Cultivating Independence
for Farmers and Other Rural Residents with Disabilities

INDIANA AGRABILITY PROJECT
BREAKING NEW GROUND OUTREACH PROGRAM

800-825-4264
www.breakingnewground.info
In 1979, a farmer with severe disabilities asked Purdue’s Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering for help with modifying his tractor so he could continue farming. His request ultimately led to the establishment of the Breaking New Ground (BNG) Resource Center, now an internationally recognized source of information on assistive technology for agricultural worksites.

Soon after it started, the BNG Resource Center established the Breaking New Ground Outreach Program to serve rural Indiana residents affected by disabilities. The BNG Outreach Program, a part of Purdue Extension, became a model for the USDA AgrAbility Program that now supports similar projects in more than 20 states, including Indiana. The Indiana AgrAbility Project serves farmers and other rural residents with disabilities through a collaborative effort between the USDA, the BNG Outreach Program, and several disability- and agriculture-related organizations, including the Arthritis Foundation-Indiana Chapter and Hoosier Uplands Economic Development Corporation.
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Whom do we serve?

The Need
Agricultural production ranks as one of the most hazardous occupations in the nation. For example:
- Farming has one of the highest disabling injury rates of any industry.
- Farm-related injuries annually affect around 1 out of 9 Indiana farm families.
- Approximately 19% of active farm operators can no longer perform essential tasks due to a disability.

The Scope of Our Services
Indiana AgrAbility serves people with many types of disabilities, including:
- spinal cord injury
- amputation
- back injury
- visual impairment
- arthritis
- hearing impairment
- stroke
- head injury
- respiratory impairment
- disabilities due to disease

How can we help?

Resources
The BNG Resource Center produces top-quality, research-based print, electronic, and audiovisual resources related to disability in agriculture and rural life. Topics include:
- worksite modifications
- adaptive tools
- improving access to FFA and 4-H programs
- rural business accessibility
- rural assistive technology
- alternative enterprises

For a complete listing of resources, visit the program Web site.

Communication Services and Public Awareness
Indiana AgrAbility Project staff members produce a newsletter, offer a toll-free helpline (800-825-4264), and maintain the www.breakingnewground.info Web site, which contains resources and links to related sites. In addition, the program raises awareness through news releases, interviews with the media, and community events (e.g., Extension meetings, agricultural field days, machinery shows, disability-related conferences, the Indiana State Fair, and various county fairs). These events help staff members connect with individuals who could benefit from program services.

On-Site Visits
To help make Indiana farm worksites, homes, and rural businesses more accessible, staff members offer:
- agricultural worksite assessments
- recommendations for home modifications
- relevant resource materials
- referrals to other sources of information and assistance
- advocacy when needed
Self-Employment and Alternative Enterprise Consultations

Indiana AgrAbility Project staff members have extensive experience in consulting with farmers and other rural residents to explore self-employment and alternative enterprise opportunities, and also to develop business plans. With that assistance, a wide variety of self-employment enterprises have been approved and funded by Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Caregiver Assistance

The program serves rural caregivers of people with disabilities through such things as caregiving workshops, printed resources, and the www.ruralcare.info Web site.

Specialized Training

Indiana AgrAbility conducts specialized educational initiatives that focus on such groups as veterans, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, foresters and woodlot owners, and emergency responders. Staff members also have provided state and national training on such topics as:

- farming with a disability
- assistive technology for agricultural workers
- community accessibility
- getting youth with disabilities involved in agriculture
- rural business accessibility
- emergency preparedness for people with disabilities

How do we operate?

As part of Purdue Extension, the Indiana AgrAbility Project has access to Extension’s statewide resources and services. In addition, the program forms collaborative relationships with many other groups and functions as a coalition of partnerships with organizations such as the Arthritis Foundation-Indiana Chapter, Hoosier Uplands Economic Development Corporation, Transition Resources Corporation, INDATA, the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana, the Veterans’ Administration, and Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services.