Urban Agriculture

For Veterans
and/or
For Farmers with Disabilities
Cindy Chastain

Cindy Chastain is the farmer veteran AgrAbility coordinator, responsible for networking with AgrAbility Projects and other relevant organizations to improve opportunities and outcomes for farmer veteran AgrAbility clients. Cindy grew up on a family farm in Indiana, earned a bachelor's degree in animal sciences from Purdue, and then served as an Army officer for more than 31 years, including service as Deputy Commander of the 1-19th Agribusiness Development Team from 2008-2010, which was deployed to Afghanistan in 2009-2010.
The vision of AgrAbility is to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities.

Through education and assistance, AgrAbility helps to eliminate (or at least minimize) obstacles that block success in production agriculture or agriculture-related occupations.
Whom Does AgrAbility Serve?

AgrAbility addresses a wide variety of disabling conditions in agriculture, including, but not limited to:

- Amputation
- Arthritis
- back impairment
- Deafness/hearing impairment
- Development disabilities, such as cerebral palsy or autism
- Disabling diseases, such as cancer or heart disease
- Mental/behavioral health problems
- Respiratory diseases
- Spinal cord injuries
- Stroke
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairments
AgrAbility Projects 2016

Key
- National Project/Federal Gov
- State/Regional Project
- Affiliate Project
- No Project

Map of the United States showing states with AgrAbility projects: California, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Wisconsin, Maine, and others.
Why Veterans to Agriculture programs?

- Average age of American farmers is 58-62 and many don’t have anyone to replace them
- Some veterans are having trouble assimilating back into society
- Unemployment, homelessness, divorce, and suicide are higher than normal among veterans
- Est 20% with TBI
- Veterans have training and skills suited to farming
- Farming can have therapeutic benefits to those suffering from PTSD or TBI
- 45% of veterans are from rural areas of America
Obstacles for veterans in farming

- Land Acquisition
- Capital
- Lack of Experience
- Disabilities; physical and/or mental health
- Equipment
Specialized Garden Tools

- Pistol Grip
- Stabilized Wrist Support
- Adapt with Universal Cuff or Splint

Make gardening easier – “Enabling” garden tools are designed for gardeners with disabilities. Tools are specially designed to use less energy and to help keep the body in proper alignment.
Visual Impairments

• Contrast colors and textures
• Wind chimes
• Clear paths on pathway and overhead
• Layout of garden – straight edges and right angles
• Use Dibble boards
Container Gardening
Container Gardening

- Mobile
- Flexible
- Protected
Elevated Beds

- Height – 2.5-3 feet
- Width (one side) – 2 feet
- Width (two sides) – 4 feet
- Diameter (circular) – 4 feet
Grip: The Fit

- Enlarged grip to fit the hand - most efficient 1 1/2” - 2” circle
- Curved to fit the natural contour of the hand
- Wrist in neutral position with thumb on top
Veteran and Beginning Farmer Resources

Beginning Farmer Veteran Resources

- Websites Dedicated to Farmer Veterans and Beginning Farmers
- Veteran Farm Training Programs
- Guides & Brochures
- 2016 Farm Bill Resources for Veterans
- Financial
- GI Bill
- Education
- Technical Assistance
- Disability Issues
- Contractor Services
- Employment - Agricultural and Other
- Multimedia

Websites Dedicated to Farmer Veterans and Beginning Farmers

- www.agrability.org
  The AgrAbility Coalition is a national program dedicated to helping disabled veterans on a national level to increase their awareness of agriculture and to help them break into the agricultural industry. The AWC wants to help preserve the next generation of agriculture through interactions between communities and veterans. They believe that food production and its benefits can help veterans on a physical and psychological level.

- USDA's new website for new farmer veterans, www.farmersvoice.usda.gov/veterans, includes a list for programs and resources, veteran success stories, and career opportunities.
The Toolbox Assistive Technology Database

- Print, CD, and web versions
  [www.agrability.org/Toolbox](http://www.agrability.org/Toolbox)
- More than 1300 products to help farmers and ranchers with disabilities
Arthritis Resources

- www.arthritis-ag.org
- Arthritis and Agriculture
- Plain Facts about Agriculture
- ¿Podrá ser la Artritis lo que me causa Dolor? (Could Arthritis be the cause of my Pain?)
- Gaining Ground on Arthritis DVD
Questions/Comments?