

2026 NM AgrAbility Newsletter



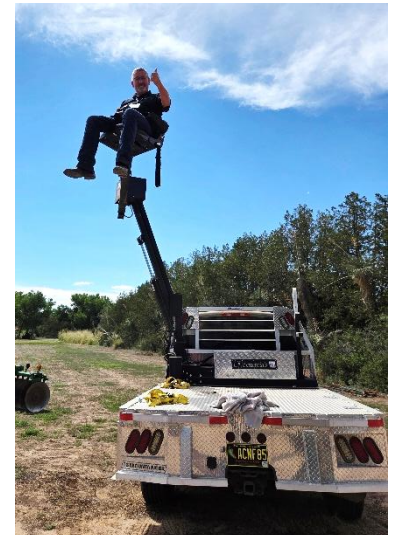
NM AgrAbility Project Field Notes

By Dr. Robert Hagevoort, NM AgrAbility Project Director(dairydoc@nmsu.edu) and Julie LaJeunesse, Project Manager (agjulie@nmsu.edu)

The NM AgrAbility Project (NMAP) continues to work toward our purpose to support success in agriculture for people with disabilities and improve quality of life through participation in agricultural production in our fourth year of our grant. We have continued to work closely with the NM Farm and Heritage Museum to develop a story-capture system for people who view [the AgrAbility exhibit](#). Project manager Julie LaJeunesse has coordinated activities for direct farm site evaluations and community trainings, including our first Day on the Farm in September, 2025. Our partners have also been busy this year, as you will see in their updates.

NMAP has plans to grow roots into our community in the summer and fall:

- June 15-17th 2026 [AgriFuture Educational Institute](#) – NMAP Info & Education
- June 23rd AgrAbility National Training Workshop [Encore Webinar](#):
NMAP client David Wyllie presents the “Motherhouse Project”
- June 29th NM AgrAbility Project - Advisory Council Meeting
- July 29th NMAP Education and Information - ABQ Library, Tony Hillerman
- Aug. 8th South Valley Growers’ Market – NMAP Informational Booth
- Aug. 13th Los Lunas [Agricultural Science Center](#) Field Day



Pictured: Project Director Robert Hagevoort demos a life-lift at the NMAP Day on the Farm

Learning the Value of Farm and Ranch site Evaluations

By Mary Thelander, NM AgrAbility Fieldwork Educator with the University of New Mexico, mthelander@salud.unm.edu

The past year has been fruitful for training health care professionals through NMAP. Occupational Therapy students Kyndra Basham and Morgan Lucero completed their Fieldwork II in November 2025. Population Health students Brianna Rodriguez and Mylee Vigil finished their Fieldwork/Capstone projects in May 2026. During these experiences, students work alongside farm apprentices—planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops—to better understand both the challenges and rewards of farm and ranch life. OT students also learn how to conduct AgrAbility farmsite evaluations. Kyndra and Morgan created an addendum to focus on social and emotional regulation skills that has been useful at the NMAP apprentice site.



Pictured: Occupational Therapy students Kyndra Basham and Morgan Lucero

Farmers and ranchers face higher rates of back pain, hand injuries, and other health concerns. The right tools and strategies can ease strain, extend years in the field, and support the vital work of producing our food. NM AgrAbility also connects food growers with additional resources to help them keep growing strong.

Through no-cost farm and ranch evaluations, NM AgrAbility provides practical recommendations for assistive technology that can help producers stay safe and keep working.

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 New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP) Partner, Tracy Agiovlasitis, tracy.agiovlasitis@gcd.nm.gov

Farmers and ranchers handle demanding, repetitive work every day, often moving between tools and tasks that add extra strain. Over time, this workload can wear down your back, strength, and endurance. Practical assistive technology can help reduce that strain, improve safety, and keep you working longer with less fatigue.



Pictured: industry image of a step-ladder extension from the [AgrAbility Toolbox](#)

The Rung Step Ladder Extension makes ladder work more stable and comfortable. It adds an 18-inch-wide, 6-inch-deep non-slip platform, giving you a secure place to stand instead of balancing on a narrow rung. Made from durable aluminum, it fits onto a ladder rung and extends it by 3 inches, making climbing, standing, and getting down easier and less tiring.

Mobile workstations help cut down on unnecessary walking and keep tools within reach. They include pegboard panels for organizing tools, built in trays, shelves, or drawers for supplies. Casters allow you to position them where you need them and lock them in place. Many different versions can be adapted to your workstation to improve efficiency, reduce wasted steps, and help limit physical strain throughout the day



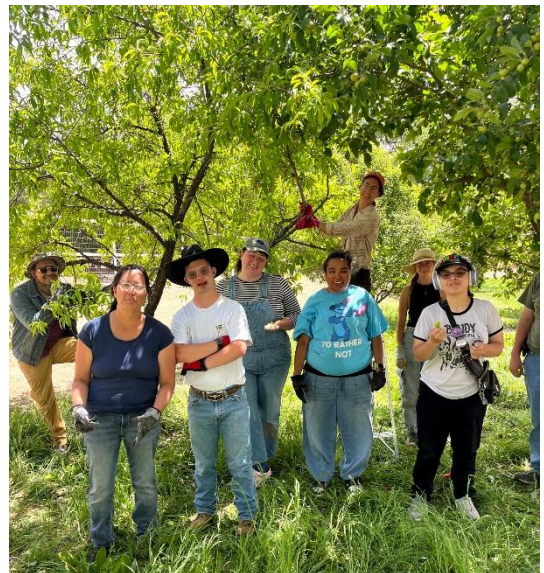
Pictured: industry image of an a-frame mobile workstation from the [AgrAbility Toolbox](#)

Farm Apprenticeship Updates

By Mandy's Farm Partner, Saleema Robinson, saleema@mandysfarm.org

NMAP at Mandy's Farm is proud to be one of 14 agriculture producers and community organizations across New Mexico awarded funding through Farm to Table's New Mexico Farmer Innovation Program—Urban Agriculture Initiative Micro-Grant. NMAP at Mandy's Farm was selected for its work strengthening the state's local food economy and expanding access to fresh, healthy food.

During the last growing season, project apprentices cultivated organic jalapeños, peppers, garlic, onions, corn, and sweet potatoes, while also raising ducks for eggs. NMAP @ Mandy's Farm is committed to teaching the skills of young adults with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities how to produce nutrient-dense food using regenerative agriculture, permaculture, soil remediation, composting, companion planting, and innovative water-conservation techniques. The project strengthens the next generation of climate-resilient farmers while protecting the Rio Grande and Pajarito Acequia through sustainable land management practices.



Pictured: Farm apprentices and support staff under a shady tree

Grant funding will support critical improvements and future growth, including repairs to the hoop house damaged in a recent windstorm, the purchase of a new wood chipper to create natural mulch for crop cover, and organic perennial vegetable and flower seeds for fall planting.

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