What is Universal Design?

Universal design is a method of designing tools, buildings and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible. Universal design is based on the premise that disability is ordinary, and affects most of us for some part of our lives.

If a design works well for people with disabilities, it works better for everyone.

The Seven Principles of Universal Design:

* Principle 1: Equitable Use. The goal is a user-friendly working environment for people of all ages and abilities.  
* Principle 2: Flexibility in Use. The worksite accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.  
* Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use. “How-to” is easy to understand, regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, or skill level.  
* Principle 4: Perceptible Information. “Where-to” is easy to see and understand, no matter what language is spoken. Tools may be color coded to indicate use and size.  
* Principle 5: Tolerance for Error. Minimizes hazards and adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.  
* Principle 6: Low Physical Effort. Completing a task is efficient and comfortable, with a minimum of fatigue.  
* Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use. There is enough space to complete the necessary work regardless of the user’s body size, posture, or mobility.

Universal Design principles are readily adaptable to agricultural enterprises, whether they take place in the house, barn, workshop, garage, feedlot, or livestock facility.

Incorporating Universal Design concepts into your farm does not mean a complete make-over. Small changes can be made over time that result in an environment that is safer and more comfortable for everyone who lives, works or visits the farm, no matter what their age or ability.

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What is AgrAbility?
AgrAbility is a national program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides assistance for farmers, farm workers and farm families with chronic health conditions or disabilities. Our goal is to help you to continue to farm successfully and live independently. Maine AgrAbility is administered by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension in partnership with Goodwill Industries of Northern New England and Alpha One. If you are currently experiencing health conditions or other barriers that make it difficult to farm, call us. Maine AgrAbility can help with any kind of physical, cognitive, or illness-related condition.

How can Maine AgrAbility help me?
We can offer the following services at no cost to customers:

• On-site assessments to identify barriers to completing tasks both in the agricultural workplace and the home.
• Recommendations for appropriate assistive technologies, modified work practices and other solutions to keep you farming.
• Community networks to connect you to other farmers, rehabilitation opportunities and health care professionals to share information and resources.
• Education and training on safety and prevention of injuries.
• Referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation and other funding sources to meet your specific needs.

Maine AgrAbility
1-800-287-1471 or 207-944-1533
maine.agrability@maine.edu

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