



Mobilizing Veterans to Feed America

Combined Federal Campaign #25771



Jeanette Lombardo

Executive Director

- **Born in Wiesbaden, Germany, to Air Force veteran father**
- **Raised on multi-generational family farm in Pennsylvania**
- **More than 24 years in agriculture lending**
- **Multiple appointments at federal and state level**
- **Served on several agricultural association boards**
- **Subject-matter expert in the areas of agricultural water, trade, land use, and crop protection tools**

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What is Farmer Veteran Coalition?

Nation's largest nonprofit assisting veterans and those currently serving; transition to civilian life by finding careers in agriculture.

Provide support to farmer veterans in several ways:

- Career counseling/Job placement
- Training; apprenticeships, internships, mentorships
- Business planning
- Market Access, Land Access, Capital Access
- Member product discounts
- 1-800 Number Call Center

Founded in 2009 | Based in Woodland, California

National Office moved to Waco, Texas in 2022

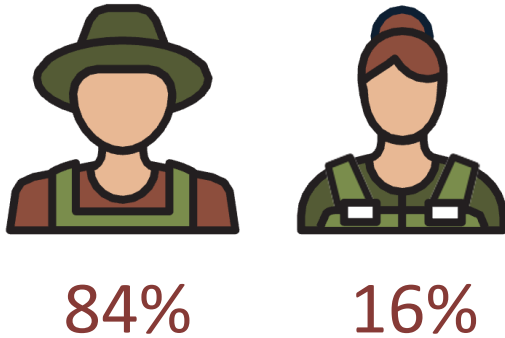


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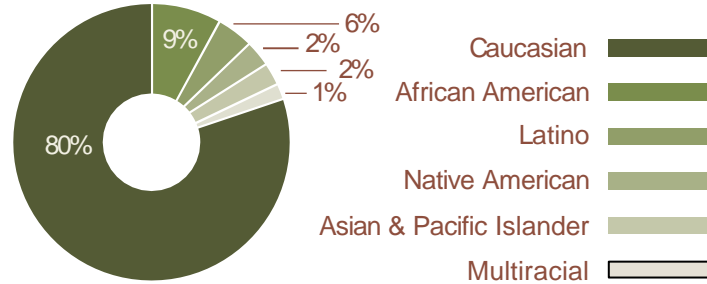


Who are FVC Members?

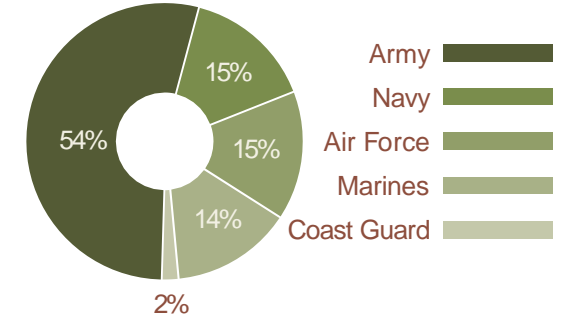
GENDER



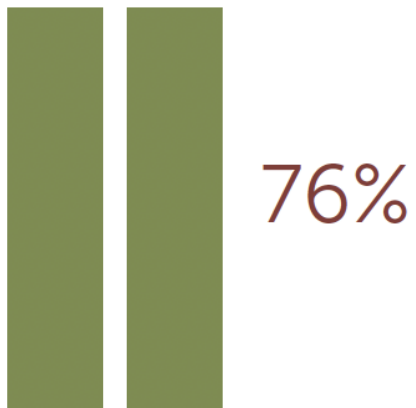
RACE & ETHNICITY



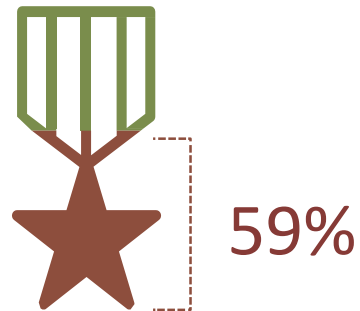
BRANCH OF SERVICE



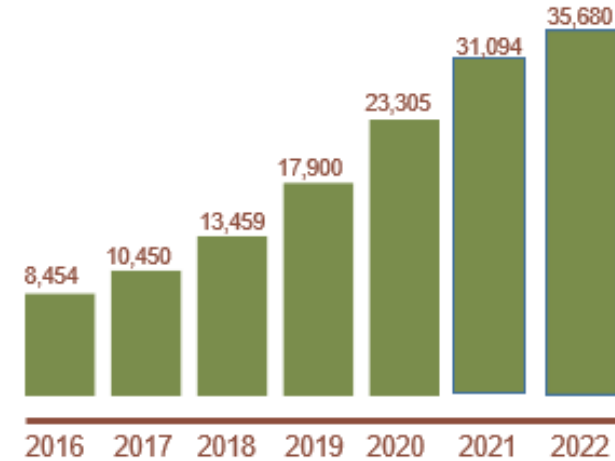
POST-9/11 SERVICE



SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED



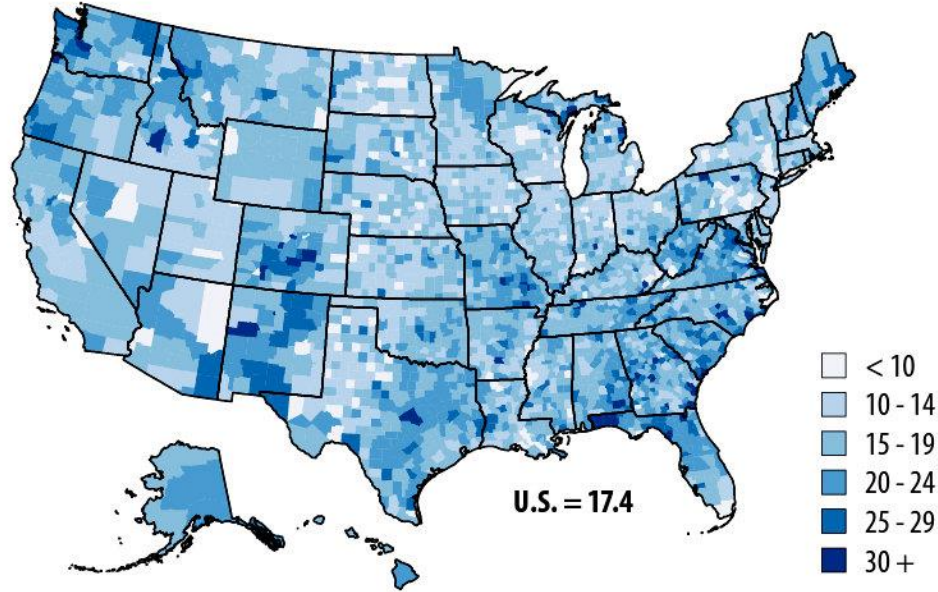
MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



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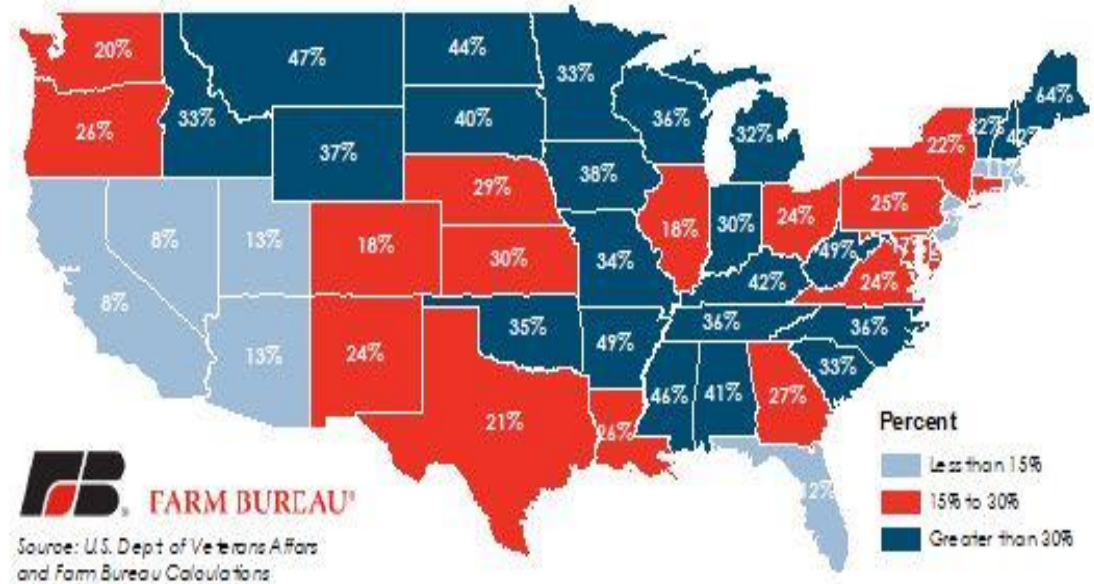
Military Veteran Farmer Statistics

Farms Operated by Producers with Military Service as Percent of All Farms, by County, 2017



The share of farms with producers who have served or are serving in the military is highest in the Southeast.

Figure. Percent of Military Veteran Population in Rural Areas, 2017FY



*USDA NASS

- 370,619 Producers with military experience
- 129+ acres under cultivation
- \$41 billion in Ag sales

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Programs

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Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund

Small grant program that provides direct assistance to farmer veterans with awards of \$1,000 to \$5,000

- Purchases made on behalf of farmer veteran for equipment and other related supplies
- Application opens at beginning of year with purchases made in the spring

Established in 2011 and has awarded approximately \$4 million in grants to more than 900 farmer veterans

Major sponsors include Wounded Warrior Project, Kubota Tractor Corporation, Tractor Supply Co., Farm Credit, and ADM



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Geared to Give

- In partnership with Kubota Tractor Corporation, the Geared to Give program provides equipment and grants through the Fellowship Fund
- Each year, Kubota awards five pieces of equipment through the Geared to Give program
- Since 2015, Geared to Give program has awarded 41 pieces of equipment to Farmer Veteran Coalition members



41  **PIECES OF EQUIPMENT AWARDED**

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Homegrown By Heroes Label

- The official farmer veteran produced branded product program (only program of it's kind in the US)
- Certifies ranchers, farmers, foresters and fishermen to sell their products as veteran-owned and produced
- 13 partnerships with State Departments of Agriculture
- Over 2900 certified growers/producers
- HBH producers can sell products on MARKET MAKER
 - *New in 2022*

 2,900

Homegrown By Heroes Certified Producers
Nationwide



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MARKET MAKER

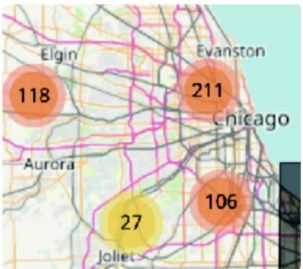
- Together we promote the sale of products of American farmers who have served, and received certification to use the Homegrown By Heroes (HBH) label
- The intention is to help the farmer veterans with market access, obtain new customers by promoting their farms and ranches as well as their products on MarketMaker’s website



FVC has over 2900 Homegrown By Heros, certified growers/producers



FIND Products and Services Across the Food System
CONNECT Directly with Growers, Buyers, Processors and More
BUILD A Stronger Business and Value-Chain



- FIND...**
- FARMERS MARKETS
 - FARM STANDS
 - RESTAURANTS
 - U-PICK
 - WHOLESALEERS
 - FARMS
 - LIVESTOCK
 - BREWERIES


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- In 2022, FVC began a partnership with AgCareers.com to support farmer veteran members find job opportunities in agriculture
- AgCareers.com operates the AgWarriors program; to connect Ag companies looking to specifically hire veterans, with veterans who are job seeking
- FVC hosts a plug-in on FarmVetCo.org that directly goes to AgCareers.com job searching function, to support finding remote off-farm income
- FVC developed a process with AgCareers.com to get farmer veterans directly in touch with AgCareers.com support staff and resources to job search or hire employees

Career Certification Pathway Program

- Focuses on technician jobs that require specialized certifications 
- There is a pilot program with Kubota, veterans receive job placement assistance

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State Chapters

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FVC State Chapters



Why State Chapters?

- Collaboration on local projects
- Networking and relationship building
- Mentorship and educational opportunities
- Share Resources: land, equipment, etc.
- Shared Topics: crops, trade issues, supply shortages, weather, pest pressures, etc.
- National movement at local level

Currently:

- 22 State Chapters
- 10+ In formation
- 10 Member - Regional Advisory Panel supports development and growth

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Grants

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Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans (AgVets)

USDA provides grants to nonprofits to increase the number of military veterans gaining knowledge and skills through comprehensive, hands-on and immersive model farm and ranch programs offered regionally that lead to successful careers in food/agriculture.

FVC's Award for 2021-2024 Grant Period

Objective to train at least 150 veterans through four partner programs:

- **Archi's Acres**
- **Rodale Institute**
- **Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship**
- **Battleground to Breaking Ground**



USDA Cooperative Agreement Mobilizing Veterans to Feed America

This grant supports USDA's historic commitment to lower barriers to access USDA programming to help underserved producers succeed.

FVC coordinates with other cooperators to focus on the needs of farmer veteran members through:

- **Financial literacy**
- **Market planning**
- **Technical farming and peer support**
- **Introduction to USDA programs**





Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Mental Health Awareness Training Project

This grant supports increased access to mental health and suicide preventions training and resources.

FVC and training partner, Living Works, will train 250 individuals per year through a variety of training methods as “gatekeepers” to suicide prevention

- Including online and in-person options,
- As well as train-the-trainer options
- A total of 1,000 trainees over the course of the grant, reaching an exponential number of additional individuals in the high risk agricultural, veteran and rural communities, including other FVC members.

An online community will be formed with Psych Armor, with projections of at least 1,000 FVC members and broader community members annually engaging there

- For additional community support
- For additional learning
- For training debriefing sessions
- An expected 4000+ member engagement over the course of the four-year grant period

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National Programs In Development

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Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF)



FVC and NAAF partnered to identify the needs of native veterans through a survey and listening sessions. The findings will be incorporated in the final *“Reimagining Native Food Economies”* report

- Plan includes developing 10 regional food hubs throughout the country to provide native producers the infrastructure to create self-sustaining food systems for native and rural communities

Next, FVC is expanding the partnership between FVC and NAAF to provide support for the first regional food hub

FVC National Programs Coming Soon...

- A national FVC mentorship with HIVES, “Holistic Impactful Veteran Engagement Service”
- Securing grant funding for a national food safety program to increase market access for Farmer Veterans
- Expanding market access for Farmer Veterans through the HBH label, Market Maker and other partners (farm stands, farmers markets, csa’s, online, corporate and institutions sales)
- National Emergency Relief Program
- Climate Smart Ag Initiative





- Ongoing projects in 13+ different states
- FVC and AgrAbility is a natural partnership; 59% of FVC Members have a service-connected disability
- With a shared set of values, and similar missions to serve farmers, we enjoy a growing partnership between FVC and AgrAbility





2023 National Stakeholder Conference

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Farmer Veteran Stakeholders Conference

Each year, FVC holds a National Farmer Veterans Stakeholder Conference to bring everyone together for a couple days of learning, networking and camaraderie—whether in person or virtual

- FVC also hosts regional meetings throughout the country as funding and need allows.
- The 2022 Farmer Veteran Stakeholders Conference was held November 14-15 in Oklahoma City.
- The 2023 Conference will be held in Greater Washington DC Area, November 12-14, 2023.



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***Look for me
tonight!***

***FVC's Silent
Auction
Item***

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