a year working with clients and doing case management. We will miss Megan and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

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### AgrAbility in the News

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

- [AgrAbility event to help island's farmers](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [Guam's 1st AgrAbility conference focuses on solutions to limitations and disabilities in farming](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [A&M to host agricultural business workshops for veterans](#) (Texas AgrAbility)
- [The Breakdown with INFB, Accessibility in Agriculture](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [Women Learn Life-Changing Skills Through Pearls of Production](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
- [Farming Like It's 2024: Equipment and Technologies for Disabled Farmers](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
- [Resources for Farmers in Crisis](#) (Illinois AgrAbility)
- [Who to call in a crisis](#) (Illinois AgrAbility, National AgrAbility Project)

- [Joe Ricker - Farming advocate for veterans' success](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [Continuing service: Veteran turns to ag to help others](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [Inaugural Veteran Farmer Award of Excellence Presented](#) (National AgrAbility Project)
- [“A Novel Approach to Pain Management For Farmers” + “Let’s Mooove: Movement and Self-Massage for Longevity & Productivity on the Farm”](#) (Maine AgrAbility)
- [Heroes to Hives offers veterans training, camaraderie and purpose](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
- [Army veteran-turned-farmer shares story](#) (Tennessee AgrAbility Project)
- [Carey Portell: A New State Of Mind Renews Her Purpose](#) (Missouri AgrAbility Project)
- [Raising Ranchers and Protecting the Panhandle](#) (Texas AgrAbility)

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## OtherNews

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

- Lincoln University Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program Small Farm Specialist Penny Wilson and Farm Outreach Worker Mary Keeter presented "PPE and Me" to 108 minority community garden managers and small farmers at a train the trainer event on October 22. (Submitted by Mary Ketter, Lincoln University, ISFOP)
- [Celebrating 30 Years of 1994 Land-grant Colleges](#)
- [EPA Announces Funding Opportunities to Support Farmworker Communities](#)
- [Grain entrapment is the leading cause of agricultural confined space-related injuries and fatalities; researchers emphasize safety](#)
- [Multi-State Center Provides Mental Health Support for Farmers, Agricultural Workers](#)
- [USDA announces actions to lower food prices, increase fairness for farmers](#)
- [Study explores stress, social support and mental health for men and women farmers](#)
- [EPA Finalizes Rule to Protect Farmworkers, Families and Communities from Pesticide Exposures](#)
- [Schools Can't Do It Alone: Young People Need More Support for Career and Life Preparation, Says New 4-H Survey](#)
- [Virtual Fencing: New Support for Graziers](#)

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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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November 2024

## National AgrAbility Project

Goodwill and Purdue National AgrAbility Project staff members participated in the regional workshop in Guam, October 28-31, which was planned with and supported by the [University of Guam Cooperative Extension & Outreach](#) and the [Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program](#). Over 180 people from mainland U.S., Guam, Taiwan, and the Federated States of Micronesia had the opportunity to participate in 28 different sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday that covered behavioral wellness, working with veterans, horticultural therapy, caregivers, AI, assistive technology for farming, local cultural experiences, aquaponics, agritourism, conducting agricultural AT assessments, and AgrAbility. Thursday's tour included a visit to a commercial farm run by the local grocery store, a non-profit organic farm, and a historic river cruise. There was lots of positive feedback, great conversations, and great connections made.



Submitted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes



The National AgrAbility Project collaborated with the National Farm Medicine Center/Children's Center/UMASH, the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, AgriSafe, The Ohio State University SAY,



University of Illinois, Progressive Agriculture Foundation, and Central States Center for Ag Safety and Health/University of Nebraska SAY in a youth safety exhibit at the National FFA Convention. Attendance at the convention was estimated to be



71,000 FFA members and advisors, state and National FFA staff, parents, university recruiters, and FFA expo exhibitors. Attendees to the exhibit participated in



learning opportunities at each station to win a sun hat and obtain safety information.

Submitted by Steve Swain

The first AgrAbility/Extension meetup took place in October and was a great success with several participants and robust conversation. If anyone is interested in joining the conversation, meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 3 p.m. Eastern. Contact Sam Wolfe [wolfesa4@msu.edu](mailto:wolfesa4@msu.edu) for details.

Login information: [https://msu.zoom.us/j/2114672813?](https://msu.zoom.us/j/2114672813?pwd=RjJhRE1KQzICMmJ4eTJJRHZWMXVnUT09)

[pwd=RjJhRE1KQzICMmJ4eTJJRHZWMXVnUT09](https://msu.zoom.us/j/2114672813?pwd=RjJhRE1KQzICMmJ4eTJJRHZWMXVnUT09)

Meeting ID: 211 467 2813

Passcode: 922439

Submitted by Samantha Wolfe

November 2024

## California

It's been a busy month for California AgrAbility. The project recently partnered with the Center for Land Based Learning to host the third Pizza for Producers event, a Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program network initiative. The event supports the agricultural community by providing a space for farmers to connect, and it has a special focus on veteran farmers. Attendees and their families enjoyed a festive evening of pumpkin carving and wood-fired pizzas.



Together with Puentes Network colleagues, staff hosted the annual Encuentro Comunitario, a "Community Gathering," in Esparto, CA. The event was held in Spanish and attended by farmworkers from the surrounding areas. Attendees and community promotores participated in discussions and shared experiences related to agricultural work. A representative from the CA Department of Labor Division of Wage and Salary

presented on labor rights followed by a dynamic question and answer session, and promotores shared local resources.

Staff kicked off the fall season with the YOLO Farmworkers Festival. They had the opportunity to table at the event and share information on arthritis, diabetes, and mental health. This year the festival featured live mural painting, live music, and other information booths. This event continues to grow each year and is a staff favorite. They're looking forward to next year's festival.



Submitted by Angelina Padilla

November 2024

## Colorado



Colorado AgrAbility Behavioral Health Specialist Chad Reznicek recently won the Office of Engagement and Extension's Rising Star Award at the CSU Extension annual Fall Forum. Chad has led Extension's efforts to expand and improve behavioral health supports for farmers, ranchers, and their families across Colorado. Between January and July 2024, Chad offered over 25 educational workshops across the state on topics related to agricultural stress and resilience. In that same period of time, he expanded his partnerships and reach, developing 523 new community contacts. Join Colorado AgrAbility in congratulating and thanking Chad!

Submitted by Natalie Bachmeier

November 2024

## Georgia



The Georgia National Fair is held every October in Perry, GA. Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency had a large "Day at the Fair" aimed at getting students interested in agriculture. They invited Georgia AgrAbility to be a part of their booth and one of their stations to talk about AgrAbility. Staff also showed the project's Action Track Chair to over 1,200 students.

Georgia AgrAbility was thrilled to have Florida AgrAbility and South Carolina AgrAbility with them again this year at the 46th annual Sunbelt Ag Expo! It is wonderful to showcase the work and services of multiple programs to farmers in the Southeast. The expo was three days filled with interacting with farmers and students while also getting to find some new equipment that will benefit AgrAbility farmers.



Georgia AgrAbility staff member Mason Dean presented to the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Agronomy Club about AgrAbility services. The group was very attentive and asked wonderful questions about accessibility. Most of the students come from a farming background. After the presentation, students were able to try out the assistive technology in Georgia AgrAbility's Mobile Learning Lab.

Submitted by AgrAbility in Georgia

November 2024

## Indiana

Linda Tarr passed away at home on November 9. Linda worked for Hoosier Uplands Economic Development Corporation, an organization that partnered as a subcontractor on the Indiana AgrAbility Project grant for many years. Hoosier Uplands later became the lead organization for USDA's Indiana AgVets Program, which collaborates closely with AgrAbility, and Linda was the driving force behind that grant project.



Those who came into contact with Linda knew that she was a dedicated and passionate ambassador for AgrAbility and AgVets. One of her favorite projects was organizing the farmer luncheon at the annual AgrAbility National Training Workshop. Linda came from a farm background and always had great respect and appreciation for AgrAbility clients and their families. She spent untold hours gathering giveaways and other tokens of appreciation for the NTW farmer luncheon. In her honor, the NTW planning committee has decided to rename the event "The Linda Tarr Farmer Luncheon."

Linda was also largely responsible for launching and growing the Indiana AgVets Certification and Internship Program. Its initial workplan called for the project to enroll 60 veterans in the first four years. However, with Linda's relentless promotion and outreach, approximately 120 have enrolled to date. She was excited that Indiana AgVets had recently been re-funded by USDA and was looking forward to changing the lives of more veterans through that program.

Linda's commitment and impact will be remembered by all who had the privilege of working with her.

You can read her obituary at <https://www.ochstetrick.net/obituaries/Linda-Tarr?obId=33656149>.

Submitted by Paul Jones



AgrAbility hosted a Boots to Business Reboot class for farmers and ranchers teaching them how to develop business plans and access the unique resources from USDA and other agencies and nonprofits to become farmers. Boots to Business is available for free in every state for veterans and their spouses. Anyone



interested in hosting one can contact Joe Ricker at 262-388-1261 or ricker2@purdue.edu.

Submitted by Joe Ricker and Ed Sheldon

November 2024

## Maine

Maine AgrAbility staff attended the meat goat "Culling and Breeding" workshop held at Liberation Farms in Wales, Maine. The workshop covered herd management information on how to make culling decisions. AgrAbility staff were able to present to the group in attendance there about support for farmers, as well as network with the Somali-Bantu farming community in that area.



Submitted by Maine AgrAbility

November 2024

## Missouri



The [Leaders in the Field Podcast series](#), hosted by Dr. Mackenzie Bevins, 2024 occupational therapy graduate who completed her capstone with Missouri AgrAbility Program, is dedicated to enhancing healthcare practitioners' understanding of the agricultural population, focusing on the unique healthcare needs, challenges, and contextual factors of agricultural workers. By offering insights on health, safety, and well-being, this podcast aims to provide valuable knowledge that will help healthcare professionals deliver more effective, client-centered

care to this underserved and unique community. This series is for a wide variety of healthcare practitioners but applies occupational therapy principles to working with agricultural producers and their families, ensuring that practitioners are equipped to address the diverse and specific needs of this population in a client-centered and holistic way.

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The [2024 Pearls of Production Conference](#) was a two-day conference for women in agriculture. Day one, October 29th, started via ZOOM at 6:00pm with a breakout session with four options and a keynote presenter. Session topics included estate planning, backyard layers, enhancing value added meat marketing and beekeeping. Day two, November 2, offered three hands-on breakout sessions. Women in agriculture were provided with health, safety, and wellbeing information including MO AgrAbility, ergonomics for women, and Show-Me Strong Farm Families mental health resources.

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

November 2024

## Nebraska



Students from the Albion, Nebraska, area attended a business and industry event hosted by the Boone County Development Agency at the Niewohner Arena. This event gave students the chance to connect with local businesses and explore the career paths available in the community. Students learned about opportunities waiting for them at home-to encourage them, support them, and inspire them to put their skills to work in the community they grew up in. Emily Jacobson,

program manager, asked the Nebraska AgrAbility team to share the degrees they held and a bit about each of the degrees. Emily provided this information to the students. The students also participated in interactive activities that prompted discussions on the role of AgrAbility in helping people with disabilities overcome barriers. The future is bright after working with these talented young people at the event!



Nebraska AgrAbility was invited to be on the advisory group for the [Nebraska Farmer Veteran Coalition](#). Emily has been participating in its board meetings to help organize the group, and going forward, she will work to promote the organization at upcoming events. Kirstin Bailey, Center for Rural Affairs, shared more details in a recent article. Kirstin is also a member of the Nebraska AgrAbility advisory team.



Members of the Nebraska AgrAbility team Kara Brichacek, rural rehabilitation specialist, and Emily Jacobson, program manager, attended the National Reinke Sales Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska. Over 650 dealers and their families from across the nation attended the event. The Nebraska AgrAbility booth was well-received, and there were many opportunities to visit with

attendees and make important connections. Kara and Emily also connected people to the AgrAbility programs in their states, and for those from states without an AgrAbility program, they were directed to National AgrAbility. Several of the Nebraska Reinke dealers took AgrAbility flyers to hang in their offices. Kara has been instrumental in providing updates on the [Nebraska AgrAbility Facebook page](#) and shared a thank you to Reinke Sales following the event. John Davis, Rural Rehabilitation Specialist, Nebraska AgrAbility was instrumental in making this connection for the team. Thank you, Kara and John.



Submitted by Soni Cochran

November 2024

## Ohio

Ohio AgrAbility was honored to help a farm family grant a final wish for a farmer with leukemia who wanted to have one last harvest. OAP staff took a lift that had been gifted to OAP by a retiring farmer and put it to use at a Newark, Ohio, farm so that the farmer could get into the combine and harvest. His family had reached out in early October and asked if OAP had a way to get him in the combine. Dee Jepsen and Randy Joseph transported the lift to the farm, and the farmer was able to get in the combine and harvest the crops with his family. It was a moving reminder of how much good work AgrAbility does across the country in assisting farmers throughout their lives.



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Disability Services Coordinator Laura Akgerman attended the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals conference in Boise, Idaho. She attended all of the disability themed sessions and met Vanessa Spero, Co-PI and outreach coordinator for Florida AgrAbility. Sharing AgrAbility news and updates made the conference even more meaningful, and Laura is looking forward to submitting a few session proposals for the 2025 conference in Atlanta.

Submitted by Laura Akgerman

November 2024

## Pennsylvania

Abbie Spackman met with the PA NRCS disabilities special emphasis program manager to problem-solve and collaborate in providing NRCS and AgrAbility services to farmers across the state. This has become a recurring bi-monthly meeting to increase networking between these two organizations. One specific area of conversation this month was on reaching farmers who have a disability, yet do not identify as having a disability. Abbie provided information to NRCS on ways to start the conversation with farmers.

Abbie participated in the PA Farm Link advisory board meeting held at Rohrbach's Farm. PA Farm Link operates a land and farmer linking database and provides succession planning to farm families. Abbie is able to provide information to the board and staff on additional programming considerations for farmers with a disability. AgrAbility also made three recent referrals to PA Farm Link for customers to receive support in farm transition planning.

Abbie partnered with a Penn State Extension dairy educator to provide three farm assessments in Bradford County, PA. The partnership with the dairy educator, who is well-known and respected in his county, opened the doors for two of the farm assessments to occur. Without this personal connection, these farmers may not have ever accepted services from AgrAbility.

Marci Walborn participated in Senator Tartaglione's Disability Employment Awareness Day at the Harrisburg Capitol Rotunda on October 22. Capitol visitors and legislators and their staff visited to learn about the supports and services AgrAbilityPA provides. Staff also made connections with other organizations to support farmers with disabilities.



On October 26, Suzanna Windon delivered a "Managing Stress on the Farm" training for the Allegheny County Master Gardeners. In the audience were some new and prospective farmers. On October 29, she will provide a webinar on the same topic via the Penn State Extension platform which is open to farmers in PA.

Submitted by Marci Walborn

## Staff Changes and Recognition

Farm stress and mental wellbeing are topics and resources that we include in AgrAbility education and outreach activities through collaborations across Extension teams through the Penn State Extension Farm Stress Team. The Penn State Extension Stress Team received the EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK AWARD: first place national, first place regional, and first place state. Farm Stress team across program teams include Chi Catalone, Ginger Fenton, Linda Fetzer, Amber Hughes, Ashley Isaacson, Maureen Ittig, Adriana Murillo-Williams, Sonya Nace, Cynthia Pollich, Abbie Spackman, Ryan Spelman, Jill Varner and Jacqueline Zitzelberger. The award was presented at the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences annual session, held recently in Tucson.



November 2024

## Tennessee



TN AgrAbility participated in the annual educational day at the TN Technology Access Program's Resource Ability Assistive Technology Fair. This event connects Tennesseans with disabilities, educators, employers, and practitioners with innovative assistive technology that can improve and increase their independence. Thank you to Tim Shaw, former NFL player, ALS warrior and present Tennessee Titan for Life. Tim provided humor and inspiration as the keynote speaker. "You have a

choice. What are you going to do? Are you going to stand up and fight for your life? Or are you going to accept what someone else tells you is reality and just fade away?" -Tim Shaw. The Tennessee Technology Access Program (TTAP) is available to help Tennesseans find assistive technology devices and services anytime. Get started at [TN.Gov/HumanServices/DS/Ttap.html](https://www.tn.gov/human-services/ds/ttap.html).

It was a beautiful fall training day with the TN AgrAbility (TNAP) team at the Plateau AgResearch and Education Center in Crossville, TN, on October 29. Twenty-four Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors participated in agriculture assistive technology training that will enable farmers with disabilities to continue their farming operation. The Down on the Farm Workshop was designed for the TN state funding partners at the TN Division of Rehabilitation Services/Vocational Rehabilitation (DRS or DVR) to learn about TN AgrAbility. This pilot program reached three of the nine regions of DRS in Tennessee. TNAP's goal was to increase referrals and capacity of DRS counselors to provide rehabilitation and assistive technology services related to farming and successful employment outcomes for farmers with disabilities. Our thanks to the many who assisted and provided ideas for the training: Farm Again GA, Missouri AgrAbility, Nebraska AgrAbility, National AgrAbility, Walt Hitch, Plateau AgResearch and Education Director and staff, Gregg Upchurch, Cumberland County UT Extension Ag Agent, John Swandal with Target Mobility for bringing the outdoor wheelchairs, TrackMaster and the Amylior R3 power chair, and Farm Credit Mid-America for their continued support of TN AgrAbility, our farmers, lunch sponsorship and speaking about their services.



It was a bittersweet day delivering an Action Trackchair to Teresa, a sheep farmer in Hawkins County. This was a special day seeing her independently accessing the sheep barn and her hilly farm since her car accident that made her paraplegic in 2013. She reacted "It will never be the same and I can't wait to help with lambing season again." Thank you to Vernon Goad's family who thoughtfully donated the DRS state-funded wheelchair back to us to give to another farmer after his passing. The best days are delivering much needed assistive technology equipment to farmers who need these items.

Thank you to Cheryl Tevis for the great article and Jason Barber, a TN AgrAbility legally blind cattle farmer who always advocates to help others and who shared his story in the [2024 AgrAbility Harvest; "A Closer Look"; "Finding a Way Forward, Limited Sight Doesn't Limit Determination"](#).

Jason says "I'm so thankful to AgrAbility, Voc Rehab, STAR, and Extension... "I hit the motherlode. I'm still learning and adapting to do what I need. Technology provides me with a lot of my independence and is always changing."



Submitted by TN AgrAbility

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November 2024

## Texas

Kara Smallegan, University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences OTD student, worked with Texas AgrAbility over her 16-week OTD capstone project. She is a Michigan native that comes from a farming family. She combined her experience between both Texas AgrAbility and Michigan AgrAbility to complete 18 farm and ranch assessments for AgrAbility clients. She worked with Texas AgrAbility staff to pilot a farm assessment tool, create ergonomics for women in agriculture modules, and complete farm assessments for clients who were not eligible for vocational rehabilitation. Kara presented her project at the end of October and will be graduating in December. Kara was a great asset to the Texas AgrAbility team this fall.

Submitted by Makenzie Thomas

November 2023

## Virginia

This month, AgrAbility has been traveling across the beautiful state of Virginia, sharing its mission with communities far and wide. One of the highlights was a wonderful farm-to-table dinner at Esther Manor Farm in Beaverdam, VA, hosted by Dr. Patience Fielding and her family. Roberto Franco, the program coordinator, had the pleasure of attending this vibrant event, which brought together around 40 guests to explore the rich cultural connections that food can create. The farm, known for its sustainable cultivation of African ethnic produce, provided the perfect backdrop for an evening filled



with tradition. Attendees enjoyed a heartfelt farm blessing led by an elder, delicious dishes, lively music and dancing, and even a fashion show celebrating Cameroonian heritage. Guests were honored to hear welcoming remarks from the Cameroon ambassador to the U.S., the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services commissioner, and a representative from the Beaverdam District, making it a truly memorable evening in the heart of Virginia.



Submitted by Leslie Lawrence

November 2024

## Wisconsin

AgrAbility of Wisconsin staff and NAP's Chuck Baldwin exhibited at World Dairy Expo from October 1-4th. World Dairy Expo is an annual event that includes a dairy cattle show, education, and the world's largest dairy-focused trade show with over 55,000 people attending the event. AAW staff had the opportunity to speak with a number of farmers from around the nation and shared examples of assistive technology and provided information for attendees to take home.



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AgrAbility of Wisconsin Outreach Program Coordinator Michelle Bachand adapted the Ohio AgrAbility document Making your events, festivals and agritourism accessible to the public into a [series of articles with a focus on Wisconsin Agritourism](#). The articles will be referenced in a new curriculum by Extension colleague Stephanie Plaster, agriculture business development outreach specialist, that is focused on the process of starting or expanding an agritourism business.



Michelle Bachand exhibited at the FEED Summit (Food Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development) from October 27-28th. The FEED Summit is the only statewide conference in Wisconsin for early-state food and farming businesses. Michelle had the opportunity to speak with food entrepreneurs and local organizations that support food and farming businesses and shared examples of assistive technology and provided information for attendees to take home.

Submitted by AgrAbility of Wisconsin

November 2024

## AgrAbility for Africa



Since the start of October, the AgrAbility for Africa staff have taken great interest in the safety of farmers living on the islands of Lake Victoria, the second largest fresh water body in the world. When they are transporting goods to inland markets, there have been sky-rocketing cases of drowning following their boats capsizing due to the strong waves from the regular, violent storms.

Overloading, poorly maintained transport vessels, Ghost Gear traps (any fishing equipment that has been lost, abandoned, or discarded in the lake or ocean, including nets, traps, and lines), and ignoring the need of personal flotation devices (PFD), among other reasons, lead to a high death toll.

Through awareness and education campaigns on water safety precautions, support to enhance access to PFD, lifesaving, and swimming skills, the AgrAbility staff hope to reduce fatal accidents.

Submitted by Mutumba Faisal

NOVEMBER 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** Great Lakes Fruit and Vegetable Growers Expo  
**Dates** December 10-12, 2024  
**City, State** Grand Rapids, Michigan  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://glexpo.com/>

**Name** Free Suicide Prevention Training (QPR) for Agricultural Communities  
**Dates** December 12, 2024, from 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m. ET  
**City, State** Online Training  
**Contact Info/Web link** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_yi6Jck3pRPOfTWAq1bQfFg#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yi6Jck3pRPOfTWAq1bQfFg#/registration)

**Name** Lincoln University Small Farmers Conference 2025  
**Dates** March 3-5, 2025  
**City, State** Jefferson City, Missouri  
**Contact Info/Web link** <https://www.lincolnu.edu/college-of-agriculture-environmental-and-human-sciences/small-farmers-conference.html>