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Indiana **AgrAbility** news note

Winter 2022



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

Welcome back Indiana AgrAbility!

Project receives new four-year USDA grant

After a two-year pause in funding from USDA, Indiana AgrAbility was awarded an AgrAbility Project grant for 2021-25. Purdue's Breaking New Ground (BNG) Resource Center will again be the lead agency for the grant. BNG was also awarded the 2021-25 National AgrAbility Project grant.

Indiana AgrAbility Project Manager Chuck Baldwin said, "The fact that the USDA/NIFA awarded both the National and the Indiana AgrAbility Project grants to Purdue in the same year (2021) is a strong indication that the staff behind these proposals is on the right track when it comes to the vision and work plan for AgrAbility that they have projected."

For the new grant cycle, Easterseals Crossroads joins Indiana AgrAbility as its non-profit disability services partner. Also new to the team is Kimber Nicoletti-Martínez, who will serve as migrant farmworker/Latino outreach coordinator. Indiana AgrAbility will continue to collaborate with Hoosier Uplands and other groups. You can read more about Kimber, Easterseals Crossroads, and Hoosier Uplands inside.

To kick off the new project, the Indiana AgrAbility Advisory Team met at Purdue on November 8. This group of 18 AgrAbility staff members, consultants, and professionals from other organizations reviewed the proposed work plan, made suggestions for improvement, and discussed new opportunities for networking and leveraging resources.

As Baldwin says, "Everyone on the team knows that they can't do it alone; success will depend not only on the quality of work they put in, but also on the many partners the team networks with – partners like INDATA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Farmer Veteran Coalition of Indiana, Purdue Extension, and many others."



Indiana AgrAbility serves anyone in production agriculture with any type of disability or functional limitation

tion, Farmer Veteran Coalition of Indiana, Purdue Extension, and many others."

If you or anyone you know would like assistance from Indiana AgrAbility, call 800-825-4264, visit www.IndianaAgrAbility.org, or email agrability@agrability.org. You can also see Indiana AgrAbility at many events around the state, including those listed inside.

AgrAbility National Training Workshop returns in 2022!



Like many events, the AgrAbility National Training Workshop (NTW) was adversely affected by the pandemic. The 2020 NTW had to be canceled less than two weeks before it was scheduled to start. Conditions in 2021 also kept the in-person NTW from happening; however, many of the sessions originally scheduled for that event were presented virtually. The total combined attendance for those webinars exceeded 2,100, and the archived sessions are available for viewing at agrability.info/ntw2021.

In 2022, the NTW is scheduled to convene again in-person on March 14-17 at the Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison, WI. As always, the NTW promises to provide many highly-informative breakout sessions, interesting off-site tours, and valuable networking opportunities. The scheduled keynote speaker is Davon Goodwin, an Army veteran, AgrAbility client, agricultural entrepreneur, and national speaker.

Registration is open! Visit www.agrability.org/ntw for details, including the schedule, hotel information, and sponsorship forms.



Off-site tours are an important feature
of the National Training Workshop



The Indiana AgrAbility Advisory Team
gathered at Purdue University

Out & About with AgrAbility

EDUCATION & AWARENESS PAST & FUTURE



Indiana AgrAbility is happy to be returning to many of the events that were preempted by the pandemic. Above, Ed Sheldon, Extension outreach and evaluation specialist for Indiana AgrAbility, demonstrates a tractor lift seat at the National FFA Convention.

Some upcoming events for Indiana AgrAbility include:

- National Farm Machinery Show, Louisville, KY, February 16-19
- Midwest Women in Agriculture Conference, Shipshewana, IN, February 8-10
- Indiana Small Farm Conference, Danville, IN, March 3-4
- AgrAbility National Training Workshop, Madison, WI, March 14-17
- Working with Amish and Other Plain Communities Conference, Shipshewana, IN, March 29-31

Indiana AgVets program marches on with AgrAbility input

In September 2019, Indiana AgrAbility became a partner on the Indiana AgVets project, a USDA-funded agricultural career training opportunity specifically for U.S. military veterans in Indiana or surrounding states. The program is led by Hoosier Uplands, a long-time collaborating organization with Indiana AgrAbility.

To date, more than 40 veterans have enrolled in the program, and fifteen are actively participating in ag-related internships across the state. Some of the host sites for interns include Purdue satellite farms, a soil and water conservation district office, and several crop and livestock farms.

In addition to internships, AgVets has conducted six face-to-face workshops around the state with total combined attendance of more than 130. Classroom sessions and tours for these events have been provided by groups like AgrAbility, Purdue Extension, Farmer Veteran



Indiana AgVets tour a hoop house during a workshop at Pinney Purdue Ag Center

Coalition of Indiana, FSA, NRCS, and others.

AgVets also provides education through Good Days Work, a nationally recognized provider of online agricultural employee training and certification. Some of the many topics include hazardous waste operations, equipment safety, and ATV safety.

For more information or to apply for the AgVets program, please visit www.indianaagvets.info or call 800-825-4264.

Meet Kimber Nicoletti-Martinez

Indiana AgrAbility is pleased to welcome Kimber Nicoletti-Martinez as migrant farmworker/Latino outreach coordinator. She is principal investigator and director of the Multicultural Efforts to end Sexual Assault (MESA), a Purdue University Extension program that works with underserved and underrepresented populations in Indiana to provide education and culturally relevant tools to promote healthy relationships. She has been collaborating



Kimber Nicoletti-Martinez

informally with AgrAbility for several years to enhance outreach to farmworkers on issues like arthritis and ergonomics.

Kimber was named 2018 National Social Worker of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers and was recently awarded a 2021 national Jefferson Award for Outstanding Public Service by an Employee.

As migrant farmworker/Latino outreach coordinator, Kimber will work to enhance quality of life for migrant/seasonal farmworkers with disabilities in Indiana. In doing so, she will network with other organizations serving this population, including the Indiana poultry, pork, and dairy associations, and Proteus Inc., an organization that focuses on farmworker assistance.

Easterseals Crossroads joins the Indiana AgrAbility team

Indiana AgrAbility has collaborated for many years with Easterseals Crossroads, a major disability services organization based in Indianapolis and home of INDATA, Indiana's Assistive Technology Act Project. However, for the new AgrAbility grant cycle, the team is pleased to announce that Easterseals Crossroads has become a formal partner.

Leading Easterseals Crossroads' efforts are Brian Norton, director of assistive technology, and Lisa Becker, assistive technology technician. A few of their efforts will include the following:

- Conducting assistive technology training for professionals and customers in rural locations in Indiana each year.
- Establishing a satellite assistive technology library at Purdue within the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering.
- Assisting with on-site visits of AgrAbility clients.
- Including AgrAbility in existing training series, such as educational events for vocational rehabilitation counselors.
- Featuring AgrAbility staff members and topics during INDATA's frequent online podcasts.



Lisa Becker and Brian Norton

- Co-coordinating an assistive technology expo for VR counselors and others in cooperation with Purdue staff and Life Essentials, a leading producer of assistive technology for farmers.

In addition to activities specific to AgrAbility's work plan, INDATA provides low-interest, extended-term financial loans to qualified individuals for purchasing assistive technology. AgrAbility staff members will refer clients to the loan program and other Easterseals Crossroads programs, as appropriate.

Remembering Bill Begley

Bill Begley, director of sales for Life Essentials, passed away last fall.

Bill was a tireless ambassador for AgrAbility and passionate advocate for farmers and ranchers with disabilities. He drove countless miles across the U.S. to share hope and practical solutions with people in need and with professionals who work with them.

During his presentations, Bill often told about how his life changed when he first went with his brother on a lift installation and how he felt



Bill talking to farmer with paralysis about lifts to access machinery

a new calling to help farmers and ranchers with disabilities get the technologies that would change their lives too.

TOOLBOX Spotlight

TOOLS TO MAKE LIFE EASIER



The WoodOX Sling Firewood Carrier

positions the load under the user's arm (on either side) so that the weight is distributed across the upper body (rather than it being all on one side and transported by one arm). This design means an upward shift in center of gravity to promote less body strain and less chance of the load tipping in transit. Further, the Sling can be loaded/unloaded from a standing position, instead of having to bend over. Also, attached on the top is a small LED flashlight for path illumination.

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