Agriculture Business Planning Workshops For Military Veterans
Who We Are

❖ Staff
  ❖ Dr. Rick Peterson, Dr. Cheryl Grenwelge, Erin Kimbrough, Miranda Ferguson, Dr. Douglas Kingman

❖ Major Partners-
  ❖ Texas AgrAbility, Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M Foundation, Farmer Veteran Coalition, Vocational Rehabilitation, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Rural Development, Texas Department of Agriculture, Grace After Fire, as well as, numerous other Veteran/agriculture service organizations, and Veterans
Outline

- Introduction: God Made A Farmer
- Why does agriculture need Veterans?
- Why do Veterans need an agriculture business?
- How do we help?
- Survey Highlights
- Previous Workshops
- Proposed Projects
- Program Partners
- How can you find out more?
Why Do We Need Veterans in Agriculture?

Aging Farmer Problem
- According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the average age of principal farm operators was 58.3 years, up 1.2 years since 2007, and continuing a 30-year trend of steady increase. The older age groups (55-75 years old) all increased in number between 2007 and 2012.
- In Texas, the average age is 60.1 years, up from 58.9 years in 2007.

Food Supply
- A report issued by Oregon State University states, “The U.S food system is a system in which 3 million people (most over the age of 55) are feeding around 300 million Americans plus the world.”
- A quarter of all farmers are expected to retire in the next 20 years.
- 2014 population of America sits at 317 million and 7.1 billion worldwide. By 2030, U.S. population is expected to exceed 350 million and 8 billion worldwide.
Why Do Veterans Need an Agriculture Business?

Veteran Unemployment

  - 5.3% All Veterans
  - Gulf War Era II (Post-9/11) Veterans 7.9%
  - Age: 20-24 12.9%, 25-29 10%, 30-34 7.2%
- Wounded Warriors Survey-WWP Alumni
  - 13.9% Overall unemployment, 19.7% non-active-duty unemployment rate
  - Top 2 barriers
- Prudential Financial Inc. and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America Survey
  - Barriers to employment
How Do We Help?
Agriculture Business Planning Workshops

Business Planning
- Our 2 part series workshop includes education on many aspects of business planning
- Business planning and ideas are provided via education and support from Dr. Greg Clary (Retired Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agriculture economist and executive director of the Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship)

Business Planning Topics Include:
- Business start-up
- Rural business ideas
- Sections of a business plan
- Management
- Legal Structures
- Risk Management
- Marketing
- Distribution
- Finance
- Accounting
- Budgeting
- And much more!
How Do We Help?

Agriculture Business Planning Workshops

Funding
- Together with our partners, we recruit local United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) program speakers from the local community
  - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
  - USDA Farm Service Agency
  - USDA Rural Development
  - TDA Texas Agriculture Finance Authority

Funding Programs Include
- Veteran specific program options
- Farm Ownership Programs
  - Direct and Guaranteed
- Farm Operating Programs
  - Direct and Guaranteed
- Programs specific for limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged
- Microloans
- Value-Added product grants
- Beginning Farmer/Rancher grant and loan options
- Conservation grants and loans
Evaluation Highlights
Agriculture Business Planning Workshops

Knowledge Gains

Pre and Post Data
On a scale of 0 (no knowledge) and 4 (Excellent Knowledge)

- Knowledge of Business Ideas
  - 1.4 Pre to 3.14 Post
- Knowledge of Risk Management
  - 1.05 Pre to 2.81 Post
- Knowledge of AgrAbility
  - .65 Pre to 3.12 Post
- Knowledge of Funding Sources
  - .81 Pre and 3.12 Post

Satisfaction

- Participants rated their overall satisfaction with the workshop a 3.81 on a 0-4 point scale
- 95% of the participants expected to benefit economically as a direct result of what they learned at the workshop
- 100% of the participants would recommend the workshop to others
Survey Highlights

- 55 Participants
- 51 were beginning farmers
- 39 Veterans - 4 Spouse of a Veteran
- Average number of years farming/ranching - 4.85
- 27% reported having a disability that would need accommodation

Training needed to operate farm/ranch:
- More than 50% selected all of the areas:
  - Production practices
  - Business planning
  - Risk management
  - Marketing
  - Funding sources (71%)
  - Land acquisition
  - Taxes
Survey Highlights

❖ Most participants had the most interest in:
   1. Livestock businesses (41.8%)
   2. Vegetable farming
   3. Fruit/nut tree production
   4. Grain production
   5. Diversified farming

❖ Other areas of interest:
   ❖ Beekeeping
   ❖ Hay production,
   ❖ Aquaponics,
   ❖ Cedar/Mesquite harvesting,
   ❖ Herbs
   ❖ Maple Syrup production
Previous Workshops

- Dallas (3)
- San Antonio (4)
- Belton (3)
- Seguin (1)
- El Paso (2)
- Weslaco (2)
- Georgetown (1)
Proposed Projects

- **BattleGround to Breaking Ground Project**
  - Veteran Training Farm
  - Online Modules
  - Community of Practice

- **Texas Ag-Ability Project**
  - On site-business consultations
  - Case Management
  - Series 1 and 2 Workshops
Program Partners

- **Dr. Greg Clary** - Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
  - Executive Director
  - Agriculture Economist
- **Melissa Blair** - NRCS
  - Public Affairs Specialist
- **Glenn Greanya** - NRCS
  - Veterans Special Emphasis Program Manager
- **Judith Canales** - FSA
  - State Director Farm Service Agency
- **Eddie Trevino** - FSA
  - Farm Loan Chief
- **Texas Department of Agriculture**
- **Rural Development**
- **PAC Committee**
Contact Us

Texas AgrAbility Community of Practice
AND/OR Planning Small Farms

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