



Mobilizing Veterans to Feed America

Who We Are

Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) is the nation's largest nonprofit assisting veterans and active duty members of the U.S. Armed Forces embark on careers in agriculture. Through the collaboration of the farming and military communities, we support those who choose to serve their country twice – once by defending it, and a second time by feeding it. We simultaneously offer veterans a new purpose on America's farms.

Rooted in our strong belief that veterans possess the unique skills and character needed to strengthen rural communities and create sustainable food systems, we recognize that agriculture additionally offers veterans purpose, opportunity, and physical and psychological benefits.

Our importance is two-fold. Veterans often look for a new mission when they exit the military. We have found that farming and a career in agriculture has a meaning beyond just a livelihood. Our project also helps with one of the biggest problems in agriculture – human capital. We cultivate the next generation of farmers and food leaders.



FVC Overview: Kitty O'Neal features Communications & Marketing Manager Natalie Monroe on KFBK



Army veteran Davon Goodwin: "The camaraderie you lose in the military, you gain through FVC"



Army veteran Marvin Frink: "Farming saved my life"

Our Roots



"I believe deeply in American agriculture and the rich reward it can give to all who take part in it. Sharing that opportunity with men and women coming home from war has been a wonderful and humbling experience."

FVC's founder Michael O'Gorman spent 4 decades growing three of the country's largest organic vegetable operations. Then in 2007 he read a study by the Carsey Institute documenting zip codes of those killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan. It showed our all volunteer military coming disproportionately from rural America. He thought "maybe those coming home from war would like careers on our nation's farms, and maybe I could help."

He met with three gold star mothers - Mary Tillman (mother of Pat Tillman), Dolores Kesterman and Nadia McCaffrey – who had all lost their sons in Iraq or Afghanistan. Fatalities were high in 2007, and the country was deeply divided. The idea of starting a campaign to create viable careers and places to heal on our nation's farms for men and women returning from war felt positive, optimistic, and healing.



Michael O'Gorman on Food + Farm + Facts podcast: What sparked the idea for FVC (at the 7 min mark)

What We Do

In February 2021 we celebrated 12 years as an organization! We **looked back at our history** - pivotal moments, and major milestones. We have seen tremendous growth since our start; our membership, which was a mere nine veteran members after year one, now stands at 30,000 veteran members nationwide.

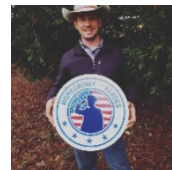


The **Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund** is a small grant program that purchases a piece of equipment the veteran has identified as making a crucial difference in their operation. Since 2011, \$3.5 million has been awarded to 800+ veterans. Further, through our **Geared to Give** program with Kubota Tractor Corporation, we honor five veterans annually by handing over the keys to a new tractor.

- [2021 Fellowship Announcement](#)
- [2021 Slideshow of Awardees](#)
- [Testimonials](#)
- [Alex Jauregui and his Hummerbee](#)
- [David Volkman: the impact on his hopyard](#)
- [Kubota awards two tractors to farmer veterans at Brantley Gilbert's property](#)



Homegrown By Heroes (HBH) is the official farmer veteran branding program of America. It certifies ranchers, farmers, and fisherman of all military eras to sell their product as veteran owned and produced. The label informs consumers that products were produced by military veterans, and allows veterans to differentiate their products in the marketplace.



Our **Stakeholders Conference** is the leading gathering for the military-to-agriculture movement, featuring education, workshops, distinguished speakers, guest panels, and networking. When we were established in 2008, no one was connecting veterans with the farming community. Today there are hundreds of organizations supporting this movement who look to us for leadership as the pioneer, and our conference is the principal symposium that brings all the players together.

- [1st Conference - Des Moines, IA, 2014](#)
- [Highlight reel from 2020 virtual conference](#)



State Chapters bridge the gap between a nationally driven movement and state and county level resources, and allow us to personalize the farmer veteran experience through individual needs. With 16 official state chapters and several more in active formation, we provide a means of grassroots support for farmer veterans within each chapter's territory.

Recent Accomplishments

April 2021: The Department of Veterans Affairs shared news of FVC. We gained 1,300 new members in 24 hours and ultimately welcomed over 2,000 veterans!

September 2021: At the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture annual meeting in Louisville, **FVC took full ownership of the Homegrown By Heroes label**, originally founded by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Member Stories

Read the stories of these **farmer veterans** who serve their communities by feeding them. Even more profiles can be found on our **website stories page**.

Materials Library

[FVC Brochure](#) | [Media Features](#) | [12 Year Timeline](#) | [Staff](#) | [Board of Directors](#)

Recent Newsletters: [Nov](#) | [Oct](#) | [Sept](#) | [August](#) | [July](#) | [June](#) | [May](#)

