



Texas AgrAbility

Background

In 2012, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service developed **Texas AgrAbility**, which is a program that assists farmers and ranchers with disabling/chronic health conditions to start or stay engaged in agriculture operations. Within this project began a push to support Military Veterans, with and without disabilities, to engage in production agriculture.

Texas AgrAbility staff, in collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation, is continuously developing new procedures and materials to educate counselors, develop modules, and implement referral processes for co-shared clients.

The **Texas AgrAbility** staff also developed an educational fact sheet (*Safety for Senior Farmers*) in both English and Spanish. The fact sheet is available through the **Texas AgrAbility** website, which is available to download for free — and will be shared with the *National AgrAbility Project* database.



texasagrability.tamu.edu

Relevance

American farmer/ranchers are disappearing at an alarming rate. With the average age of the American producer at 58 years old, our nation's food security could be challenged over the next 20 years. Many veterans are pursuing self-employment and turning to agriculture-based enterprises to accomplish their goals. Veterans struggle with unemployment in rural farming areas and also struggle to transition into civilian life after leaving the military. Farming and ranching has become a highly sought after career for many veterans, offering self-sustainability, therapeutic healing, meaningful and flexible self-employment, and continued service, among other benefits.

The most challenging barriers for veterans entering into production agriculture are access to capital and access to land. Veterans seeking funding for their farm enterprise have faced several lender challenges in qualifying for financing. Among those challenges are creating viable business plans, obtaining relevant education and acquiring experience

Research has shown that this population is able to achieve higher levels of financial performance if they have written a business plan and utilize standard financial management practices, which can be addressed through increased access to training and hands-on learning opportunities.

Texas AgrAbility Target Audience:

Farmers & Ranchers



Individuals with Disabilities & Health Conditions



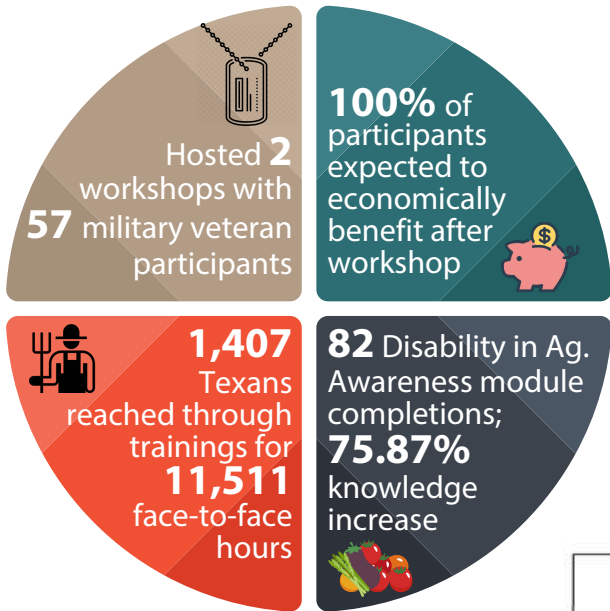
Family Members of Farmers, Ranchers & Farmworkers



Migrant & Hispanic Farmers & Farmworkers

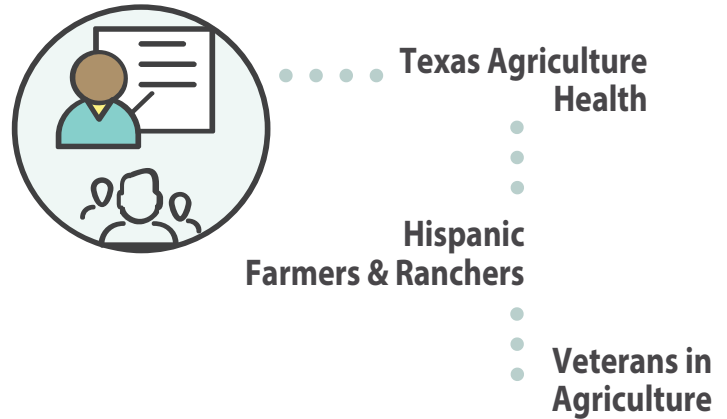


Goal 1
Provide Education



Goal 2
Increase Service Capacity

Texas AgrAbility conducted a needs-assessment with stakeholders and created **3** online forums for information sharing and connections:



Goal 3
Assistance

Texas AgrAbility developed materials to conduct worksite assessments related to tasks, task modification, and recommendations.

Texas AgrAbility staff conducted **6** formal worksite assessments and agriculture business plans with Vocational Rehabilitation, garnering **\$15,200** in support for project sustainability.

Texas AgrAbility staff referred **10 clients** have for Vocational Rehabilitation in 2019 — 10 clients have received services in the form of technical assistance, agriculture business planning, and comprehensive worksite assessments and assistive technology recommendations through Vocational Rehabilitation.

Texas AgrAbility staff submitted a diversity and inclusion grant through Farm Credit Bank of Texas for \$5,000 to support workshops — a **\$500 sponsorship** from the Alamo Soil and Water Conservation District to support educational workshops for military veterans and beginning farmers and ranchers was awarded.

Assisted **78 producers** with disabilities and military veterans with disabilities to remain/begin in production agriculture through worksite assessments and resource connections to assistive technologies and funding. Through its contract with Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation, **Texas AgrAbility** was able to provide clients with **\$134,664-plus** in assistive technology recommendations to Vocational Rehabilitation co-shared clients to improve access and accessibility to their farm or ranch.

Goal 4
Marketing & Outreach



Texas AgrAbility brochure translated to Spanish, updated **BGBG** ads, dispersed over **400** at workshops

58 open client cases, served **74** clients through **600-plus** hours

745 subscribers to **Texas AgrAbility** monthly newsletter; **33** blog posts with **99** subscribers

100% acceptance in **BGBG Entrepreneurial Training** — **12** client referrals from **BGBG** training in process



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