New Staff Training
AgrAbility NTW
March 25, 2019
Lincoln, Nebraska
Session Overview

- Overview of National AgrAbility Project (NAP)
  - History
  - Goals
  - Structure
  - Services
  - Personnel
  - Resources
Whom Does AgrAbility Serve?

AgrAbility addresses a wide variety of **functional limitations** 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

Importance of staying with your realm of expertise!
Disability within the Agricultural Community

- Causes of disability
  - Traumatic injury (agriculture is one of the most hazardous occupations). Many injuries also come from off-farm incidents.
  - Disease & chronic conditions
  - Aging (Average age of U.S. farmers is 57+)

- Prevalence of disability
  - Approximately 15-20% of farm population impacted by disability
  - 1.04 – 2.23 million of the U.S. farm, ranch, and agricultural community impacted by disability
Whom Does AgrAbility Serve?

Just as disability is a wide continuum, agriculture is also:

- Row crops: corn, soy, wheat, cotton, etc.
- Ranching
- Sheep and goats
- Dairy
- Produce, including organic
- Orchards
- Agritourism
- Niche markets, like llamas, herbs, etc.
- Floriculture
- Aquaculture
- Hydroponics
- Aquaponics
AgrAbility began in 1991 as part of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (now NIFA)

In 1991, there were 8 funded state and regional AgrAbility projects (SRAPS); as of 2019, there are 20 SRAPs and several previously-funded affiliate projects

One National AgrAbility Project (NAP) supports the SRAPs
AgrAbility Partnerships

- All AgrAbility projects – state projects and the national project – are partnerships between a land-grant university and at least one disability-services program.
- 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions are eligible to apply for AgrAbility grants.
  - Current 1890 grant holder = North Carolina A&T
  - 1890 institutions are partners with 1862 institutions in at least 6 other states.
Current NAP Partners

- Breaking New Ground Resource Center, Purdue University (lead organization)
- Goodwill of the Finger Lakes (NY)
- APRIL (Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living)
- Colorado State University (evaluation specialists)
- Washington State University (evaluation specialists)
- Consultants
- Many unfunded partners: FVC, RESNA, FFA, etc.
AgrAbility Services/Priorities

- **Education**
  - Workshops; resource development; online education

- **Networking**
  - Leveraging efforts with other groups; peer support

- **Direct Assistance**
  - Site visits; consultations; business planning

- **Marketing**
  - Publics awareness activities and materials
Special Responsibilities of the NAP

- Provide support to the state and regional AgrAbility Projects
  - Training
  - Resources
  - Consultations with NAP specialists
- Provide limited direct services to customers in states without AgrAbility projects
Funding

Equipment

- Most funding for assistive technology comes through state vocational rehabilitation systems
- Other sources of grants and loans are available (www.agrability.org/funding-assistance/)
- Some state Assistive Technology Act projects can provide free or low-cost AT + loan programs
What if Your State Doesn’t Have an AgrAbility Project

- Can still get technical support from the National AgrAbility Project
- Resources available at [www.agrability.org](http://www.agrability.org)
- Encourage your state’s land-grant university(s) to apply for an AgrAbility grant
  - RFA process open now
    - Deadline = Thursday, May 9
Resources for Farmer/Ranchers with Disabilities in All States

- State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Centers for Independent Living
- State Assistive Technology Act Projects
- Cooperative Extension
- USDA
  - FSA
  - NRCS
Questions?
NAP Key Personnel

- Bill Field, Project Director
  - Founder of Breaking New Ground
  - Overall project oversight
  - Liaison with USDA
NAP Key Personnel

- Paul Jones, Project Manager
  - Management of daily activities
  - Resource development
NAP Key Personnel

- Steve Swain, Assistive Technology Specialist
  - Toolbox process
  - Liaison with RESNA
Chuck Baldwin, Special Populations Outreach Coordinator & Demographic Data Specialist

- Networking with 1890 and 1994 land-grant institutions, Latino farmworker organizations, others
- Coordinates demographic data collection process
NAP Key Personnel

- Cindy Chastain, Veteran Outreach Coordinator
  - Outreach to veterans with disabilities interested in agriculture and organizations that serve them
Shawn Ehlers, Technology Outreach Coordinator

- Advancing and modernizing resources related to assistive technology and safe working practices, development and instruction of training and outreach material, and providing technical expertise
NAP Key Personnel

- Sean Tormoehlen, Graduate Student
  - Focusing on issues of aging and their relationship to farm safety and AgrAbility
NAP Key Personnel

- Richard Fox, Information Technology Specialist
  - Maintenance of NAP web site and assistive technology database
NAP Key Personnel

- Goodwill of the Finger Lakes
  - Promotion of the Goodwill/AgrAbility partnership
  - National Training Workshop
  - Regional workshops
  - 24-hour call center
NAP Key Personnel

- APRIL (Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living)
  - Promotion AgrAbility resources to CILs
  - Connecting CILs and SRAPs
  - Outreach to rural youth with disabilities

Billy Altom

Sierra Royster
NAP Key Personnel

- Evaluation Team
  - Objective analysis of NAP activities
    - Annual staff needs assessment
    - Demographic data
    - Quality of life evaluation

Bob Fetsch, Colorado State University

Brian French, Washington State University
Consultants

- Steve Etheridge
  - Vocational rehabilitation issues
  - Former VR counselor

- Carla Wilhite
  - Occupational therapy issues
  - Professor at University of New Mexico and former AgrAbility staff member
Consultants

- Ed Bell
  - Farmer
  - Former AgrAbility client
  - Public speaker
Educational Resources: www.agrability.org

- Project information and contacts
- Downloadable resources
- Online training
- Mobile friendly
- Tour
Educational Resources: www.agrability.org

- **Staff extranet:** marketing, evaluation, staff resources
  - Logos
  - Demographic summaries
  - All-staff meeting archives
  - Photo library
The Toolbox Assistive Technology Database

- Print, CD, and web versions
  www.agrability.org/Toolbox
- 1503 products to help farmers and ranchers with disabilities
Recent Publications

AgrAbility
25 YEARS, 25 STORIES
1991-2016
Cultivating Independence for People with Disabilities in Agriculture

AgrAbility
A USDA Program with Demonstrated Impact

The vision of AgrAbility is to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities, so that they, their families, and their communities continue to succeed in rural America.

"Disability" covers a wide spectrum. Examples include, but are not limited to:
- Injuries: spinal cord injuries, amputations, back problems
- Chronic diseases: arthritis, multiple sclerosis, diabetes
- Conditions of aging: vision loss, hearing impairments, reduced mobility
- Veterans' issues: PTSD, traumatic brain injury, other combat-related impairments

AgrAbility provides education, on-site assistance, and networking services to help agricultural workers with disabilities get the technologies and services they need to succeed.

Funding is currently available for no-cost AgrAbility projects across the country plus one National AgrAbility Project, which supports state projects and provides limited assistance to those in need of services who live in non-AgrAbility states.

Arthritis and GARDENING
A Guide for Home Gardeners and Small-Scale Producers

Arthritis Foundation
Cultivating Accessible Agriculture
Back problems = most common disabling conditions reported by AgrAbility clients.

21-page booklet discusses many aspects of back problems in ag settings

www.agrability.org/resources/back
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
30 technical reports on specific topics, such as farming with a spinal cord injury

Currently being updated
Conducting Agricultural Worksite Assessments

- Step-by-step guide for evaluating farms and ranches
- Reproducible assessment form
- Electronic database for recording data and printing reports
AT Secondary Injury Evaluation

- Step-by-step guide for evaluating AT for secondary injury hazards
- Reproducible assessment forms
Newsletters

- AgrAbility Harvest
  - Annually to national audience
- AgrAbility e-Note
  - Monthly to AgrAbility staff members and other interested parties
Questions?