

ILLINOIS AGRABILITY UNLIMITED: HELPING FARMERS KEEP THEIR INDEPENDENCE

Jerry wanted to keep farming, despite complications during heart surgery that led to having both his legs amputated below the knees. He needed help getting into his tractors after his medical problems were addressed. Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited provided funding assistance to modify Jerry's tractors for easier access.

Donna was injured by a ram on her sheep farm and left with chronic pain and poor mobility. Adding to this, her husband, Scott, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. They wanted to remain independent and continue living on their farm. Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited helped secure a scooter and ramp for Donna and memory aids for Scott, so they could continue living and working as farmers—their lifelong passion.

Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited is a University of Illinois Extension, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences program. Since 1990, the program has offered a variety of services and adaptive technologies to over 1,000 individuals with disabilities and conditions that limit their mobility. Each of these individuals had the same goal in mind—to stay on the farm, continue working the farm, and remain productive for their families, communities, and Illinois agriculture.

OPPORTUNITY

Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited receives a small amount of funds from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through renewable competitive grants to support operational overhead. These funds are not able to be used to assist farm families with the purchase of assistive technology, the most pressing and important needs in Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited. Some modifications can cost thousands of dollars. For example, a lift on a tractor or combine can cost over \$12,000.

Many farmers do not qualify for other state or federal assistance services, leaving a significant gap for farmers in need. In addition to adaptive technologies, equipment, and home structural changes, Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited offers essential counseling services to farmers in need.



“The assistance from AgrAbility Unlimited has provided me with items I needed in order to continue with my preferred life.”

—JERRY, *Mason County, IL farmer*

University of Illinois Extension
College of Agricultural, Consumer
and Environmental Sciences



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RESOURCES REQUIRED

The purpose of Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited is to provide a hand-up and not a handout. Private funding is necessary to sustain and support AgrAbility, allowing them to provide adaptive equipment for farmers. At times in the past when USDA funding has ceased, the program and its services have been in jeopardy.

The Illinois AgrAbility Unlimited endowment will support:

1. Shared cost purchase of assistive technology for individuals with disabilities in Illinois agriculture.
2. Technical services to farming individuals with mobility challenges and disabilities.



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