

GROWING GOODWILL

Colorado
AgrAbility
Cultivating Accessible Agriculture
NEWS



Goodwill
of
COLORADO



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

SPRING 2023

2023 Winter Workshops

The Colorado AgrAbility Project had a successful 2023 Winter Workshop series! The project hosted five winter workshops in: Grand Junction, Colorado Springs, Sterling, Pierce, and Limon.

There were a total of 96 registrants that attended, including 25 agricultural producers, and 71 professionals. Candiss Leathers, Project Manager, and Jim Craig, Rural Rehabilitation Specialist focused on Ergonomic impacts and demonstrated how to make changes to daily tasks on the farm or ranch. Dr. Rebecca Hill, Co-Director, informed attendees of the impacts of the Colorado River, and how it affects all Coloradans.

Chad Reznicek, Behavioral Health specialist, dove into SAMHSA's 8 domains of wellness, giving everyone in attendance the chance to reflect on different ways to de-stress. This year, the Colorado AgrAbility Project was fortunate enough to partner with High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (HICAHS); Whitney Pennington, Outreach Lead was able to provide some Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to attendee's and guide them to proper usage of said equipment.



Photo (L to R): Candiss Leathers, Jim Craig, Whitney Pennington

Stay in touch!



Colorado AgrAbility Project



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Photo (L to R): Bob Fetsch, Jim Craig, Candiss Leathers, Ellis Vidmar, Chad Reznicek, and, Rebecca Hill



Photo (L to R): Candiss Leathers & Dr Bill Field

Nationally Recognized

Receiving a Breaking New Ground Award from the National AgrAbility Project (NAP) at Purdue University is one of the most esteemed honors anyone working with AgrAbility can receive.

Each year, Dr. Bill Field and the National AgrAbility Project (NAP) Leadership Team look for and reward people like Candiss Leathers who care deeply about our farmers and ranchers with disabilities and who demonstrate their care with years of action serving their needs both locally and nationally.

For almost 10 and a half years Candiss has worked tirelessly to address primarily the physical needs of the Colorado AgrAbility clients and their families. She has served on NAP's National Training Workshop Planning Committee for a decade. She received the prestigious Breaking New Ground Award at the National AgrAbility Training Workshop in Spokane, WA in March, Congratulations, Candiss!

Behavioral Health Matters

The Colorado AgrAbility Project is expanding further into the behavioral health field.

For immediate mental health needs please refer to:

Farm Aid Hotline

800-FARM-AID (327-6243)

Monday-Friday 9:00AM - 5:00PM ET

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

24/7

2-1-1

Comprehensive Hotline that connects callers with local resources.

24/7

Colorado Crisis Services

844-493-TALK(8255) OR

Text TALK to 382525

24/7

Colorado Agricultural Addiction and Mental Health Program

www.caamhpforhealth.org

Six free session with a licensed, ag-friendly counselor whenever and wherever you need them.



Colorado AgrAbility is Expanding!

Regional Extension Behavioral Health Specialists

The Regional Extension Behavioral Health Specialists, will work with rural communities to provide in-the-field stress management information and education to farmers and ranchers, to prevent emergencies including suicide, to be innovative in addressing the reluctance of many farmers and ranchers to seek and follow through with counseling, and to provide training for rural behavioral health providers and community stakeholders.

Final interviews for candidates were held early May.

Rural Rehabilitation Specialist

The Rural Rehabilitation Specialist will coordinate AgrAbility program activities for farmers and ranchers located in rural Colorado with the goal of informing, educating, and assisting farmers, ranchers, and farm workers with disabilities and their families to mitigate incidences of harmful responses to stress experienced by these individuals physical, behavioral, and/or developmental disabilities and to enhance self-sufficiency and/or the continuation of employment.

The Rural Rehabilitation Specialist assists program participants to remain and or to enter in their agricultural livelihoods by analyzing each individual situation, making recommendations, identifying adaptive technology, and facilitating access to resources.

Interviews will be conducted this spring, and there will be an update in the Fall newsletter!

Welcome to the Team!



Ellis Vidmar is the new Program Coordinator, who is passionate about agriculture, communication, and advocating for opportunities for those with disabilities or limitations. Ellis grew up on a multi-generational cow/calf ranch in Hot Sulphur Springs, where her family still raises cattle and operates a pasture to plate business. She holds a Master's degree in Agriculture with an emphasis in Agriculture Media & Communication from West Texas A&M University. Ellis is excited to continue to grow the AgrAbility team, and help make a real difference in agricultural producer's lives. In her free time, she helps on her family's ranch, manages her own small business, and gardens with her husband.

National VA Administration Conference

Jim Craig, Rural Rehabilitation Specialist, presented at the VA Health Administration National Conference in February. This year's conference was entitled "Health Services Research & Development" ADAPT (Accelerate Discovery and practice Transformation). This year was the first in three years to be held due to the pandemic. The theme of this three-day event was to discuss and inform newly hired VA health care workers in best practices in service delivery for disabled veterans. Jim presented on improving the use of VA care and achieving improved outcomes. Jim wants to continue to raise national awareness that returning veterans are not being heard by the VA, and employment can have a direct effect on re-integration and improved mental health.

