





**2024-2025  
by the numbers**

**60** new clients 

 **164** total clients

**21** presentations 

 **9** display booths

**7,550** total event attendees 

 **\$462,947**  
partner funding  
for AgrAbility clients

## MICHIGAN AGRABILITY

The Michigan AgrAbility project helps people who want to continue working in agriculture even when illness, injury, or chronic conditions create barriers to work. AgrAbility is a USDA-funded partnership between MSU Extension and Easterseals MORC, with a mission to enhance quality of life so that farmers, their families, and communities can thrive, using assistive devices and adaptive equipment that makes farming safer and easier on the body.

In 2025, Michigan AgrAbility coordinated two events with client partners: a farm visit field day in Holland and a maple tubing installation day in Newberry. The field day brought together staff from Michigan Rehabilitation Services, the Michigan Center for Rural Health, Kent County Farm Bureau, and Extension to

demonstrate the adaptive items that allow Doug VerHoeven to safely use his equipment and successfully farm 90 acres. The tubing installation day took place on Veteran’s Day at a veteran’s farm and provided hands-on training on how to make a small-scale maple sugar operation easier on the body by using tubing instead of lugging heavy buckets of sap across the snow.

The project also provided guidance to two MSU College of Engineering Mechanical Engineering Capstone projects: making improvements to a previous design group’s rolling kneeler cart prototype to help a client tend low-growing lavender while protecting her fragile foot bones and an arm support addition to an exoskeleton that could be useful for anyone who had experienced a stroke or injury affecting one arm so that they can lift and do overhead work such as pruning.

Throughout the year, the team worked with 164 clients at their farms and collaborated with Michigan Rehabilitation Services to provide equipment such as quick-attach hitches, lifts on tractors and combines, and cattle handling systems to 22 farmers across the state. AgrAbility also worked with Easterseals MORC to provide \$9,500 in donations to cover equipment for 12 farmers such as hand control levers, an air ride seat and an electric wheelchair, improvements that will make their work safer and easier on the body. Former clients also donated nine items back to the program, amounting to nearly \$30,000 worth of equipment that is back in use.

Staff had great presence around the state and provided 21 presentations, tabled at nine events, and had 341 direct interactions, from a total of more than 7,550 participants present at events.



**FARM STRESS**

Farming remains one of the most unpredictable and stressful professions in Michigan. Through the MSU Extension Managing Farm Stress Program, we continue to combine farm business expertise with behavioral health support to strengthen the resilience of agricultural communities. Program leadership is based in our Benzie County office, allowing for responsive local engagement alongside statewide delivery. In 2025, the program led 74 training workshops, reaching more than 1,700 participants statewide, with measurable improvements in participants' confidence to manage their own stress and to support farmers experiencing distress. Workshops are offered at community libraries and partner

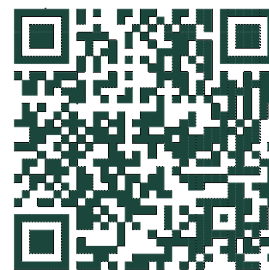
sites, including evenings and weekends, to improve accessibility for producers.

Local organizations interested in hosting a program are encouraged to contact their county office.

89 counseling sessions were supported in 2025, maintaining a pathway to professional care for farmers and farm family members at low or no cost.

Our other efforts included updated curricula, expanded media outreach, and release of the short documentary *Weathering Together* to explore the effect of stress on Michigan farmers and raise awareness of available resources.

Scan to view the short documentary *Weathering Together*



*Farming is tough, but you don't have to do it alone. MSU Extension stands by our farmers and is ready to support you.*

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