

# The California AgrAbility Program & Farmworker Awareness Week

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Ability\_Tools Staff/March 30,2015



**Happy Cesar Chavez Day!**

Did you know that March 24th - 31st is **Farmworker Awareness Week**?

[CalAgrAbility](#) and [Ability Tools](#) are celebrating - along with others in the state of California and across the country - the important jobs of farmworkers by sharing stories about their lives and livelihoods.

The California AgrAbility Program (CalAgrAbility) is a farm safety project at the University of California-Davis located in the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering and is a partnership between the University of California Cooperative Extension Service and Ability Tools.

***CalAgrAbility's goal is to maximize the independence of California***

***farmers, ranchers, workers and their families who are facing obstacles due to injury, illness, or disability by providing services, information, and education.***

All California AgrAbility services are free. Due to the diversity of California's farming industry, CalAgrAbility offers bilingual/bicultural education and services to diverse agricultural communities - in English and Spanish. Our staff will explore, identify and assist with all options to help folks working in agriculture to reach their goals and continue doing the work they love. *California AgrAbility can help you work smarter, not harder*

Whatever the challenges facing California's farmers, workers and ranchers, California AgrAbility provides support to help people to continue working and living independently on California's farms.

### **How can AgrAbility Help?**

#### **Adaptive & Assistive Technology**

- On-site agricultural work site and task analysis as well as in home. With farmworkers we tend to do many more recommendations for them at home and we give them tools to learn to manage their health because their families depend on their health to continue working.
- Recommendations for equipment adaptations, home modifications, and adaptive devices (i.e. tractor, hitches, lifts, driving aids, etc.)

\*\*\*California AgrAbility cannot provide funds to purchase Assistive Technology (AT). We will, however, assist our farmer consumers in identifying/locating appropriate AT and funding sources that are available.

#### **Education & Advocacy**

- Educational and safety workshops to farmers, health and rehab professionals, agricultural organizations, and others. Workshops highlight issues unique to farmers, workers and ranchers facing obstacles due to injury, illness, or normal wear and tear on their bodies.
- Self-help bilingual courses on farming with arthritis and arthritis prevention, discussing symptoms, common types of arthritis, medication, nutrition, and pain management techniques, such as hot and cold therapy and exercise routines provided by the Arthritis Foundation.
- Assist limited-resource & beginning farmers in finding opportunities for farming, i.e. conservation, habitat restoration, and business planning, through agencies such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), etc.

- The CalAgrAbility NEWS provides fully-researched information on topics relevant to our consumers and health providers. (Spanish & English)
- Monthly bilingual radio public service announcements on farm health and safety issues. (Spanish & English)
- Dissemination of bilingual health and safety literacy at workshops and community fairs. (Spanish & English)
- Advocate with doctors and other health and social service agencies for consumers by attending appointments with families.
- Translation and interpretation services (English and Spanish) for families to navigate AT, medical, social services, workers comp, etc. systems.
- Translate documents into simple language that is easy to understand. This is one of our key components as it is very important for our consumers to have the knowledge necessary to take action to lead a safer, healthier life.

\*\*\*CalAgrAbility bilingual staff is not professionally trained nor are licensed medical interpreters. They are not trained medical/legal social workers and have no expert knowledge on legal medical documentation.



Rosendo is fixing a door lock at home using his prosthesis.

Networking is a vital point in assisting families, as we refer them to many other services because CalAgrAbility does not have the funds to purchase much needed equipment, such as AT for the home and work.

- Network with other non-profit and state agencies (i.e., Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Security, local healthcare providers, Workers Comp, etc.).
- Research and Referrals to appropriate farming, medical, health professionals in the

community.

CalAgrAbility assisted a consumer, Rosendo, from Yuba County in obtaining a prosthesis through Merced Pacific Medical, Inc. Rosendo said that his prosthesis has come in handy in his new job of working as a foreman overseeing the operation of machinery. He can put his prostheses on when he has to move large things. He also mentioned that it helps him complete delicate tasks at home like picking up papers and completing odd jobs around the house.

This is only one case where CalAgrAbility has helped farmworkers obtain assistive technologies (AT) to continue to work independently. There are other cases including helping workers obtain glasses through the international retailer LensCrafters. Farmworkers are resilient and continue to work with tools that give them the ability to do so. Some agricultural workers, like the farmers from the Yuba area, grew inspired enough to start their own small farm: <http://saf-unite.org/farmworkerawareness>

Here are two guides produced by CalAgrAbility (in English & Spanish) about **Arthritis**, which is very common and prevalent among the agricultural community:

**Could Arthritis Be What is Causing My Pain? Information for people with Joint Pain** - [English version & Spanish version](#)

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## **CONTACT US! TELL US YOUR STORY!**

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