Armed to Farm: Soldiering the Success of Military Veterans in New Poultry, Livestock and Agroforestry Enterprises

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PD: Dan Donoghue, PhD
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Program at a Glance

VETERANS IMPACTED
One-on-one: 675
Scholarships for Southern SAWG: 144
Internship hours: over 13,000 hours logged
Online module access: 61,391
   English: 41,359
   Spanish: 20,032

“...The mixture of topics and hands on learning was so thoroughly thought out. I never expected to learn so much on every topic thing I never have thought of. It was amazing.”

“The diversity of the programs was awesome...”

“I loved all the information provided and everyone’s willingness to just want to help and answer questions.”

2017 Armed to Farm Group & Feedback
Partners/Collaborators

• **Partners:**
  - University of Arkansas
  - USDA-Agricultural Research Service
    • Dale Bumpers Small Farm Research Center, Booneville, AR
    • Poultry Production and Product Safety Research Unit, Fayetteville, AR
  - National Center for Appropriate Technology, Margo Hale
  - The Center for Agroforestry, University of Missouri
  - Appalachian State University
  - University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
  - Farmer Veteran Coalition
  - Across the Creek Farm, Veteran Mentor

• **Collaborators:**
  - Arkansas Women in Agriculture
Project Overview

**KEY APPROACHES AND OUTCOMES**

**Workshops/Armed to Farm Boot Camps**
- Armed to Farm Boot Camps at Fayetteville, AR (summer 2016 & 2017)
- Annual on-farm workshops in the fall serve serving area new and beginning farmers. We have one coming up in Oct. 2017

**Agroforestry Academy**
- Week-long, hands-on academy at the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry
- Great Networking, Research-Proven Practices and more!

**Online Training Programs**
- Courses over poultry, sheep & goats, agroforestry, business practices and more
- 35 modules available in both English and Spanish

**Internships and Hands-on Training**
- We’ve worked with two farmer mentors, one in Arkansas (Across the Creek Farm) and one in North Carolina (New Life Farm)
- We’ve had over a dozen interns go through the program, logging more than 6,000 hours

**Networking and Mentoring Services**
- This grant has allowed us to pay registration for veterans to the Southern SAWG conference from 2015-2017
- SSAWG Networking Session for Veterans with NCAT
- Booth at the trade show highlighting the Small Farms program

**PROJECT AUDIENCE**

- Returning war veterans
- Spanish speaking population
- Native Americans
- Women
- New Farmers

*Interested in…*

- Poultry
- Diversified Livestock
- Agroforestry
Project Accomplishments

Objective 1: New Farmer Online Training Program
- Website built and courses can be found in 3 locations
- Online training program accessed over 30,000 times during grant and 60,000 times during lifetime
- Modules continually being updated and uploaded

Objective 2: Armed to Farm Workshops, On Farm Demonstrations, Internship Programs
- Agroforestry Academy – July 2015 – 24 attendees, 9 veterans
  July 2016 – 27 attendees, 12 veterans
  July 2017 – 20 attendees, 6 veterans
- Armed to Farm – June 2016 with 24 participants from 11 states
  June 2017 with 30 participants from 15 states
- Farm Foundations Workshop – October 2015 with 25 participants
  October 2016 with 20 participants
  October 2017 to be held
- Internships: Year One - over 2500 hours logged
  Year Two – 3300 hours logged
  Year Three – roughly 2600 hours logged

Objective 3: Networking and Mentoring Services
- Southern SAWG Conference sponsoring registration fees
  - 2015 – 48 veterans
  - 2016 – 45 veterans
  - 2017 – 51 veterans
- Networking session – engaged with over 150 veterans
- Trade show – interacted with over 2500 new/beginning farmers
- BFRDP/Farm Answers Webinar on Veteran Farmers
Impacts and Evaluation

OBJECTIVE 1.
NEW FARMER ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAM
Expected to total 10,000 downloads – *met the goal and exceeded!*

OBJECTIVE 2:
ARMED TO FARM WORKSHOPS, ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS, INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS
Worked one-on-one with almost 300 beginning farmers through workshops & internships. Interns have logged over 6000 hours of work since the start of the grant. Mentored interns with our 2 mentor farmers at Across the Creek Farm and New Life Farm.

OBJECTIVE 3:
NETWORKING AND MENTORING SERVICES
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference
*Paid registration for 144 veterans and their spouses*
*Over 100 veterans reached through to networking session*
*Engaged with over 2500 farmers in the trade show*
Lessons Learned & Best Practices

Free access and use of our online Beginning Farmer training course
poultry-science.uark.edu/small_farms.php
and/or
www.attra.ncat.org/uofa/

Make veterans comfortable:
- Shared military experience
- Small workshops
- Informal programs
- Be aware of benefits

Connections with veteran mentors/opportunities
Next Year & After

Our plan is to continue our work with veteran farmers and mentorship/networking programs.

We have received a new BFRDP Grant and we will focus on:

1. Enhancing our existing courses & adding training modules for pasture beef production
2. Armed to Farm 2.0 Boot Camp
3. Intensive internship opportunities
4. Expanding our networking & mentoring systems to support a new generation of farmers
Questions?

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