

News from the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project

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Educator SUCCESS Spotlight: Sara West

AgrAbility Curriculum and Educator are One of a Kind

Sara West always felt like she needed to give something back to the state of Oklahoma. Sara (pictured below) takes that to heart as she is an Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Science (FCS)/4-H Educator from Marshall County. When she first started working on her Master's degree in Human Development and Family Science from Oklahoma State University, Sara had an inspiring idea about working with AgrAbility. "I first found out about the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project from Dr. Jan Johnston, Principal Investigator for the program, who was also my academic advisor."



From there, Sara began to brainstorm with Dr. Johnston about AgrAbility and how she might be able to promote it amongst her colleagues. "I really wanted to be able to show support to the AgrAbility Project by sharing information with Extension employees along with the families we work with. This really was a best kept secret as AgrAbility can help a diverse population."

As a result of her passion for Extension, Sara began creating a program entitled "Action in AgrAbility", which eventually developed into a curriculum designed for school-age youth. "As Cooperative Extension and 4-H have witnessed since the early 1900's, one of the best ways of educating adults is through their own children. Thus from that idea "Action in AgrAbility" was formed."

The main objectives from Sara's work are educating youth on the aging process and living with a disability and how it affects the livelihood of farmers, ranchers and their families. Her work also raises awareness of the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project. "Through the activities in the curriculum, youth use critical thinking skills to not only advocate for the AgrAbility Project and older adults, but to also plan and complete a service project for an older adult in their communities."

Sara hopes that "Action in AgrAbility" educates families across Oklahoma and possibly other states with an AgrAbility Project about the needs of older adults, as well as the resources available to assist them.

Sara notes that new and unique outreach opportunities to promote "Action in AgrAbility" are very important to her because "as professionals, we tend to lean towards the audiences we are most comfortable with. Even though I started exploring this topic because of the Gerontology focus of my degree, I still come from a 4-H background." Sara and Oklahoma AgrAbility Program Coordinator Kevin Bell conducted a workshop entitled, "Take Action with AgrAbility" on July 29th, 2010 in Stillwater, OK at the 89th Annual 4-H Roundup. Ten 4-H students learned what it would be like to live with a disability through educational demonstrations (pictured below). Sara went on to state that she believes demonstrations like these are "important for youth to understand that our population is aging, and what this means to rural Oklahomans."

It's safe to say that with Sara West's work she is giving back to not only Oklahomans, but making a difference for future generations to come beyond our state's borders.



4-H Students learning what it is like to live with a disability.



Partner Updates



Paige Eckert
Oklahoma AgrAbility
Graduate Research Assistant

Paige Eckert is Oklahoma AgrAbility's new Graduate Research Assistant. Paige is a 2010 graduate of Oklahoma State University. She is working towards her

Master's degree at Oklahoma State in Gerontology in the Human Development and Family Science Department. She will work with Oklahoma AgrAbility and the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension (OCES) to help collect information and input, and create helpful resources from it. These resources are beneficial as they can help us continue to serve our audiences throughout Oklahoma. The addition of Paige to the team will help AgrAbility continue to impact the quality of life for Oklahomans through our services.

Please feel free to reach out to Paige at paige.eckert@okstate.edu.



Lynn Jeffries PT, Ph.D., PCS
Langston University
Director of the Doctor of
Physical Therapy Program
(DPT)

Lynn is the Langston University (LU) partner representative of Oklahoma AgrAbility. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Therapy, a Master of Science in Pediatric Physical Therapy, and a Doctorate in Allied Health Sciences, all from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Lynn has worked in many different programs providing physical therapy for children with disabilities and supporting their families. As the LU partner representative, Lynn provides education to DPT students, rehabilitation professionals, and community members related to AgrAbility. She also participates in project activities and networking opportunities.

Please feel free to reach out to Dr. Jeffries at lmjeffries@lunet.edu.

Oklahoma AgrAbility Welcomes 4 New Advisory Council Members

Debbie Davenport, B.J. Nevels, Charles Rohla, and Sandra Wade-Penn have accepted nominations to become a part of the Oklahoma AgrAbility Council. Ms. Davenport is Director for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Injury Prevention programs for the Choctaw Indian Nation. Mr. Nevels serves as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Oklahoma City. Dr. Rohla is assistant professor in agriculture research and agriculture consultant at the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation in Ardmore, OK. Ms. Penn serves as the Program Manager in the Center for Outreach Programs at Langston University. Each advisory council member represents organizations that are involved with agriculture, health care and services for Oklahomans with disabilities. They serve as valuable connections to a wide variety of organizations that support and collaborate with Oklahoma AgrAbility.

Oklahoma AgrAbility Staff

Oklahoma State University

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

Jan Johnston, Principal Investigator & Co-Director
Kevin Bell, Program Coordinator

Oklahoma ABLE Tech

Linda Jaco, Co-Director
Sandra Stevenson, Case Manager
Stacy Bauter, Program Assistant
Milissa Gofourth, Program Manager

Langston University

School of Physical Therapy

Lynn Jeffries, Co-Director

Contact Oklahoma AgrAbility

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Arthritis and Exercise

Living with arthritis has the capacity to be debilitating, especially in an agriculture-related occupation such as farming or ranching. The impact of this condition can be intense on farmers and ranchers because it limits their physical strength, flexibility, and movement. Arthritis can cause pain and inflammation in the joints that limit mobility. With arthritis, many farm-related activities in daily operations including utilizing large, heavy machinery and working with large animals can be overwhelming.

Helpful News about Exercise

The good news is that farmers and ranchers have the opportunity to improve both their overall health and possibly even their work performance by becoming more physically active. For many years it was thought that people living with arthritis should not exercise because it would damage their joints. Now doctors and therapists know that's not the case at all. As a farmer or rancher, you are the only one who can make the commitment to start moving now.



Exercise Precautions

Before you begin any exercise program, you should consult your healthcare provider to see what type of exercises are best for you. You may even want to see a physical therapist for an assessment of your specific exercise needs. A physical therapist can help you get started with an exercise program, plan out physical activities to avoid damage to your joints, and start making realistic goals. Exercise recommendations on arthritis in this article are based upon the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) guidelines.

So, what exercises should you do? There are several kinds of exercises and each has a different purpose. Aerobic exercises may be able to improve your overall health and to control your weight. Flexibility exercises can help keep your joints healthy and moving. Strengthening exercises can allow you to build muscle around your joints so they are supported during daily farm activities. All three kinds of exercise are important for farmers, ranchers and others living with arthritis.

Aerobic Exercises

If you are able to walk, then walking is a good option for starting an exercise routine. Walking is a gentle, low-impact exercise that can ease you into a higher level of fitness and health. Walking is one of your body's most natural forms of exercise. It's safe, simple, and does not require any practice. If you cannot

walk, try a stationary bicycle with no resistance or do hand or arm exercises. It is good to move each joint in its full range of motion every day. Over time you may be able to tell a difference in your overall flexibility and stamina.

Flexibility Exercises

These exercises can help maintain normal joint function and relieve joint stiffness. Doing an assortment of stretching exercises for 10 minutes a couple times per day may produce the best results. Depending upon your exercise capacity, you can choose to increase the number of times you stretch each day.

Start slowly and gently. Stretching should not be painful. Do not bounce or get up and down a lot. Whatever you do for your left side, do for your right side. It is best to use all your joints every day and move them through their entire range of motion. If you do not move in certain directions during your normal day, you should take care to exercise those joints. Remember to breathe in and out as you do these exercises and not hold your breath. Stretching exercises can be performed on a daily basis and are easiest after a shower or bath when the muscles are still warm. Performing light flexibility exercises before strengthening or aerobic exercises can help prevent injury and improve workout performance.

Strengthening Exercises

Strengthening exercises can aid in improving and maintaining muscle strength and endurance. Building strong muscles can help keep joints stable and help reduce fatigue. Strengthening exercises can allow you to move your joints through a range of motion to strengthen and increase muscle endurance. Resistance to this motion can come from your own body weight, a resistance band, or light barbell. Also performing exercise in water may be able to help strengthen muscles because water adds both resistance and aids in your movements. For increasing your muscular strength, these exercises are generally done every other day. As your muscles begin to get used to the weights and the exercise becomes easy, you may be able to progressively add more weight to your exercise routine.

If you have any additional questions or comments, please contact Oklahoma AgrAbility. Call us toll free at 888-885-5588 Voice/TTY or email us at ability@okstate.edu.





On the Horizon: AgrAbility Events

November 18-20, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Convention, Oklahoma City
December 9-11, 17th Annual Tulsa Farm Show, Tulsa

In the News: Spotlight on Oklahoma AgrAbility

75th Annual OHCE State Conference

“Dreams to Diamonds” was the theme of the 75th Annual Oklahoma Home and Community Education (OHCE) Conference held July 19-20, 2010 at the Clarion Hotel & Convention Center in Oklahoma City, OK.

OHCE members work together to build better communities through education with leadership and service. Program Coordinator Kevin Bell displayed a booth that promoted awareness about Oklahoma AgrAbility and provided insight on how OHCE members can display AgrAbility information at upcoming events in their respective counties. There were over 400 members of OHCE in attendance.

About Oklahoma AgrAbility

Oklahoma AgrAbility connects farmers and ranchers with disabilities to resources about ways to continue success in their enterprise, operation and daily life activities. Call AgrAbility at 888-885-5588 (voice/tty) or e-mail ability@okstate.edu for more information.

About this Newsletter



This is a quarterly publication available via mail, e-mail and the Web at www.agrability.okstate.edu. For more information about this newsletter please contact AgrAbility at 888-885-5588 (voice/tty) or e-mail ability@okstate.edu.

FALL Friendly Resources

For information about arthritis help, good nutrition and physical activities, and understanding long-term care issues, visit the resource page at <http://agrability.okstate.edu/ResourceCenter.html>.

access to Agriculture is provided by the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project, 1514 West Hall of Fame Stillwater, OK 74078; 405-744-2398; www.agrability.okstate.edu.

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