

News Column for Use Week of 2/24/2020  
John Forshee, District Extension Director/Farm Management/Community Vitality  
River Valley Extension District  
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### **AgrAbility – Cultivating Accessible Agriculture**

Agriculture is a high-risk occupation with the incidence of work-related injury or death much above the general population. Hearing loss, disabling injuries, back problems, amputations, and chronic respiratory issues are just a few of the more obvious conditions farmers may find themselves experiencing. In addition, we may not think of things, such as stress and anxiety resulting in behavior health issues, an aging farm population dealing with joint health issues, a disabling disease, such as cancer or heart disease, stroke, visual impairment, traumatic brain injury, or those who suffer with arthritis.

AgrAbility is a program sponsored by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) which provides assistance to farmers, ranchers, other agricultural workers, and farm family members impacted by disability – such as those outlined above. The vision of AgrAbility is to enable a high-quality lifestyle for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities. Through education and assistance, AgrAbility helps to eliminate or minimize the obstacles blocking success in production agriculture or agriculture-related occupations.

They also offer the following services as no cost to the customers: on-site assessment of barriers on the farm and home; recommending appropriate assistive technologies; providing educational materials and trainings; referring customers to other service providers for assistance specific to the customer's needs; arranging peer support; and assisting military veterans seeking employment in agriculture-related occupations.

AgrAbility does not provide direct funding for equipment, but it does often work with other sources to help customers obtain the needed assistive technologies or modifications.

AgrAbility also has high-quality informational brochures. *Arthritis and Gardening* is a guide for home gardeners and small-scale producers. *Arthritis and Agriculture* is a guide to understanding and living with arthritis in an agricultural setting.

If any of this news column rings true for you, then AgrAbility might be able to offer you some assistance or education allowing you to work longer or more pain-free in agriculture. The Kansas AgrAbility Project is a partnership of K-State Research and Extension, Southeast Kansas Independent Living (SKIL), and Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK). Contact them by calling 800-526-3648, or 785-532-2976. Learn more about The Kansas AgrAbility by visiting their website at: <http://agrability.bae.ksu.edu/>. The National AgrAbility Project phone number is: 800-825-4264; find them on their website at: [www.agrability.org](http://www.agrability.org); or contact them via email at: [agrability@agrability.org](mailto:agrability@agrability.org).