

Workshop and Farm Tours Scheduled for Veterans who want to Farm or Ranch

In the last 10 years, almost a million of our military's servicemen and servicewomen have come from rural communities. As these veterans return home, they bring with them an opportunity to employ their passion, discipline, and sense of service to revitalize America's small farms and rural communities.

This spring the Center for Rural Affairs along with partnering organizations presented several workshops and farm tours to provide Veterans interested in starting their own farms or ranches with advice and resources.

Due to overwhelming participation in those successful workshops and tours, and high demand for more, we are currently planning farm tours and workshops for veterans and the public through the summer and early fall.

Farm tours in Kansas and Nebraska with established farmers will demonstrate successful systems and strategies. All tours will be handicap accessible, free of charge and lunch will be provided at no cost.

"While some veterans return home to jobs, many are returning to rural areas where jobs can be scarce," said Kathie Starkweather with the Center for Rural Affairs, who is managing the project. USDA's Risk Management Agency awarded funding to Center for Rural Affairs and its partners to introduce new veteran farmers and ranchers to various areas of agriculture (see press release [here](#)).

According to Starkweather, the long-term goal for this project is to help new veteran farmers and ranchers successfully establish farms and ranches in Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado and Missouri.

Farm tours will be held throughout July and August; a final workshop will be held in combination with a farm tour in Scottsbluff on August 17.

Farm Tour Locations Details:

Nebraska

Tuesday, August 7

Bluestem Farms, 9:00 a.m. - noon (multi-market produce farm), Madison, Nebraska

Mike Krueger Farm, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. (commercial cattle and grain farm, AgrAbility client)

Pierce, Nebraska (Download a [map here](#).)

Tuesday, August 14,

West Blue Farm morning (organic field grains, direct-market cattle and poultry, farm-transition to beinner), Milford, NE

Del Ficke Farm afternoon (commercial cattle and grain farm, farm partnership with sons, AgrAbility client), Milford, NE

Friday, August 17 - Workshop/Farm Tour combination

Workshop 9:00 a.m. - noon

North Platte NRD Office

100547 Airport Rd, Scottsbluff NE

Farm Tours - afternoon

Mitchell Valley Farm (organic practices, produce & small grains, CSA marketing)

Victory Hill Farm (goat dairy & cheesemaking, pork, chevon & eggs, marketing at farmstand and farmers' markets).

Kansas

Tuesday, July 31

Edgerton/Lawrence area: Gieringer's Orchard (pick-your-own and farmers' market sales of fruit and vegetables), Soaring Eagle Organic Farm (chickens and cattle, organic grains), Pendleton Country Market (vegetables, bedding plants & cut flowers sold at CSA and farmers' market), Red Tractor Farm (meat goats, vegetables, eggs), Lawrence Farmers Market tour.

September 19 and 20

Atwood/St. Francis area: tour of High Plains Food Cooperative member farms: “online farmers market” selling produce, meats, and other farm products into the Colorado Front Range

The workshops are free of charge to veterans, and lunch will be provided at no cost. Registration is requested for meal counts by calling the Center for Rural Affairs at (402) 617-7946. Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, Nebraska Farm Bureau, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Farm Credit Services are sponsoring the meals for attending veterans.

Individual assistance is available by contacting the Farmer Veteran Coalition at info@farmvetco.org or (530-756-1395, farm business and veteran benefits) and the Center for Rural Affairs at info@cfra.org (402-687-2100, farm programs).

Additional information on the workshop agendas and later farm tours is online at www.cfra.org/veteran_farmers_project.