

WINTER 2020-21



Project News



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THE NEW MEXICO AGRABILITY PROJECT IS FUNDED THROUGH A GRANT FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT AGRICULTURE UNDER AWARD CFDA 10.500 #2018-41590-28717

WWW.AGRABILITY.NMSU.EDU



New Mexico Loves Pecans

Photo: David Prather, 2007, CC-BY-SA. 2.0

PROJECT DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

NMAP has a core mission of promoting success in agriculture



Hello from the NM AgrAbility Project team. It's hard to believe that the first case of COVID-19 in New Mexico was March 11, 2020. One year later, we continue to deal with the changes and upheaval this pandemic has brought to our daily lives. In the Spring 2020 Newsletter, I focused on how stress can affect our overall wellness. Stress that goes unrecognized and is not managed well can negatively affect farm families and the farm operation. How well are you managing your stress? Take this quiz to find out how stress may affect your life (Jolly & Schwab, 2017).

Check Your Stress Level

For each of the numbered statements, consider whether you feel that way:

- a) Rarely
- b) Sometimes, or
- c) Often

- ___ 1. I feel tense or anxious.
- ___ 2. People or animals make me feel irritable.
- ___ 3. I drink, smoke, or take drugs to relax.
- ___ 4. I have tension headaches or pain in the neck or shoulders.
- ___ 5. I have trouble going to sleep or staying asleep.

- ___ 6. I find it difficult to concentrate on what I'm doing.
- ___ 7. I have a difficult time finding time or being able to relax.
- ___ 8. I feel sad or depressed for no good reason.
- ___ 9. I feel tired even after I rest or sleep.
- ___ 10. I argue with family or co-workers.
- ___ 11. I give others the "silent treatment" when I'm upset.

Scoring

Give yourself 0 points for every "a" answer, 1 point for every "b" answer, and 2 points for every "c" answer.

Results

0 – 5 points: You probably are handling stress well.
6 – 11 points: You could benefit from some stress reduction techniques.
12 points or more: Your stress is causing significant difficulties. It may be time to develop new strategies to cope with job and family pressures.

What can you do?

- Recognize your symptoms of stress.
- Eat nutritious foods daily.



Photo: COTTON PLANT, USDA

- Talk with family and friends.
- Take time to relax every day. It often helps to schedule time into your workday.
- Do aerobic exercise three times a week. Even though farmers get a lot of exercise, vigorous exercise is needed to get the heart pumping.

Resource: Jolly, C. & Schwab, C. (2017, July). Manage stress to increase farm safety – Safe Farm. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Cordially,
Sonja Koukel
NMAP Program Director

For more Information on managing stress to increase farm safety, follow this link: <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/4617>

Information on Coping with Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic visit: <https://aces.nmsu.edu/covid19/health.html>

Questions about the program?
Wish to refer a farmer, rancher, food grower or food worker?
Contact Us!

Toll Free: 1-800-289-6577
Office: 1-575-646-3006
Email: skoukel@nmsu.edu

HAND CARE DURING THE COLD

by **Celina Aguilar, UNM OT
Graduate Student**



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/>

As we approach the end of winter, you might be forgetting we continue to have cold weather. Along with it, the cold weather brings continued flu season, joint pain and stiffness, dry skin, and other unpleasant experiences. When working outside during the cold season, our hands tend to be highly impacted by the cold, while being one of the most vital parts of our anatomy for working and accomplishing tasks in our daily lives, especially when working in agriculture. It is of great importance to prioritize caring for your hands, as neglecting to do so can result in damage that can not only threaten wellbeing, but also one's livelihood.

Skin Care

The cold air has the tendency to dry out our skin, leaving it vulnerable to cracking and irritation. An important preventative step that can be taken is to limit exposure to any irritants or harsh chemicals. When it is necessary to come into contact with such materials, hand washing is a must. However, even hand washing needs to be done with precautions, such as washing with a gentle cleanser that does not contain harsh soaps, solvents, or abrasives. Following hand washing, it is important to replenish moisture using a salve or balm that is not oily or greasy, as to

make sure that hands are not slippery during work.

Protective Wear

One crucial way in which you can protect your hands while working outside in the cold is to wear proper gloves. When choosing gloves, it is important to aim for minimizing moisture and providing adequate insulation. To minimize sweating, you can wear a cotton liner under other gloves. Waterproof gloves as an external layer will help prevent your hands from coming in contact with moisture, which will hamper their ability to keep warm. As far as insulation goes, the best insulation is a Thinsulate® glove with layers. Although layering is key for containing body heat in your hands, it is important to remember that, depending on the material, adding additional layers can make the gloves stiffer, which may reduce range of motion and grasp.

When choosing gloves for cold weather, it is also necessary to find those which fit correctly. Loose or ripped gloves will not insulate your hands, and can pose a safety risk of getting caught in machinery. Gloves should be thick enough to be protective, without being too bulky. The fit of the glove should be somewhat form fitting, permitting you to slightly wiggle your fingers, but no more room than that.

Gloves you choose should also have a good gripping material surface, especially if you are handling heavy and large materials in your daily work. It is a good idea to keep a few pairs of gloves nearby in case your gloves get wet or damaged.

Skin checks and Blood flow

The cold can affect both your skin and the blood flow in your hands. This can reduce sensation in your fingers, which makes doing skin checks and maintaining blood flow important. Wearing a good pair of gloves (too tight will restrict blood flow, too loose will not insulate) when possible can help protect your hand from wind, moisture, the cold air, and any cold materials you are handling, which will help maintain healthy blood circulation to your hands.

To ensure that your skin is healthy, it's important to do a hand exam after working. Thoroughly inspect your hands, looking for any cuts, rashes, or abrasions. Clean and bandage any minor cuts and abrasions. Remove any splinters or materials stuck in your skin. If any wounds are severe or not safely manageable with at-home first aid, seek medical attention.

Arthritis Pain Management

Along with the cold weather can also come joint stiffness and pain from arthritis, especially for joints in the hands which are used often. To help ease arthritis symptoms, you can do gentle exercises and movements, such as opening and closing a fist, to warm up the joints. When not wearing work gloves, or if not working, compression gloves can help with arthritis pain as well. As for the stiffness, warmth will help, and can be applied during work by keeping hand warmers nearby or in your pocket. These are often sold online and in hardware and grocery stores.



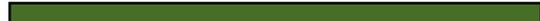
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/>

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- Faivre, I. (2015). Protect your hands and your livelihood. Retrieved from <https://ohsonline.com/Articles/2015/Protect-Your-Hands>
- Occupational Dermatology Research and Education Centre (n.d.). Skin care in the workplace. Retrieved from <http://www.occderm.asn.au>

SAFETY IN THE WORKSHOP

by Nicole Herrera UNM OT Graduate-Student



Working in agriculture is considered one of the most dangerous jobs in America. Several aspects need to be taken into consideration to prevent any potential injuries. All year round it is of utmost importance to ensure safety on the job, as neglecting to do so can result in damage that may affect one's ability to perform when working in agriculture.

General Guidelines

There are several strategies that can be used to make agricultural tasks safe for individuals. You want to ensure you are using the correct tool for the specific task, incorporating adaptive tools or assistive technology, and using the proper protective equipment when needed. It is important to remove any jewelry, pay attention to unstable items when placing them on the floor or table, and washing hands often to prevent the spread of infection or disease.

Lastly, be aware of any tripping hazards, as they can be very costly.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In general, PPE is intended as a protective barrier from many hazards. When choosing the appropriate equipment, it is important that the item has been approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for eye, face, respiratory, and hearing protection.

All PPE should be the correct fit to one's body size and posture. Conducting routine



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/>

maintenance checks on PPE is essential in ensuring safety in the facility.

Eye protection should always be worn when there is potential injury to the eyes or face from particles, toxic chemicals, and other hazards. Protectives must always remain clean and free of contaminants.

Exposure to high levels of noise can result in hearing loss, so hearing protection should be worn when the level is 85 decibels or greater, over an 8-hour period.

Head protection should be worn for potential falling objects, or low-hanging objects.

Proper foot protection is recommended to prevent any chemical/heat burns from any spills by chemicals, slipping, or electrical shocks. Foot protection also aids in protection against the dropping of heavy objects.

Cleanliness

One critical way to ensure safety in the facility is to keep areas clean for disease prevention. It is important to be aware of hiding places for pesky rodents and consider setting baits or traps if needed.

Thoroughly disinfect tools and equipment after every use. Use disposable gloves and boots when necessary to protect the livestock and yourself. Use safety procedures for proper storage of PPE



and cleaning supplies. Replace any disinfectant solution regularly to minimize tracking any potential diseases into areas of livestock.

Adequate Lighting

Indoor lighting for shop facilities is a fundamental aspect to ensure safe and efficient production. When working indoors, the lighting system should produce the proper energy efficiency and have a strong bulb life. It is important to remember that as bulbs and fixtures get dirty overtime and can create a decrease in light levels. Additionally, environmental factors of the facility play a role (i.e., temperature or dust) in shortening the lifespan of a bulb.

References:

Harmon, Jay D. and Petersen, Dana, "FarmEnergy: Indoor lighting for livestock, poultry, and farm shop facilities" (2011). *Agriculture and Environment Extension Publications*. 32. http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/extension_ag_pubs/32

Cleaning and Disinfection Tips. (2020, March 23). Retrieved from <https://www.healthyagriculture.org/prevent/sanitation/cleaning-disinfection/>

Choosing the correct lighting:

Compact fluorescent lights (CFL)

CFLs work best in facilities that require lighting to stay on for prolonged periods. CFL lights do not usually work in extreme temperatures as this causes the bulb life to be shortened.

Light emitting diodes (LED)

LEDs are far more efficient than incandescent lighting and are considered long lasting for up to 100,000 hours. These lights are susceptible to moisture, heat, and dust damage, making their application limited.

High intensity discharge (HID) lamps

HID work best for ceilings that are higher than 12 feet (high bay applications). Keep in mind that these lamps are not suited for short periods of time because they require several minutes to warm up before they reach their full lumen output.

Although there are many different types of lighting that can be used in a facility, it is important to take many aspects into consideration to prevent injuries and promote safety.

Overall, the choice of lighting should be able to meet the basic needs of the tasks required within the workspace while maintaining safety.

PARTNER UPDATES

NMSU



New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension, with Extension agents in all 33 NM counties, has the capacity to move reliable and evidence-based information out to consumers for use in living satisfying and high-quality lives in rural, agricultural, and urban areas.

Extension agents live and work in the communities they serve, and through their networks, can serve as a resource for linking interested/eligible individuals to the NMAP.

NMAP plans to work with the NM Tribal Extension Program to deliver community-based education to the state's 23 Native American tribes. This outreach involves both educational and training programs.

Further, Extension State Specialists are resources for research-based

information. Specialists can assist NMAP in addressing identified educational and training needs through fact sheets, circulars,

guides, media-based delivery, and informal presentations. NMSU will host and assist in the development of mobile and web content; manage the branding, promotion, and marketing; and engage in marketing and promoting NMAP to farmers, ranchers, and others.

Most importantly, NMSU will serve as the critical foundation for all the partners' mutual activities for team building, coordination, and service delivery.

NMTAP



The New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP), is still open and providing services during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the last few months have certainly looked different for many individuals and organizations, NMTAP's responsibility to the farmers and ranchers of the state remains the same. We are available to provide on-site assessments to farmers and ranchers with disabilities. This assessment will help determine if technology or process adaptations will be beneficial in accomplishing farm tasks.

For aspects of assessments conducted at the farm/ranch, staff will wear their own Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and maintain a distance of six feet in accordance to the public health order. Call on us and/or help us spread the word about this free service that can improve the quality of life of some of our most important workers in the State of New Mexico.

Also, in the coming months NMTAP will offer FREE virtual online trainings to farmers and ranchers with disabilities, their families, and professionals regarding assistive devices that can be used on a farm or ranch. These trainings will be performed over ZOOM and will feature overviews of the program, information about assistive devices and live demonstration when possible.



Photo: USDA

During the time of COVID-19, we are trying to find creative ways to continue providing useful and needed resources. Sharing over a virtual platform ensures the safety of our staff while allowing individuals to gain educational information from the safety of their homes.

For more information about farm site assessments or the virtual trainings, please contact us at 505-841-4450 and visit:

<http://www.tap.gcd.state.nm.us/>

MANDY'S FARM



Welcome to a new year and a new growing season in New Mexico! Mandy's Farm finished out our 2020 season with a long sigh of relief, after navigating the same new challenges as many other community farms faced as food growers in a COVID-positive world. Mandy's Farm is not only a working farm in the South Valley of Albuquerque, but also a disability service provider, a nonprofit organization, and the home of the apprenticeship portion of the New Mexico AgrAbility Project, focused on training and small business incubation for new farmers with disabilities.

Over the past year, much of what we do has looked very different. Much of our focus during this time (especially given the very few staff members who are able to be on-site) has been focused on curriculum development, increasing physical accessibility of our agriculture spaces, and developing best-practices related to site safety. This winter, we worked alongside a new group of Occupational Therapy interns from the University of New Mexico. They were able to tackle a variety of projects including creating a plan for Mandy's Farm to increase access and safety in the barn, specifically the feed room. They also supported our program apprentices as they work to build their farm business plans. They also created a guide for practical OT exercises in the garden, taught virtual community classes on



medicinal herbs, and led a farm stretching workshop. The OT interns always help us to work smarter not harder.

As we look forward to the new opportunities and growth that come with spring, Mandy's Farm is also gearing up for our next apprenticeship season. This year we will be starting the season virtually, supplemented with specialized in-person support for the diverse group of apprentices we are welcoming. We are excited to test the waters as we deliver our curriculum virtually, and invite anyone to attend. The virtual classes will be open to community members who want to follow along with the apprentices this season. This will provide an opportunity for new and experienced farmers to grow their food alongside our apprentices, building new strengths and sharing in victories and failures throughout the season. Our curriculum offers an all-abilities approach for those who have an interest in learning more about food growing for themselves and their communities. The curriculum is focused on safety, physical health, adaptive tools and accessible farming practices.

If you have an interest in following along with us this growing season please contact April Cox, the Adapted Farming Specialist:

april@mandysfarm.org



Photo from: File:Rad 062001 hand x-ray false color nevit.jpg
From Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository

On November 5, 2020 Occupational Therapy Graduate Students and AgrAbility Interns Celina Aguilar, Nicole Herrera and faculty from the University of New Mexico presented a webinar on *Hand Protection and Ergonomics for Agricultural Workers* to about 50 occupational therapy, physical therapy, and assistive technology professionals from across New Mexico.

Topics of the webinar included the impact agriculture has on hands, and need for hand protection and ergonomics as well as recognizing tools, technologies, and modifications to decrease hand injury.

Participants in the webinar earned 2.0 continuing education unit hours (CEUs) at no cost. The webinar was free and was recorded.

Additional professionals who would like to earn the CEUs at no cost, can watch the webinar, complete a short exam, and feedback exit form to receive a certificate of completion.

Contact: Carla Wilhite at UNM-Occupational Therapy Graduate Program for the link to the webinar and instructions at:

UNM-OTGP



cwilhite@salud.unm.edu

The interns are also working on several projects at Mandy's Farm to create curriculum for the adapted farming program and make accessibility recommendations to the feed room in the livestock barn at the Clark Street location.

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

FROM THE NATIONAL AGRABILITY TOOLBOX

The Fiskars Shock-Absorbing Hammer is designed to reduce by four times the shock and vibration that a wooden-handled hammer transfers to the body. The tool features a patented insulation sleeve that reportedly “captures” the initial strike shock before it reaches the hand, and a dual-insulated ergonomic handle that “dampens” lingering vibration. Other features include magnetic nail groove in the head for one-hand nail starting and sculptured, dimpled, Softgrip handle for comfort and control. (Three types are available-general use, finishing, and framing.)

Source Fiskars Brands, Inc.
7800 Discovery Dr.
Middleton, WI, 53562
Website www2.fiskars.com
Phone 866-348-5661
Cost: Approx. \$55



Vendor photo

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Vendor photo

MONSTERBALLWISE MULTI-POSITIONING VISE

Available in floor and bench-top models, the Monsterballwise Multi-Positioning Vise allows the user to position a secured object in any direction and at any angle (from perpendicular to horizontal) and hold it firmly immobile. The device consists of a metal frame on top of which is a work-plate protruding from a ball that can be maneuvered to any desired position then locked in that position. This allows one to work at any angle, from any direction, and (for the floor model) at any height. Among the benefits: accommodates direction of hand and arm motion, reduces joint and tendon damage from repetitive motion, and allows more convenient access of the tools being used.

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Phone 402-730-4590
Est. Cost: (Contact supplier for current pricing)



Tarping a cotton module, USDA Photo