

Autumn Harvest

2025 NM AgrAbility Newsletter



NM AgrAbility Project Field Notes

By Dr. Robert Hagevoort, NM AgrAbility Program Director and Julie LaJeunesse, Program Manager

The NM AgrAbility project has been laying the groundwork toward our purpose of supporting success in agriculture for people with disabilities. Last fall, Agricultural apprentices and OT students graduated from their respective programs, reaping much knowledge of the demands of food production. In January 2025, we collaborated with the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum to create an AgrAbility exhibit that showcases ways in which people with many health conditions benefit from the AgrAbility project.



Pictured: The entrance to the AgrAbility exhibit at the NM Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum

In the spring, we planted seeds about the benefits of assistive technology and other supports for food producers at the 2024 AgrAbility National Training Conference in Las Cruces, NM. We assisted in planning the conference and were thrilled that NM was selected to host. Team Members LaJeunesse, Siegel, Thelander, and Trusty shared their expertise. **And we were able to appoint Julie LaJeunesse as NMAP Program Manager and take the lead on an increased number of clients, activities, and requests for AgrAbility information.** Over the summer, we have been growing our contacts with extension offices so that more ~~New Mexican food~~ producers will know that they can access a no-cost farm or ranch site assessment and learn about assistive technology solutions to keep them farming and ranching.

We will harvest the rewards of collaborating with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation program for a Day on the Farm on September 19, 2025. On that day, agricultural experts, NM AgrAbility team members, and DVR Counselors will share knowledge about the work required for food production and the role of Assistive Technology to keep farmers and ranchers doing what they love.

Learning the Value of Farm and Ranch site Evaluations

By Mary Thelander, NM AgrAbility Fieldwork Educator with the University of New Mexico

Congratulations to OT students Jennifer Solan and Dany Rivera who completed their OT Fieldwork II with the NM AgrAbility Program in December, 2024. Two new OT students, Kyndra Basham and Morgan Lujan, have begun their fieldwork in September, 2025. OT Students learn how to conduct an AgrAbility farm or ranch site evaluations. With a no-cost farm site evaluation, NM farmers and ranchers receive recommendations about Assistive Technology that may improve their ability to continue cultivation.

Top reasons to seek a Farm or Ranch site Evaluation from NM AgrAbility:

1. Food Producers, including farmers and ranchers, complete rigorous and dangerous work. They deserve support to solve problems if they experience an illness or an injury.
2. Food Producers have higher rates of pain, back injuries, hand injuries and other health conditions. Assistive technology can help farmers and ranchers continue to do the work their vital and important work and offer solutions and hope.
3. NM AgrAbility can help farmers and ranchers learn about other helpful resources too.

If you are, or you know a NM farmer or rancher who may benefit from a no-cost farm site evaluation, contact NM AgrAbility at 1 (855) AGRABLE (247-2253) or NMAgrability@gmail.com.

Assistive Technology Corner: By Mary Thelander, NM AgrAbility Fieldwork Educator with the University of New Mexico

People who have decreased mobility can explore Manzano Mountain State Park in a TrackMaster Mobility Device. The TrackMaster, awarded to the NM State Park through a grant in 2025, can be borrowed free of charge by people who have any health condition that limits mobility such as injury to feet, legs, back, spine, or heart, lung or other medical conditions that limit endurance in high elevation conditions. It is important to note that any people who borrow the TrackMaster must have a companion when they use it to explore the state park. Both the companion and the TrackMaster user must attend a safety training before borrowing the mobility device. For more information call 1-877-664-7787 or The Manzano Mountains State Park [Website](#).



Pictured: The TrackMaster Mobility Device at Manzano Mountain State Park



Logo for NMTAP AT Conference stating "Empower Yourself with Assistive Technology"

The **Assistive Technology Conference for 2025 (ATC25) will be held on September 22 & 23, 2025**, at Berna Facio Professional Center at 3315 Louisiana Blvd. NE in Albuquerque. This annual educational event is great to get more in depth information and hands-on opportunities about Assistive Technology (AT) that can assist in continuing your employment, education, and community engagement. This year the sessions start out with supports for food growers in New Mexico. There are eight sessions that cover challenges in many areas in life. Check out our website to find out more and register today to attend! [Link: NM ATC25 Program](#)

Farm Apprenticeship Updates

By Sophie Trusty, Program Director with our Non-profit Partner, Mandy's Farm

The AgrAbility Apprenticeship Program at Mandy's Farm has been busy! Our first class of apprentices graduated in December, 2024 and have transitioned into community agricultural work in nurseries, compost facilities, and landscaping businesses. In March, 2025 we welcomed our second cohort of apprentices, 6 individuals participating in hands-on agricultural learning at our farm in Albuquerque's South Valley. The apprentices have been growing, harvesting, and creating value-added products with garlic, onions, corn, okra, cabbage, leeks, and sweet potatoes. The apprenticeship team also returned to selling at the South Valley Growers Market for this season



Pictured: December, 2024 NMAP/Mandy's Farm Graduates

We are excited to announce the completion of the new microlearning course offered through NMSU, Introduction to Accessible Regenerative Farming, which will be available for individuals throughout the state to access and complete the curriculum offered through Mandy's Farm.

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