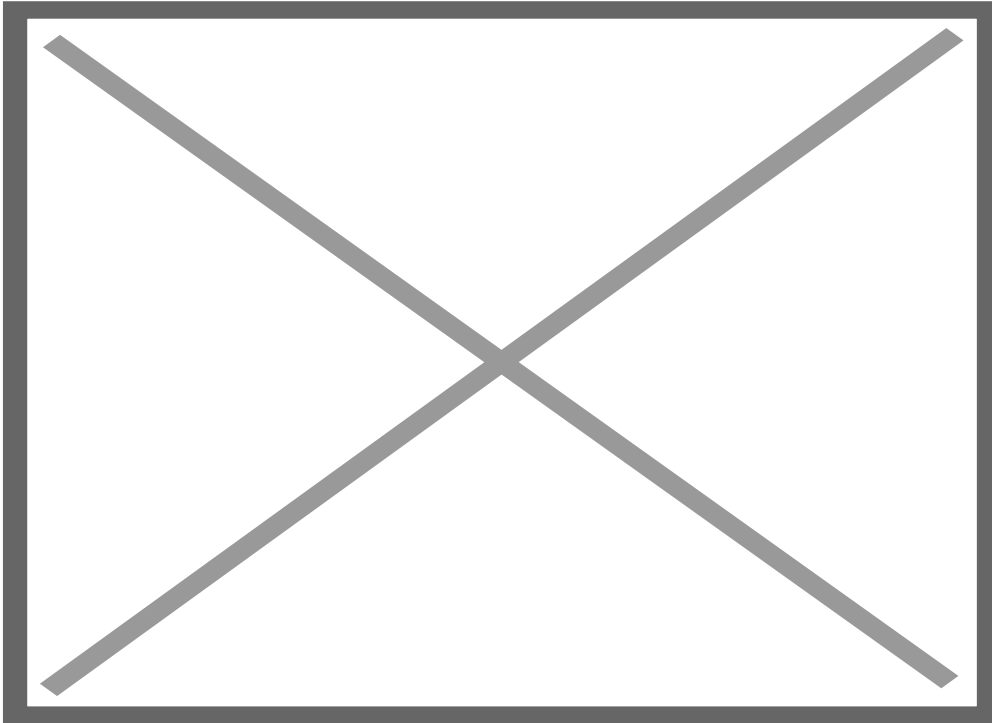




USDA Partners with Texas A&M to Help Veterans Seeking Agriculture Loans and Careers

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Secretary Perdue announced the partnership today in Dallas, Texas.

Dallas, TX, May 31, 2018 - U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced a partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Texas A&M's AgriLife Extension Service to help military veterans obtain loans and pursue careers as farmers and ranchers. Secretary Perdue joined local dignitaries, members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and community leaders at the Dallas Farmers Market to unveil the new pilot program.

USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) is collaborating with AgriLife Extension Service on the pilot, which is part of the Texas A&M Battleground to Breaking Ground project. The program makes it easier for veterans to meet federal requirements to get FSA direct [farm ownership](#) loans, which can help provide access to land and capital.

"Veterans retiring from active duty face many challenges, and this effort provides them with hands-on training and financial planning to help them succeed as new farmers and ranchers," said Secretary Perdue, who is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. "Through this pilot, veterans will learn how to build an agricultural business and how USDA can help them at every step of the way. We are committed to supporting veterans, whether they are starting or growing their farming or ranching operations. This is an important step in our efforts to strengthen the American economy and support our American heroes."

The pilot program, which will include 15 to 18 veterans, will roll out in three phases: an introductory workshop, a business planning curriculum, and a production curriculum over a period of 12 to 18 months.

Typically, loan applicants must participate in the business operations of a farm for at least three years during a 10-year period. However, as part of this pilot program, participants can combine the certificate they receive with their military leadership or management experience to satisfy this requirement. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, approximately 45 percent of armed service members are from rural America.

Pilot program applications will be accepted from interested veterans between June 15 and July 20, 2018, until 11 p.m. central standard time, [apply here](#). For more information about USDA programs, visit newfarmers.usda.gov/veterans or <https://www.farmers.gov>.

To learn about other ways USDA is supporting veterans, visit <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/initiatives/veterans>, and watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAeLqXHUU3w>.

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