

## What is Kansas AgrAbility?

*Each year AgrAbility helps hundreds of farmers, ranchers, agricultural workers, and their families succeed in agricultural production and rural community life.*

AgrAbility is a national network of programs funded and administered by the United States Department of Agriculture and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). Kansas is one of 21 states that have AgrAbility Projects.

### Purpose

The Kansas AgrAbility Project's primary purpose is to directly assist Kansas farmers/ranchers, their employees, and family members who have become injured, have a health condition, or a disability to remain actively engaged in production agriculture for as long as they choose. It is estimated that more than 9,000 full-time or part-time Kansas farmers, ranchers, and their workers have disabilities that interfere with their ability to work in production agriculture. For many of these individuals, the presence of a disability jeopardizes their rural and agricultural futures. Rural isolation and gaps in rural service delivery systems are often compounded by a farm family's self-reliance. These factors frequently prevent agricultural workers with health conditions or disabilities from taking advantage of growing expertise in modifying farm operations, adapting equipment, promoting farmstead accessibility, and using assistive technologies to safely accommodate disability in agricultural and rural settings. Yet, with some assistance, the majority of agricultural workers with disabilities can continue to earn their livelihoods in agriculture and participate fully in rural community life.

### Services

The Kansas AgrAbility Project is a partnership between Kansas State University, Southeast Kansas Independent Living, and Assistive Technology for

Kansans at the University of Kansas. Through these partnerships and in cooperation with multiple agricultural and disability service organizations and Kansas State University's network of extension educators in all 105 counties, Kansas AgrAbility continues to enhance the quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers.

The Kansas AgrAbility Project actively promotes education and networking among rural and disability service organizations to increase the capacity for serving farmers with health conditions and disabilities. The project works to improve understanding around challenges faced by those farmers in an effort to break down service barriers and promote successful outcomes.

The Kansas AgrAbility Project provides a wide range of no-cost assistance to farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers who have health conditions or disabilities. This assistance includes information on how to accommodate barriers and maintain a rural lifestyle by modifying equipment, structures, and operations. Farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers with any type of physical, cognitive, or sensory condition (e.g., amputation, traumatic brain injury, hearing impairment) that interferes with their ability to do their agricultural work or activities of daily living are eligible for AgrAbility services.

Kansas AgrAbility Agriculture Assistive Technology Specialists combine their knowledge of agriculture with assistive device expertise to provide farmers, ranchers, and workers with health conditions or disabilities the specialized services they need to safely accommodate their activities in everyday farm/ranch operations. Furthermore, the project engages extension

educators, disability experts, rural professionals, and volunteers in offering an array of services.

Direct assistance provided by Kansas AgrAbility staff includes:

- Reviewing agricultural worksites and suggesting modifications.
- Suggesting ways to modify equipment.
- Analyzing agricultural tasks and providing guidance on how to restructure them.
- Providing on-site technical assistance on adapting and using farm/ranch equipment and tools, and on modifying farm/ranch operations and buildings if needed.
- Finding services that meet specific needs.

Indirect assistance provided by Kansas AgrAbility staff includes:

- Providing information and education to rural professionals in Kansas who provide services to rural residents with impairments.
- Promoting increased awareness among the rural and general public that disabilities do not have to end a career in agriculture. People with disabilities can and do work in agriculture in Kansas.



- Delivering agriculture-based education to help prevent further injury and disability.
- Providing training to help extension educators and other rural professionals upgrade their skills in assisting farmers with disabilities.
- Developing and coordinating peer counseling networks.

## Contact

Kansas AgrAbility customers or potential customers can call 1-800-KAN DO IT (1-800-526-3648). The KAN DO IT line will connect the client with the nearest Assistive Technology Access Site. The client's information will be referred to one of three Agriculture Assistive Technology Specialists who will make direct contact with the customer.

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Website: [agrability.ksu.edu](http://agrability.ksu.edu) | Email: [agrability@ksu.edu](mailto:agrability@ksu.edu) | Telephone: 1-800-KAN-DO-IT

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