

VETERANS

Opportunities for
Transitioning Service Members and
Veterans



VETERANS



Carlina Williams, USN Veteran, started a mobile juice business, Communion Juice, which serves locally-sourced, cold-pressed fresh juice and herbal shots. She hopes to eventually franchise her business.



Veterans can learn to fight wildfires through the USDA Forest Service's apprenticeship



Rupert Richards, USAF Veteran, is the Agricultural Marketing Service Specialty Crops Inspection/Training Branch Chief, USDA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Calvin Riggleman, USMC Veteran, took the products from his family farm and transformed them into a wide range of condiments



Angela Mulder, USAF Veteran, learns about agriculture and farming by volunteering with Vets on the Farm



VETERANS

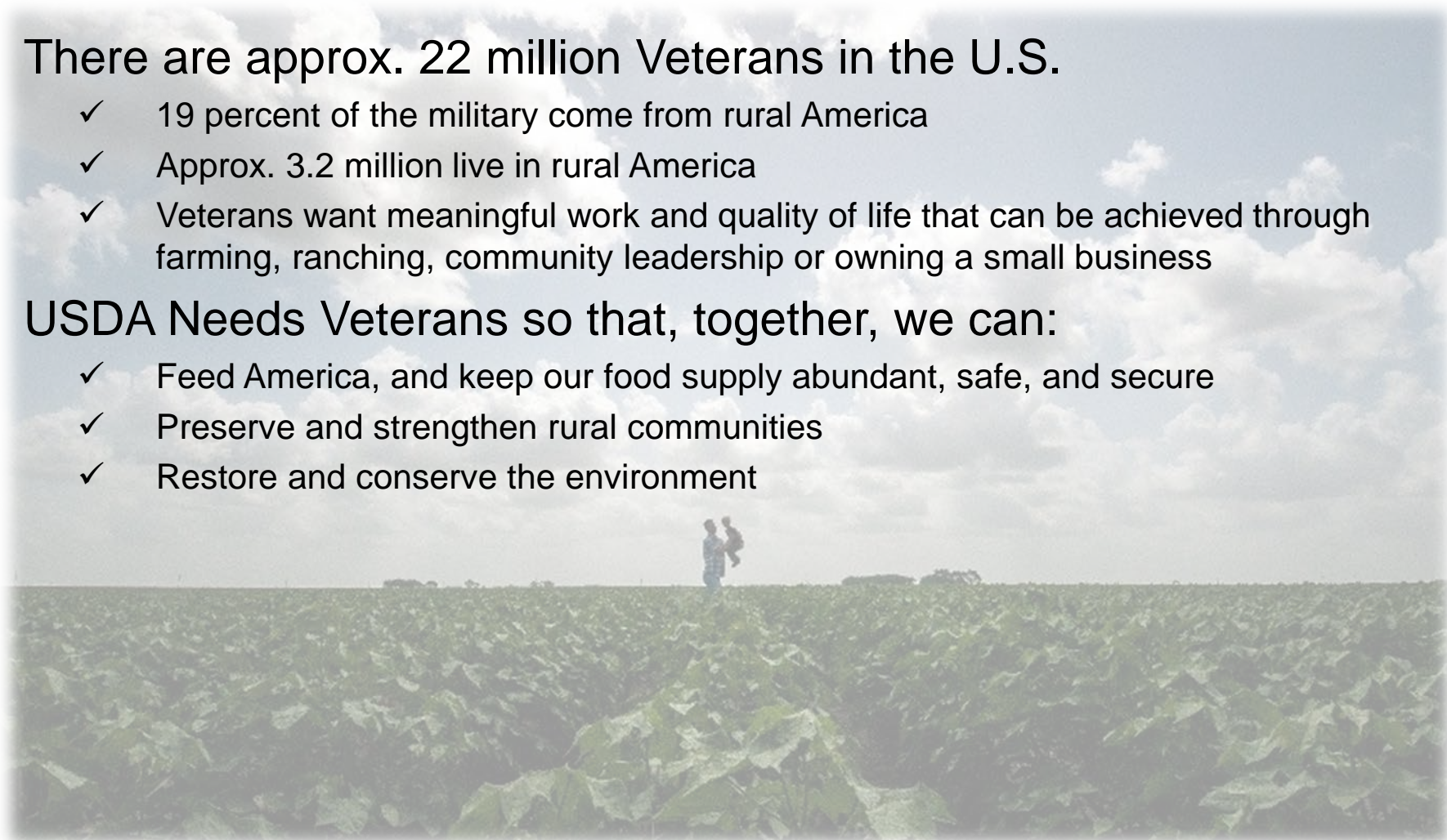
Why Veterans?

There are approx. 22 million Veterans in the U.S.

- ✓ 19 percent of the military come from rural America
- ✓ Approx. 3.2 million live in rural America
- ✓ Veterans want meaningful work and quality of life that can be achieved through farming, ranching, community leadership or owning a small business

USDA Needs Veterans so that, together, we can:

- ✓ Feed America, and keep our food supply abundant, safe, and secure
- ✓ Preserve and strengthen rural communities
- ✓ Restore and conserve the environment





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Opportunities in the 3Es

EMPLOYMENT



EDUCATION



ENTREPRENEURSHIP





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EMPLOYMENT



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Employment

USDA's Veterans Employment Program Office can:

- Match skills / qualifications to careers at USDA
- Review resumes; provide feedback
- Explain the Federal hiring process (USA JOBS, special hiring authorities, category rating)

Your military experience can be directly translatable to jobs at USDA, such as:

- Criminal Justice
- Soil Conservationist Technician
- Contracting and Procurement
- Information Technology
- Food Inspection and Public Health
- Smoke Jumper
- Finance
- Economists



Monshi Ramdass (right), USDA Veterans Employment Program Officer, often attends hiring events and employers panels.



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Employment

On-the-Job Training:

- Paid Apprenticeships
 - **Agricultural Commodity Graders** – 12-month training program through USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, starting at GS-5/7
 - **Wildland Firefighters** – 3,000 hour on-the-job learning program through USDA's Forest Service, available positions include GS-3, 4/5, and 5
 - **Dairy Graziers*** - Includes full-time employment, training and mentorship over a period of two years

DoD SkillBridge / Career Skills Program:

- Eligible service members can participate in industry training instead of performing military duties during the closing months of their career



Austin Looney uses drip torches to conduct backburns



**Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is an independent non-profit organization with a National Apprenticeship under the U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration*

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Employment Resources

- USDA's Veterans Employment Program Office:
<https://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/vepo/>
- Department of Labor Apprenticeships:
<https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/index.htm>
- Agricultural Commodity Grader Apprenticeship:
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/careers/apprenticeship-program>
- Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship: <https://www.nafri.gov/wfap/>
- Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship: <https://www.dga-national.org/Participate>
- DoD SkillBridge: <https://dodskillbridge.com/>
- Army Career Skills Program:
<https://www.imcom.army.mil/Organization/G1Personnel/CareerSkillsProgram.aspx>





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EDUCATION





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Education

Ag experts are in high demand

- **Higher Education** – A recent Purdue University research study indicates that about 60,000 agriculture-related jobs are available annually but many can't be filled due to lack of graduates

Veterans can fill this need by getting a degree in

- Plant science
 - Food science
 - Environmental science
 - Sustainable biomaterials
 - Water resources science and engineering
 - Precision agriculture
 - Veterinary medicine
-
- **Certificates** – Many U.S institutions and organizations offer certificates in sustainable agriculture
 - **Student Farms** – Offer practical, hands-on education through courses, internships, special projects, and research projects



Matt McCue (U.S. Army Veteran) is working on his graduate degree in International Agricultural Development at University of California, Davis. (Photo Courtesy: Farmer Veteran Coalition)



Education

- **Farm Training and Apprenticeships** – Equip Veterans with the right tools and skills to gain experience and qualifications needed to participate in USDA programs
 - ***ATTRA***'s Armed to Farm program is for military Veterans and provides trainings from conference presentations to two-day workshops to week-long training events
 - ***Farmer Veteran Coalition*** provides direct assistance to Veterans in their beginning years of farming or ranching
- **Extension** – USDA works with universities to provide non-formal education and learning activities directly to ag producers, small business owners, consumers and families throughout the country



Matt Smiley, left, (Army/OIF) explains blossom-end rot to Marquise Rhym, right, (USMC/OEF/OIF). Marquise was placed on R Kelley Farms outside Sacramento, CA, for a 4-month internship. Once his internship is over, Marquise will be hired full-time to help manage the farm.



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Education Resources

- Purdue University Study: <https://www.purdue.edu/usda/employment/>
- Sustainable Agriculture Education and Training Directory (Degrees, Certificates, Student Farms):
<https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/edtr/sustainable-agriculture-education-directory>
- Farm Training and Apprenticeships: <https://www.nal.usda.gov/veteran-programs-and-resources>
- ATTRA Armed to Farm: <https://www.ncat.org/armedtofarm/>
- Farmer Veteran Coalition: <https://www.farmvetco.org/about-us/our-programs/farming-fellowship/>
- Extension: <https://nifa.usda.gov/extension>





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ENTREPRENEURSHIP



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Entrepreneurship – From Farm to Fork

USDA can help agriculture entrepreneurs get access to capital and land, and help you manage your risk

Loans

- Microloans
- Operating Loans
- Farm Ownership Loans

Land

- Transition Incentives Program

Enhancing Land Quality

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Agricultural Easement Program
- Conservation Stewardship Program

Crop Insurance

Technical Assistance / Conservation Technical Assistance



Mannah Gbeh, pictured with his son, grew up in Liberia before coming to the U.S. and enlisting in the Navy, serving 3 deployments in support of OIF and OEF. Today, Mannah owns and operates Bee Valley Farm in Jamul, CA where he produces garlic, honey, olives and almonds.





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Entrepreneurship – From Farm to Fork

Veterans who are part of the community of New and Beginning Farmers are eligible for USDA programs to help start – and continue – a career in farming



Josh Eilers, a former Army Ranger, now owns a cattle ranch in Texas and specializes in high-quality FullBlood Wagyu.

- Access to ag resources, such as capital, land, business development, marketing, insurance, etc.
- Find information tailored to you by using the New Farmer Discovery Tool
- Connect with a mentor, attend workshops, and receive online resources through USDA's partnership with SCORE



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Entrepreneurship – Rural Business

Veterans can help strengthen and develop rural communities by starting or expanding a rural business. USDA can help with:

- Loans and Loan Guarantees
- Processing and Marketing of Products
- Energy Efficiency Improvements



Torrance Hart, a USAF Veteran, now runs a successful e-commerce business called Tweak & Twine

Rural is closer than you think!

See if your area is eligible by visiting our Eligibility Map



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Entrepreneurship Resources

- New Farmers: <https://newfarmers.usda.gov/veterans>
- Discovery Tool: <https://newfarmers.usda.gov/discovery/>
- USDA and SCORE: <https://www.score.org/usda>
- Rural Development programs:
<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs>
- Eligibility Map:
<https://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do>
- U.S. Small Business Administration:
 - USDA Rural Small Business information to soon be included in Boots to Business course (TAP): www.sba.gov/bootstobusiness
 - Get help with your business plan by visiting your local Veteran Business Outreach Center: www.sba.gov/vboc





THANK YOU!

Questions / Comments

Contact Us:

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Visit Us:

USDA Service Centers: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

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