



A newsletter dedicated to friends of the Indiana AgrAbility Project/Breaking New Ground Outreach Program

A Champion in and out of the Ring

Kyle Albertson hasn't let disability stop him from excelling

Nineteen-year-old Kyle Albertson is a 10-year 4-H member from Benton County, Indiana. Like many other 4-Hers, he loves to show sheep – Southdown sheep in his case. However, unlike most, Kyle must use some special technologies in the ring, and other areas of life, due to the challenges he faces because of muscular dystrophy.

Kyle was introduced to showing sheep by some family friends when he was a third-grader. At that time, his father improvised

an attachment for his wheelchair, based on trimming stands used for grooming sheep, which allowed Kyle to guide his animals in the ring. About three years ago, the apparatus was modified by another family friend, John Kretzmeir, to make it more effective and comfortable for the sheep. Kyle now shows the Kretzmeirs' sheep at fairs.

All the efforts have paid off, as Kyle has won Senior Sheep Showmanship and Grand Champion Sheep Showmanship awards at the Benton County 4-H Fair.

Kyle's friends and family have also made a variety of adaptations around the farm to increase his participation in activities like planting and harvesting. In addition, he has a modified van that enables him to drive and thus be more independent.

Kyle was also among the honored few to be named a torchbearer for Benton County during the 2016 Indiana Bicentennial Torch



Kyle Albertson and Kenzie Kretzmeir celebrate a victory at the 2016 Benton County 4-H Fair



Kyle carries the torch through Benton County during Indiana's Bicentennial Relay

Relay on its 3,200-mile journey across the state.

The future continues to look bright for Kyle as he recently graduated from Benton Central High School where he was active in FFA and assisted with the group's large annual consignment auction. Kyle is slated to attend Purdue University in the fall to pursue a degree in agribusiness.

Proposed Federal Budget Cuts

AgrAbility funding in question for 2018 USDA budget



AgrAbility has been included in the president's budget for the past five years.

Prior to that, the program was included in the final federal budget through the actions of senators and/or representatives.

For the past five fiscal years, AgrAbility funding was included as part of President Obama's budget. Prior to that time, or for approximately 20 years, authorization for the program existed through the Farm Bill, but no funds were allocated to it in any president's proposed budget. During that time, funding for AgrAbility was included in the final federal budget through the actions of one or more senators or representatives.

In the initial USDA/NIFA 2018 Budget, the entire AgrAbility/farm safety amount was eliminated. Reasons included the Administration's efforts to "redirect available resources, as appropriate, from lower-priority areas to other science and technology activities."

However, in their "markup" sessions, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees recommended that AgrAbility/farm safety be funded at its current level. This does not guarantee that AgrAbility funding will be included in the final federal budget for FY18, however, as there are several more steps on the budget process.

For current details on AgrAbility funding, visit www.agrability.org.

Out & About with AgrAbility

EDUCATION & AWARENESS PAST & FUTURE



Roy Ballard (right) accepts a Breaking New Ground Achievement Award from Project Director Bill Field during the most recent Indiana AgrAbility Advisory Team meeting. Roy is a Purdue Extension agriculture and natural resources educator from Hancock County, a long-time member of the Advisory Team, and a strong proponent of local foods and small farms.

Some upcoming Indiana events:

- Indiana State Fair, Indianapolis, August 4-20
- Veterans' tour of Crowl Cattle, Lafayette, August 12
- Farm Bill listening session with Senator Joe Donnelly, Normandy Barn, Indiana State Fair, August 15, 9:00 a.m.
- INDATA "Assistive Technology and Autism" training, Indianapolis, August 25
- Veterans' beekeeping workshop, Wheatfield, September 29-30
- Indiana-Illinois Farm Show, Indianapolis, December 12-14

THE MISSION OF THE FARMER VETERAN COALITION IS MOBILIZING VETERANS TO FEED AMERICA. AGRICULTURE OFFERS PURPOSE AND OPPORTUNITY, AS WELL AS PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS.

New farmer veteran group forming

Indiana AgrAbility and the Indiana Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program are working together with Indiana farmer veterans to bring a chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) to the state.

The core group of leaders is working to get the required organizational paperwork completed and an initial stakeholders meeting scheduled by the end of the year. The chapter will then be able to provide direct assistance to Indiana's farmer veterans. Look for more details in an upcoming News Note.



Indiana farmer veterans discuss the new FVC chapter

FVC is cultivating a new generation of farmers and food leaders, and developing viable employment and meaningful careers through collaboration between the farming and military communities.

Embassy Men: Bridging Horizons Community Service Contest winners

"Embassy Men," the men's ministry group at Linton First Christian Church, won first place in the 2017 Bridging Horizons Community Service Contest. They built a wheelchair-access ramp onto a house trailer to enable the resident to safely enter and exit. The individual previously had to rely on others to bring him food and supplies, and had missed several medical appointments because he couldn't leave the trailer.

Second place went to Forest Park FFA of Ferdinand, IN, which built an accessible cart that enabled an elementary school student with a disability to deliver library books in his school. Springs Valley Jr./Sr. High School's construction technology program, Fellowship of Christian Athletes group, and FFA partnered to win third place by completing several projects during the year, including wheelchair-access ramps.



Members of the Embassy Men group build a wheelchair-accessible ramp

INDATA: an important partner for AgrAbility and you

Steve Swain named an INDATA Assistive Technology Champion

Steve Swain, longtime rural rehabilitation specialist for Indiana AgrAbility, was recently honored as an Assistive Technology Champion by INDATA, Indiana's Assistive Technology Act program. "His technical knowledge and his ability to apply it to a wide variety of situations makes him invaluable to Hoosiers with disabilities," said Wade Wingler, vice president at Easterseals Crossroads, the host organization for INDATA.



Steve Swain (left) accepts award from Easterseals Crossroads Vice President Wade Wingler

The award, the first of its kind, was presented during a celebration of INDATA's 10th anniversary.

Loans for assistive technology available through INDATA

INDATA, Indiana's Assistive Technology Act project, provides a variety of services that allow consumers to access assistive technology to address disability needs. Among those services, its Alternative Financing Program (AFP) provides low-interest, extended rate loans to qualified individuals needing a variety of technologies.

The AFP is a partnership between Easterseals Crossroads and STAR Financial, and is available throughout Indiana. Individuals must meet eligibility requirements, provide disability documentation, and complete the application process.

For more information, contact Nikol Prieto nprieto@eastersealscrossroads.org or 888-466-1314.



TOOLBOX Spotlight

TOOLS TO MAKE LIFE EASIER



The Quick-Cut Greens Harvester

is powered by a cordless drill and designed to harvest over 150 pounds of salad greens an hour without having to kneel or use a knife or scissors. The device consists of (1) an upright metal frame with a crossbar and a hand grip at the top and a serrated blade at the bottom; (2) a rotating macramé brush that gently pulls the leaves into the oscillating blade, which cuts them off at ground level; and (3) a cloth basket to catch the harvested crop. The universal mount on the frame is designed to accept almost any kind of cordless drill, although 18-volt models reportedly work best.

For more information on this and many more helpful technologies, visit **THE TOOLBOX** Assistive Technology Database at www.agrability.org/toolbox