

2025 AgrAbility NTW Poster Descriptions

- **Promoting Positive Mental Wellbeing in Rural Youth Through 4-H Rodeo Clown College** by *Emily Doosing and Karen Funkenbusch - University of Missouri Extension and Maureen Cunningham- Brain Injury Assoc. of MO*
As a continuation of the 4-H Save Your Brain program, the 4-H Rodeo Clown College program also added a health and wellbeing focus. 4-H Rodeo Clown College was first implemented in southeast Missouri in the spring of 2024. This program teaches youth ages 8-18 to set healthy boundaries, embrace diversity and be inclusive of those different than themselves, practice empathy, demonstrate active listening, practice positive self-talk and mindfulness, and maintain an optimistic mindset. These mental health and wellbeing concepts are gently introduced to youth through the silly veil of agriculture and clowning. It is important to note that Missouri 4-H faculty and staff are not mental health professionals, and as such, are not qualified to diagnose or treat mental illness. Instead, Missouri 4-H faculty and staff promote optimal mental health and wellbeing through this program. This poster presentation will equip Extension professionals, farmers, ranchers, and other participants with the knowledge to implement the 4-H Rodeo Clown College program in their own communities in order to promote positive mental wellbeing in youth across the nation.
- **Restoring Hope After Disaster: Building Resilience Through Partnership** by *Lindsey Head- Florida AgrAbility - UF/IFAS*
Florida AgrAbility partnered with the Center for Independent Living of Broward/Gulf Coast to identify and assist farmers with disabilities affected by the 2022 catastrophic Hurricane Ian. This natural disaster resulted in a \$1.1 Billion loss in Florida's agriculture industry due to damaged crops and destroyed infrastructure. The CIL pledged \$100,000 to Florida AgrAbility to assist farmers in need due to the damage. Florida AgrAbility has disbursed the funds amongst six farmers to help them rebuild their farming operations. These funds are being used to replant citrus groves, rebuild fencing infrastructure, and repair greenhouses.
- **Promoting Community Health and Resilience: Addressing Healthcare Barriers Through Culturally Responsive Outreach in the Western Pacific** by *Kuan-Ju Chen, Tim de la Cruz, and Rita Sharma- University of Guam, KristiAnna Whitman- Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center and Don McMoran- WA AgrAbility/WRASAP*
The people of Guam face numerous barriers to adequate healthcare, including the inability to afford treatments for prevalent chronic illnesses and limited access to culturally responsive health information. The University of Guam Farmer Focus project has worked to address these concerns by hosting a summer filled with outreach events that promote community health and culture-centered care. Among the most notable events were the 3rd Farmer Focus Regional Conference in Yap, one of the four island nations within the Federated States of Micronesia, and community health check-ups and seminars conducted in partnership with the National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences (NTUNHS) in Taiwan.
- **Promoting Occupation for Food-Growers with Three-Dimensional Printing** by *Mary Thelander- University of NM and Robin Gibbs- NM AgrAbility OT Fieldwork Program*
This poster will describe a Fieldwork Education Program which focuses on assistive technology and three-dimensional printing to restore occupations related to agricultural work for people who identify as having a disability. Fieldwork partners include the University of New Mexico, Mandy's Farm, the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program and the New Mexico AgrAbility program. Assistive Technology, including three-dimensional printed items, are key approaches used in this fieldwork program and for this population. Assistive technology includes items that are purchased and/or customized to promote engagement in activities for people with disabilities and mobility limitations (Smith, 2017). Three-dimensional printing has been shown to offer opportunities for the customization of commercially available items, or the creation of items to improve independence such as with orthoses, prosthetics and assistive technology items (Patterson et al. 2020, Lundsford

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et al, 2016). Both assistive technology and three-dimensional printing have an established presence in the Occupational Therapy scope of practice (Bondoc et al., 2015), including demonstration that three-dimensional printed assistive technology is both cost effective and improves independence for OT clients (Turkistani & Qurban, 2022). Sample three-dimensional printed items will foster reflection for audience members who can look at and touch materials for consideration of how to translate information about this program and the evidence- base of three-dimensional printed assistive technology into their practice.

- **Energy Conservation for Food Growers with Chronic Fatigue by Mary Thelander- *University of NM and Brett Harding***

Post-exertional malaise, a cardinal symptom of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (also called Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) results in activity restrictions for millions of people living in the U.S (Valdez, et al., 2020), including reduction or cessation of paid employment (Vink & Vink-Niese, 2019). Post acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2, a syndrome resulting in debilitating fatigue, often accompanied by dyspnea, myalgia, pain, insomnia, decreased memory, vertigo and anxiety, has been described as a form of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (Komaroff & Bateman, 2021; Poenaru et al., 2021). Specific etiology of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis presenting as post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 may be attributed to injury to the person's brain, lungs, heart and other internal organs. For clients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and/or post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2, graded therapeutic exercise, once a recommended strategy, may increase post-exertional malaise (Poenaru et al., 2021). Due to the high prevalence of post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 and the increasing prevalence of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, it is vital that occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants have up-to-date and evidence-based rehabilitation strategies for people experiencing debilitating fatigue (Poenaru et al., 2021).

- **Promoting Wellness in Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities by Mary Thelander and Athena Pauio- *University of NM***

Resulting from a Fall, 2024 Population Health Capstone project, this poster will relay information about common disabilities experienced among agricultural workers and health disparities experienced by people with I/DD. Benefits of community-based interventions and assistive technology for people with I/DD will be discussed.

- **GIS Analysis of South Carolina AgrAbility Population Data by Jake McAllister- *Clemson University***

Using US census disability and USDA agricultural statistics, estimated populations are determined in each of the 46 counties of South Carolina. In doing so, these statistics represent what kind of disability (vision, hearing, cognitive, and ambulatory) is presented in each county and which county is affected the most by each of these conditions.

- **Legacy Innovation Farming Economics (LIFE) Project – Outreach and Impact by Ed Sheldon and Chuck Baldwin- *NAP/LIFE Project, John Jamerson- Legacy Farming and Health Group/LIFE Project, Tameka Peoples- Peoples Foundation/LIFE Project, Darrell Anderson- Chef Joseph's/LIFE Project, Gabriel Mont-Reynaud- Pangea Farms/LIFE Project, and Joe Tutt- Crooked Fork Land & Cattle/LIFE Project***

In 2019, the National AgrAbility Project joined the Peoples Foundation and the Legacy Farming and Health Group to form the Legacy Innovation Farming Economics (LIFE) Project. This project, supported by the USDA 2501 grant program, has been successful in promoting the utilization of USDA services (including AgrAbility) among socially disadvantaged populations and military veterans involved in agriculture throughout the country. In 2022, the LIFE Project's success in distributing technical support and educational resources to aspiring agriculturalists was recognized by the team receiving a second three-year grant to continue the effort. This poster presentation will highlight the LIFE Project's successes in reaching underserved audiences.

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- **Empowering an Inclusive and Accessible Conservation Workforce** by *Nathan Fields- Plant for a Change Farm*
People with and without disabilities benefit from working alongside one another. However, people with disabilities are rarely represented in environmental and conservation efforts and are disproportionately served by nonprofit companies.
Plant for a Change set out in May 2020, during the pandemic, to mobilize an inclusive and accessible conservation workforce made up of people with and without disabilities. Our primary learning objective for the poster is to provide viewers with an opportunity to see how Plant for a Change's mission of keystone native seeds as a driver of conservation has allowed inclusive employment and community involvement to be intentional and purposeful.
- **Promoting Food Security and Decreasing Suicide Risk in Rural Veterans** by *Karen Besterman-Dahan- VA Maryland Health Care - VISN 5 Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center*
This poster will review a project that aims to reduce food insecurity and associated risk of suicide among rural Veterans by adapting an intervention that addresses multiple dimensions of social determinants. We will review disproportionate rates of food insecurity in rural veterans, the stakeholder prioritized barriers and facilitators to food insecurity which informed this project and plans for the intervention.
- **Expanding Agricultural Opportunities for Veteran Farmers** by *Haze Orner and Suzanna Windon- AgrAbility PA, Pennsylvania State University*
This study explores the need for veteran-specific agricultural programs amidst the growing interest in agriculture among military veterans. Despite Pennsylvania having the fourth-largest veteran population in the U.S., the state ranks 25th in farm producers with military experience. Research highlights the advantages of veteran-to-farmer (V2F) programs, including workforce reintegration and strengthened community connections. This study assesses the interest in agriculture education programs and evaluates the need for increased governmental support for veteran farmers.
The study used a convenient sampling approach, with an online survey distributed to stakeholders attending the 2024 Farmer Veteran Coalition Conference. Key findings reveal that a significant percentage of participants have military backgrounds, with 60% growing up on a farm and 68% currently involved in farming. Many veterans expressed interest in veteran agricultural education programs, grants, loans, and support networks. The results indicate a demand for tailored programs to help veterans transition into agriculture, with a specific interest in financial assistance, educational resources, and succession planning. These findings suggest a pressing need to develop and expand veteran-focused agricultural initiatives.
- **Missouri AgrAbility Assist Client Farmers to Promote Independence and Accessible Self-Employment in Agriculture** by *Karen Funkenbusch, Emily Doosing, Willard Downs, Kirk Funkenbusch, Susan Jaster, David Middleton, Katie Neuner, Elizabeth Picking, and Brenda Schreck- University of Missouri Extension and Genny Asher-Missouri Department of Social Services – Rehabilitation Services for Blind*
The University of Missouri Extension and Missouri Department of Social Services - Rehabilitation Services for Blind through a fee for service contract collaboratively provide Level II Onsite Farmstead Assessments and produce culturally appropriate diverse health, safety and wellness resources to meet the individualized needs of their agricultural operations.
Accessible resources are critical for self-employment in agriculture if the intended outcome is to help farmers with disabilities remain healthy and prevent secondary injuries.

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