

# Introduction

## Learning Objectives:

1. Learn how “Agriculture for Life” was developed.
2. Preview topics found in this guide.
3. Prepare yourself to read, hear, and see more information.



Welcome to Agriculture For Life, an informational resource guide written for farm and ranch producers working alongside their families to keep operations, resources, and our state’s economy moving. In these pages, you’ll find useful information to navigate the issues, concerns and available solutions to Oklahomans living the Ag4Life way. Featured state resources, including Oklahoma ABLE Tech and OK Extension, are waiting to work with Ag families to maintain productivity while adapting to new and often unexpected changes in health and work.

In today’s world, living well the Ag4Life way is about being prepared to roll with the normal changes of growing older. It’s also about weighing the risks and benefits of farming and ranching, given that these occupations are among the most dangerous in North America. Topics of interest here are based on frequently asked questions and discussions with hundreds of farming and ranching families and agricultural professionals over several years.

There are many contributors to the development of this resource. The guide’s central focus on health promotion and finding solutions on the

farm and ranch are based on the work of Carla Wilhite, O.T.D., OTR/L, who graciously gave permission for its use. Carla is currently on faculty at the University of North Dakota in the Department of Occupational Therapy.

The guide was originally prepared through the Oklahoma AgrAbility Grant which focused on keeping state farm and ranch producers, their families, and employees productive and on the job despite living with an injury, chronic condition, or other disability that impacted work and home life. Learning to manage arthritis, for example, was a focus of their work.

Today, Ag4Life, an Extension program, continues to help families use safe and effective ways to stay on the job.

Today, the National AgrAbility Program, at Purdue University, continues to provide valuable information and state resource referrals across the country. They often consult on specific assistive technologies, work modifications, developing new farm enterprises, returning veteran resources, etc.

Please visit [www.agrability.org](http://www.agrability.org) to learn more or call toll free 800.825.4264.

## Talk it Over

This Ag4Life guide is made up of units of information made easier to use for family discussions. Please take time to explore each topic's worksheets, group questions, stories of other Ag families with similar concerns, and available resources.

Family discussions are encouraged as working through home and work issues face-to-face gives practice to effective communication. As a result, families are more likely to make informed decisions about living and working on farms and ranches quicker and more efficiently. Learning to adapt to change helps families to be ready as health issues and physical limitations increase with age.

The good news is many Ag families have found ways to adapt and thrive on the land despite challenges they face. Adapting means following through on a new way of doing, and making adaptations can be difficult without support. Adapting also means being strong in the face of a challenge, using opportunities and resources for assistance, and taking responsibility for important health and safety decisions.

## Our Disclaimer

This resource guide intends to have an honest discussion about living and working on farms and ranches for those with conditions and disabilities. It focuses on living with a host of chronic health conditions, injury, illness, and disability that

impedes day-to-day operations.

If you find a subject too uncomfortable, please know the intent here is to inform, not create discomfort. Just skip information that doesn't apply to your situation. Keep in mind, however, such information might be helpful to others. Though unlikely, if thinking about traumatic injuries or emotional events cause additional worry, please contact a mental health professional as soon as practical. Talk and support can improve and often eliminate discomfort.

The focus here is on resources for Oklahomans. However, this guide can be adapted by any state, particularly as resources - such as Extension and disability organizations like Oklahoma ABLE Tech - are located throughout the United States.

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May your prosperity, health, and hope continue to thrive as you live the Ag4Life way.

Enjoy your reading!



# Table of Contents

<b>Section 1: Acquiring a Disability.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 2: Moving Forward and Taking Control .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Section 3: Modifying Your Home, Farm, or Ranch .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Section 4: Business Management .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Section 5: Working with Vocational Rehabilitation .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Section 6: Quality of Life .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Section 7: Social Security Disability Benefits and Work Incentives .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Section 8: Leisure and Play for Individuals with Disabilities .....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Section 9: Working with AgrAbility.....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Section 10: Moving On.....</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Appendix A.....</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Appendix B.....</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Appendix C.....</b>	<b>172</b>

