WINTER 2019

New Mexico AgrAbility

Cultivating Accessible Agriculture

Project News

Lincoln County

CONTENTS

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

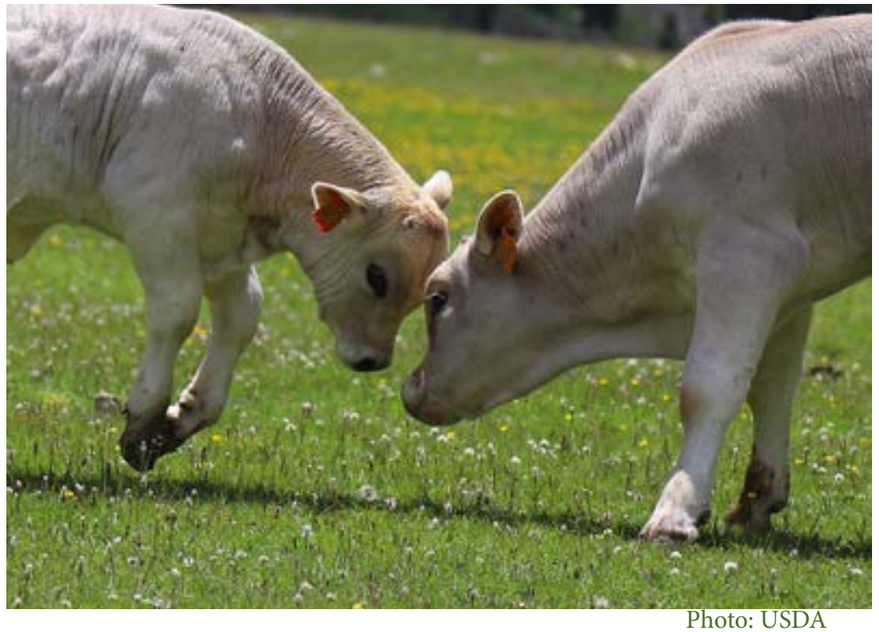


Photo: USDA

It is a happy talent to know how to play.

Ralph Waldo Emerson
American writer
1803–1882

PROJECT DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

NMAP Begins Second Year of Grant Project

It's Newsletter Number 2! I'm happy to report that our first New Mexico AgrAbility Program Newsletter (Summer 2019) was a big success. Team members sent the newsletter through email contacts, the postal service, and posted a copy to the program website. We received many responses from individuals interested in knowing more about the program and from organizations eager to discover how we might partner or collaborate. Feel free to share this link with others who may be interested in reading the newsletter or finding information about NMAP at: agrability.nmsu.edu

NMAP just entered Year 2 of the four-year funding (2018 – 2022). Our team is busy organizing an NMAP Advisory Council. We developed a Charter to guide the purpose and scope of work. For the first year, team members contacted individuals they thought might be interested in serving. Membership consists of at least five (5) members who are asked to serve a one-year commitment.

It is our intention to invite Advisory Council members who represent stakeholder partners from diverse geographic, cultural, and ethnic organizations and communities. Our target audience includes veterans groups, disability organizations, Native American organizations, vocational rehabilitation, Hispanic organizations, other ethnic groups, women's groups, and farm business/marketing groups.

Advisory Council members will be a tremendous influence to the effectiveness of the NMAP team as it works to carry out specific and complex roles. Council members will:

- complement the skills of the NMAP team members.
- share professional expertise, insights, and experiences to leverage increased value for the AgrAbility customer.
- engage and participate in strategic discussions that will help shape the project's future.

In future newsletters, I'll use some of this space to introduce our Advisory Council Members.

Cordially yours,

Sonja Koukel, Project Director
New Mexico Agrability Project

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER INTRODUCTION

NMAP Welcomes Dr. Francisco Soto Mas, Associate Professor with UNM College of Population Health. He is a social and behavioral scientist with more than 25 years of professional experience in medicine and public health.

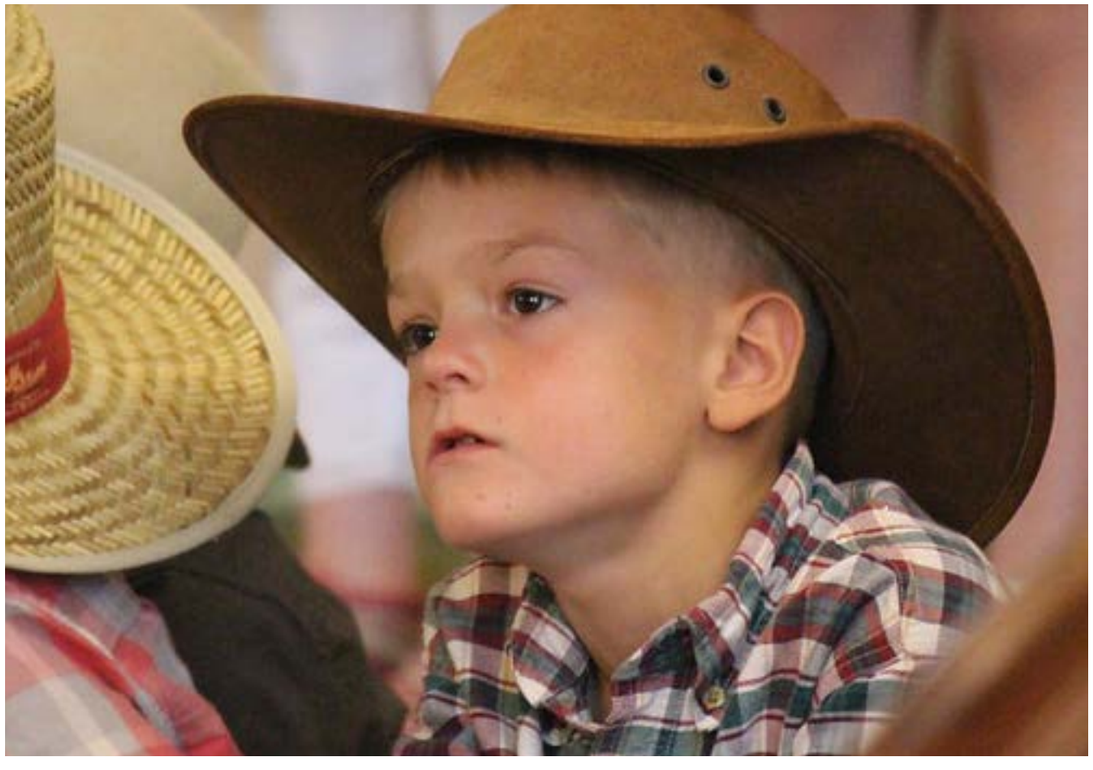
His expertise includes community assessment and program planning and evaluation. He is involved with the SW Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education, and conducts research with organic farmers.

If you are interested in serving on the Advisory Council, please use the contact information included in this newsletter and let us know. Members serve on a rotating basis, so the team will always be on the lookout for new members.

Dr. Francisco Soto Mas

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

Eduardo Medina
Program Assistant
Toll Free: 1-800-289-6577
Office: 1-575-646-2925
Email: **emw@ad.nmsu.edu**



Photos: Creative Commons

SAFE PLAY MATTERS ON THE FARM AND RANCH

By Carla Wilhite, OTD, OTR/L

The highest rate of injuries in agriculture involves children younger than 10 years

About 10 percent of children in the United States have a disability that prevents them from enjoying play opportunities with family members and peers, although play is an important part of childhood for every child, regardless of ability. Play helps develop physical, emotional, sensory and intellectual capacities, as well as imagination and social skills.

Children learn best when they are allowed self-direction in exploring and engaging in the play environment, as well as having interaction with peers and family members. If children with disabilities are disadvantaged in their abilities to develop through play, they are more likely to be disadvantaged as adults entering the workforce.

Play also has a role in developing a child's sense of connection to agriculture and family. What childhood would be complete without toys that teach about caring for animals or working with agricultural machinery and tools? However, farms and ranches are industrial worksites, not playgrounds. More than 100 children are killed and more than 32,000 children are seriously injured annually on the nation's 2.13 million U.S. farms.

Most children neither recognize the inherent dangers of machinery, chemicals, livestock, ponds, ditches and confined storage spaces nor remember rules intended to keep them safe around common worksite hazards. In addition, agricultural worksites are dynamic, and changing circumstances often create a need for new safety rules.

To keep children of all abilities safe around agricultural worksites, safe play areas can be created. Safe play areas provide locations where children can participate in a variety of activities away from hazards. Addressing accessibility needs when creating play areas also ensures all family members and friends, including children, parents and grandparents with disabilities, can benefit from interaction during play.

Strategies for Safe and Accessible Play

Safe, accessible play areas on farms and ranches should be thoughtfully designed, but creating a play area should be fun, so try turning designing a play area into a family activity or service project for clubs.

Many sources provide suggestions for creating safe play areas, but the first step should always be to create ways to limit access and exposure to hazards. The primary hazards to consider include traffic, agricultural production and environmental concerns. Exposure to these hazards often can be limited by the location of the play area or a barrier used to separate the play area from the rest of the farm or ranch.

Once a site that limits access to hazards is selected, child development principles and safety guidelines can be used to craft activities and play equipment for the play area. Including manufactured play equipment and items from the natural environment provides a variety of ways a child can play and can help maintain a child's interest in the play area.

Sources
Creating Safe Play Areas on Farms. (2003). N. Esser, S. Heiberger, and B. Lee (Eds.). Marshfield, WI: Marshfield Clinic.
Interactive Demonstrations of Safe Play Areas. (2006). R.M. Fisher and B.C. Lee (Eds.). Marshfield, WI: Marshfield Clinic.

National Center on Accessibility
www.ncaonline.org

Planning and Preparing Play Areas

Six easy steps to creating a safe play area:

1. Locate a site to be developed into a safe play area. The location should provide maximum play options with minimum exposure to hazards.

2. Sketch the ideal play area for that site. Consider ways to promote fantasy, manipulative, swinging, climbing and riding activities. Plan for modifications in play activities as children grow.

3. Determine materials needed. Create or buy materials for different activities.

4. Build the play area. Older children can assist if supervised.

5. Use the play area. Explain safety rules, and post signs. Think about immediate modifications and future changes based on how the area gets used.

6. Maintain and improve the safe play area. Develop a routine maintenance plan that includes keeping grass mowed, checking equipment for loose or broken parts and reviewing safety rules for visitors. Make improvements and modifications as children outgrow play equipment and materials.

Routine maintenance should include:

- Cutting grass and removing snow
- Raking and replacing ground cover
- Checking for hazards
- Sealing, staining or painting wooden structures to prevent deterioration
- Applying anti-rust treatment to metal
- Replacing plastic equipment that shows cracks
- Regularly replacing sand and water to avoid contamination
- Modifying play areas as children grow and require greater challenges

Want to Start a Public Playground Project?

After reading this issue, perhaps you will be inspired to start a public accessible playground project in your rural community, but you may not know how to get things started. The National Center for Boundless Playgrounds already has given some consideration to start-up projects and has several free resources to assist communities in planning and carrying out playground projects. The center recommends putting together a committee willing to dedicate two to three years of work and designating a project coordinator with strong leadership
abilities and experience working with volunteers. The committee will have many duties, including locating a site with favorable characteristics, fundraising and budgeting, negotiation with public officials, learning and following ADA guidelines for playgrounds, purchasing equipment and hiring professional construction services.

For more information contact:
Boundless Playgrounds, 45 Wintonbury Ave., Bloomfield, CT 06002
(860) 243-8315, Fax: (860) 243-5854
www.boundlessplaygrounds.org

STRATEGIES FOR SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE PLAY

Safe play should include:

- Competent supervision
- Changing play opportunities as children grow and develop
- Safety rules for all children
- Consequences for breaking safety rules

Safe, accessible play areas should be:

- Connected to the home by a 60-inch wide hard-surface path, such as concrete,synthetic lumber or compacted crushed gravel
- Connected by 60-inch wide paths between each play element that are free from obstructions, have 1/2-inch or smaller transitions between surfaces and use beveling or rounding of edges to minimize contact injuries
- Designated by boundaries or physical barriers such as fences, gates or shrubs
- Away from hazards such as vehicle traffic, machinery or unstable structures
- Away from loud noises
- Free from open water
- Adequately shaded from sun
- Adequately sheltered from wind, dust or hazardous airborne particles
- Protected with a strong barrier separating children from farm animals
- Within sight and sound of a responsible adult
- Close to drinking water, first aid, hand washing and toilet facilities
- Small or large enough to match the amount of space needed to play safely

- Easily and regularly maintained with grass mowed and snow removed
- Where there is minimal risk of snakes, fire ants or other “critters” that interrupt play or pose a health hazard

Safe, accessible play equipment should be:

- Appropriate for the ages of children who are using it
- Spaced with other pieces of equipment to minimize risk of injury
- Free from entrapment hazards – spaces greater than 3 ½ inches but less than 9 inches – that can prevent withdrawal of a child’s body or head
- Without bolt ends, edges or other protrusions extending beyond 1/8 inch, which can catch strings or clothing worn around a child’s neck or cause skin injury
- Reachable using steps that are at least 24 inches wide, 14 inches deep and 8 inches high
- Accessible by wheelchair, with platforms large enough to turn; platforms should be at least 24 inches wide, 14 inches deep and 11-18 inches high
- Absent of lead-based paint, creosote and wood treatment
- Devoid of pinch, crush, shearing and sharp-edge hazards that could cut skin or crush a body part
- Surfaced with appropriate ground material that is accessible and maintained at an appropriate depth to cushion a fall; loose materials are not as accessible as rubber or geotextile mats
- Surrounded by a use zone that includes appropriate ground surfacing with a border and multiple accessible entry points
- Smooth to avoid wood or metal slivers
- Constructed of materials that do not absorb excessive heat from sun
- Securely anchored to prevent overturns
- Played with as intended
- Well maintained by an adult

Additional accessibility concerns include:

- Can play features be approached using a wheelchair, crutches or a walker?
- Can children transfer to equipment or activity areas by pulling next to the equipment or area? Crawling onto or into it? Laying over it? Are hand holds provided to assist with transitions?
- Is equipment exited near where children left their mobility devices?
- Can children access the same play areas and gathering places as siblings or other peers? Are ramps, bridges or berms available to assist with access? Is the tallest point of the play area accessible to all children?
- Are pathways to natural materials that can be gathered for play provided?
- Are tables or other raised surfaces at multiple heights and accessible from the ground or a wheelchair?
- Are doorways and gates wide enough for wheelchairs and walkers?

Promoting success in agriculture

PARTNER UPDATES

NMSU

Rooster, photo courtesy C. Wilhite

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.

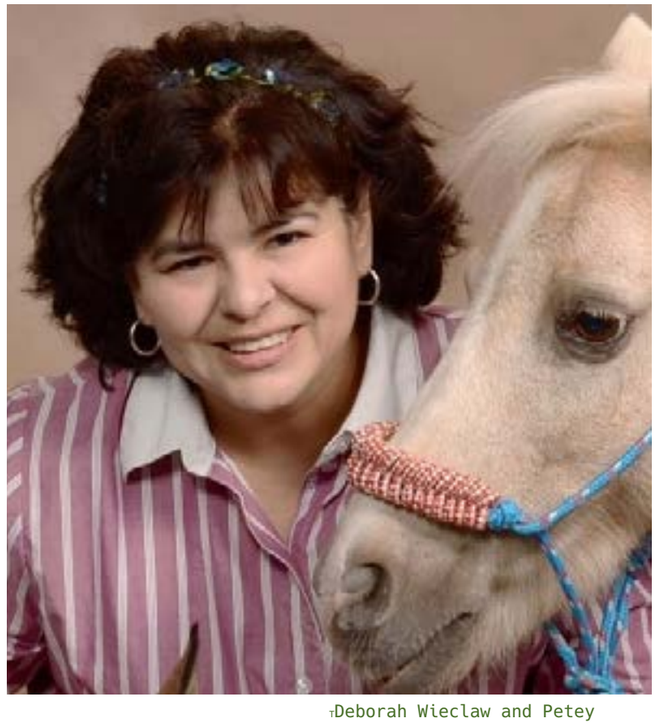
Extension agents live and work in the communities they serve, and through their networks, can serve as a resource for linking interested/eligible individuals to the NMAP.

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 driving the mission of the project.

Eduardo Medina will serve as NMSU NMAP Program Assistant to maximize the impact of AgrAbility deliverables.

NMTAP



Deborah Wieclaw and Petey

We would like to welcome Deborah Wieclaw as the latest addition to the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program. She was hired in August, 2019 as the program's AgrAbility Specialist.

Having earned a Bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico, she also holds a Master's degree in Agriculture from New Mexico State University. Deborah is from, and continues to live in, the South Valley of Albuquerque.

Deborah has an extensive history working in animal husbandry, including pets, livestock and exotic animals. As a youth, Deborah competed in horse shows, rodeos, and participated in 4H.

She also has a diverse history working with individuals with traumatic brain injury, intellectual developmental disabilities and age related challenges. Her goal has always been to help individuals to not just simply live, but to live purposely by adapting and overcoming obstacles.

Deborah's primary role with AgrAbility is consumer education in adaptive technologies, including Assistive Technology devices or modified processes. She is available to provide resources for the agricultural community and agencies that support employment in farming and ranching.

Deborah is also a direct support to food growers and their families through assessing work and/or home access, providing advice on helpful adaptations.

For additional information, give her a call today at 505-841-4583!

REST IN PEACE
BETSY
NOVEMBER
2019

MANDY'S FARM

Story by Evangeline Randall & Callie Ward, OTS

Many hours at the south valley farm were dedicated to our harvest of pumpkins (over 700 pounds!), cantaloupe, zucchini, green beans, herbs, radishes, squash, kale, swiss chard, eggplants, flowers, and peppers.

During the harvest, we all took opportunities to share knowledge and experiences - in harvesting techniques, appropriate vegetable sizes, safe body mechanics, and even insect identification (curse the squash bug!). The occupational therapy interns introduced a game called Water Check! to maintain motivation to stay hydrated as the months got cooler.

Breaks between harvesting and other farming activities offered opportunities for play and curiosity. Movement breaks often included the chickens, and our AgrAbility mascot, Blue the dog. Sometimes they featured yoga, intentional breathing, or dancing. They always included laughter.

Harvest Fest, an annual celebration at Mandy's Farm, was a point of conversation the food growers spoke about with anticipation and excitement.

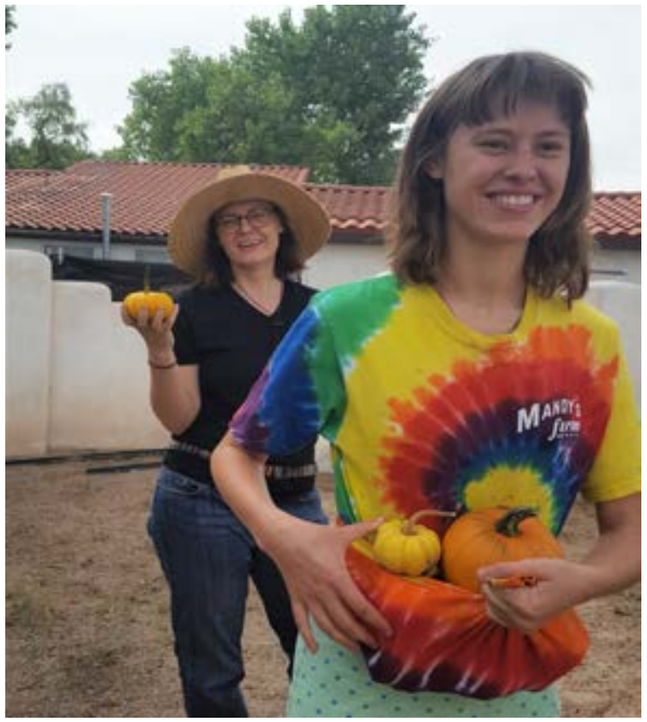
All that we harvested and transferred to storage represented the program's growth and there was so much work to be done before it would be ready for Harvest Fest.

We pickled vegetables, infused herbs into oils and vinegars, baked many, many praline cupcakes with puree made from our cantaloupes, made goat milk lotions and soaps, and bagged up our sunflower seeds to sell.

We spent slower moments finger painting canvas bags for customers to buy in order to decrease our use of single-use plastic bags. And lastly, we prepared and honed our skills of running a table in a market-type setting. The food growers patiently practiced communication with customers, marketing their product, handling money, bagging products, and working as a team.

When Harvest Fest arrived, it was a day that began with excitement and anticipatory anxiety. As the day progressed we watched the food growers develop confidence and initiate conversations with passersby. We saw them naturally move into roles they flourished in and support each other in preferred modes of communication with customers.

The food growers were also invited to share some of their knowledge about nutrition with another job training program offered through Mandy's Farm. The nutrition presentation was an opportunity for the food growers to share their understanding of



Evangeline (in back) and Farm Intern, Mandy's Farm. Photo Courtesy April Wood

the difference between natural and processed foods and the impact that food has on our health and well-being.

Both of these events created an opportunity for apprentices to realize and demonstrate their own and each other's strengths. The kitchen was a place we spent much of our time, taking freshly harvested produce from the garden and cooking delicious foods for our taste buds to feast on.

With time, the food growers became more comfortable making sure we all kept kitchen safety in the forefront of our minds as we cooked up a storm. With the holidays approaching, the food growers roasted two of the 80+ pumpkins harvested and baked several tasty pumpkin pies.

In the process of making our pumpkin pie we scooped out the seeds, sprinkled them with our homemade Cajun and savory herb seasonings, and roasted them for a healthy snack.

With sustainability in mind, we tried to use every part of the food we grew. Food scraps provided a source of nourishment for our chicken flock and the edible parts nourished our human bellies.

That being said, part of our routine cooking tasks included mixing and baking chicken treats, fittingly referred to as "flock blocks" which the chickens enjoyed pecking and we enjoyed watching. Everybody eats good on the farm!

Through our busy days of using our hands to water, harvest, pull weeds, collect, build, and create, the OT interns have had the unique opportunity to learn about the food grower's skills, strengths, and interests.

As we begin to look towards the sunset of our rotation, we are in winterizing mode. We have put the fields to rest. Our recently sowed garlic and winter rye will grow over the dormant months, a reminder that life continues to forge through cold conditions.

After Thanksgiving, we will began establishing our aquaponics system and growing mushrooms. These are two new food growing adventures that will expand and diversify the knowledge base for all participants in the adapted farming program.

The more connected we become with the land and its vital role in sustaining life, we recognize that death is a natural part of the cycle.

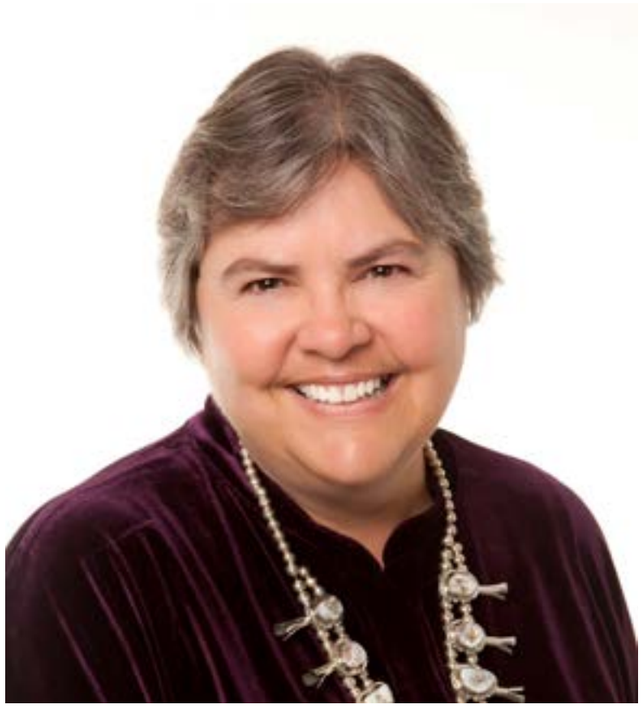
Betsy, one of the older red hens of our chicken flock, passed away this fall. We'd like to take a moment to honor her life, funny personality and valuable contribution to the food growers experience.

With her passing, we have also welcomed four guinea hen chicks to the farm's population. Our resident rooster, Valentine, established his position among the flock with his first crow.

As many farmers know, even though the growing season has come to an end the farmer's work is never done. And so we look forward to new seedlings the AgrAbility program cultivates in the time to come.

UNM-OTGP

AGRABILITY TEAM MEMBER RECOGNIZED BY HER PROFESSION



Carla Wilhite, OTD, OTR/L

Dr. Carla Wilhite is being recognized as a Fellow with the American Occupational Therapy Association for her contributions to education and agricultural health.

The Roster of Fellows recognizes occupational therapists who through their knowledge, expertise, leadership, advocacy, and/or guidance have made a significant contribution over time to the profession with a measured impact on consumers of occupational therapy services and/or members of the Association.

For over twenty years, Carla has been working with farmers and ranchers with disabilities, health challenges, and aging issues which affect participation in agriculture.

Her role with the New Mexico AgrAbility Project is as a Co-Investigator, but she wears many hats by supporting occupational therapy students in fieldwork experiences with project partners, conducting educational events for health care professionals, and providing assistance with direct services and farm visits when called on. Carla is a full-time faculty member of the Occupational Therapy Graduate Program at UNM, but also serves as an advisor to the National AgrAbility Project, volunteer Board Chair of AgriSafe (a total farmer health non-profit organization), Vice Chair of the AOTA-Affliated State Association Presidents, Vice Chair of the UNM Health Sciences Faculty Council, and many other service activities.

However, nothing makes Carla happier than going on a farm visit and sitting on a John Deere tractor.

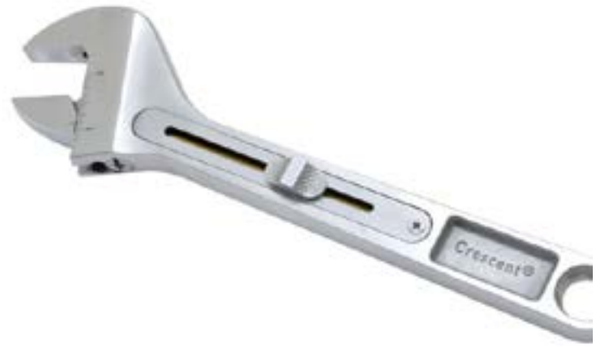
TECHNOLOGY CORNER

BARB WIRE GATE CLOSER

Bolted onto the fence post adjacent to the gate, this Barbed-Wire Gate Closer works by simply cranking the handle, which draws the cable that loops over the gate post toward the fence post, not only closing the gate, but also stretching it tight. A pin is then inserted to keep it secure. The device, made of zinc-plated tubular steel, is double handled, allowing for operation from either side, and can be locked by replacing the pin with a padlock. The gate cable reportedly has a 2,000-pound breaking strength.

Source Koinzan Enterprises, Inc.
P.O. Box 272
607 North 2nd Street
Elgin, NE, 68636
Website: www.koinzanenterprises.com
Email info@koinzanenterprises.com
Phone 402-843-5800
Est. Cost $25

Retrieved from the National AgrAbility Toolbox: http://www.agrability.org/toolbox/?solution=1262



RAPIDSLIDE 10-INCH ADJUSTABLE WRENCH

To adjust the jaws of Crescent's RapidSlide Adjustable Wrench, one merely moves the button-slider on the handle either up or down, instead of having to finger-twist a spiral-thread knob. The adjusting mechanism is a rod with spiral grooves inside the handle; the slide-button rotates the rod which opens and closes the jaws.

The tool is made of forged steel with a chrome finish, has a jaw capacity of 1 1/4 inches (10-inch model) or 1 inch (8-inch model), a wide handle for increased leverage, and a SAE/metric size indicator marked on the jaw.

Est. Cost: $20 10 inch wrench

Retrieved from the National AgrAbility Toolbox: http://www.agrability.org/toolbox/?solution=906

OUR PROJECT STAFF

Sonja Koukel, PhD, Professor/Extension Health Specialist. As the Project Director, Sonja provides leadership to the team to ensure adherence to the work plan. She is responsible for reporting to USDA NIFA and sharing information with the National AgrAbility Program.

Paul Gutierrez, PhD, Professor/Extension Agricultural and Business Management Specialist. Paul brings his networking leadership to the project through his work with rural community development and outreach to Native American and Hispanic agriculture producers, as well as, farmers and ranchers.

Bryce Jorgenson, PhD, Assistant Professor/Extension Family Resource Management Specialist. Bryce serves as the project evaluator.

Eduardo Medina, Master of Agriculture specializing in Agribusiness (MAG-AB). As the program assistant, Eduardo assists in promoting the New Mexico AgrAbility Project and serves as the main point of contact.

Carla Wilhite, OTD, Assistant Professor/ Occupational Therapist. Carla brings 19 years of experience in providing AgrAbility services and previously managed AgrAbility programs in Colorado and Oklahoma. A researcher focused on farmer health issues, her involvement with NMAP involves providing leadership, educating project participants, and supervising occupational therapy students' fieldwork.

Tracy Agiovlasitis, Director of the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP)/Program Coordinator. Tracy, a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), shares her extensive knowledge and expertise in disability issues and assistive technology as an educator for the project activities of New Mexico AgrAbility.

Deborah Weiclaw, MS (Animal Science), New Mexico AgrAbility Specialist for the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program. Deborah conducts the worksite assessments for the farmers and ranchers throughout the state of New Mexico and makes assistive technology recommendations for people with disabilities in agriculture to continue working safely.

Melissa McCue, Bachelor's in Human Rehabilitation Services and Communications Disorders and is a Fellow with the Center for Development and Disability, University of New Mexico. Melissa is the Director of Mandy's Farm/Program Coordinator. She contributes to program develoment of the Apprentiship Program, assists in meeting the goals of the work plan, and provides reports to NMSU. Mandy's Farm is the non-profit partner.

April Cox, Associate's Degree in Integrated Studies. April brings extensive experience in agricultural management to Mandy's Farn. She developed, designed, and leads the implementation of the NMAP Apprenticeship Program that provides information for farmers' wanting to learn about adapative practices and those looking for assistance so they can return to their work.

Jessie Calero, BA, MA in Education. Jessie brings experience within adult programming for individuals with developmental disabilities. She has developed, designed, and implemented new programs across all departments during her time at Mandy's Farm. Jessie serves as the Development Director.

Photo: courtesy C. Wilhite

Yucca in snow near Carrizozo