

BattleGround to Breaking Ground: A Transformational Journey

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

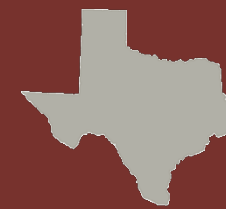
- ❖ A report issued by Oregon State University states, "The U.S food system is a system in which 3 million people (most over the age of 55) are feeding around 300 million Americans plus the world."
- ❖ A quarter of all farmers are expected to retire in the next 20 years.
- ❖ 2014 population of America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

Why Do Veterans Need an Agriculture Business?



Veteran Unemployment

- ❖ BLS Current Population Survey-January 2015
 - ❖ 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?

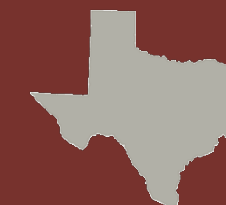
Agriculture Business Planning Workshops

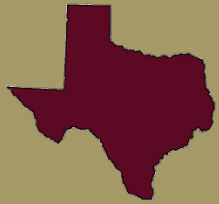
Business Planning

- ❖ 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?

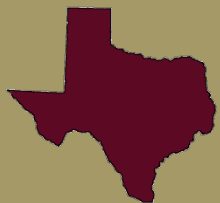
Agriculture Business Planning Workshops

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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