



**Jeanette Lombardo, CEO
Farmer Veteran Coalition
(FVC)**



Geared to Give recipients recognized during the PBR World Finals in Dallas, TX.



2023 Farmer Veteran Coalition Stakeholders Conference in Washington, D.C.

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FROM SERVICE TO SOIL: HOW THE FARMER VETERAN COALITION CULTIVATES NEW AGRICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS

Jeanette Lombardo, CEO of the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC), is at the wheel of a movement intertwining the strength of military service with the resilience of American agriculture. Her leadership is driven by a deep commitment to the active, reservist, and veteran communities, recognizing their potential to revitalize the falling number of farmers in America, revitalize rural communities, and benefit from a quality of life they are well suited to.

Jeanette's journey with FVC is deeply personal. Raised on a farm in Northwestern Pennsylvania, her roots in agriculture run deep. Decades of agricultural industry advocacy work with American Agri Women and California Women for Agriculture, state and federal appointments with the USDA and EPA, combined with her career as an agribusiness lender, laid a solid foundation for her role at FVC. With a family history rich in military service, Jeanette found a perfect fit in an organization that bridges her agricultural expertise and respect for the service of veterans.

FVC's mission, "mobilizing Veterans to feed America," speaks to the dual paths offered to its members: careers in the agricultural sector or assistance in starting their own farm or ranch business. The organization is a national nonprofit based in Waco, Texas, rapidly approaching 50,000 members. For 15 years, FVC has fostered a new generation of farmers and food leaders by developing training programs for specific jobs in the ag sector, advertising employment opportunities through a partnership with AgCareers, and assisting Veterans with starting their own farming operations.

Jeanette's vision for FVC is clear: to be lifelong partners with our Farmer Veterans on their new journey. By listening to their needs, FVC has created programs like the Fellowship Fund and Homegrown By Heroes, and made available an online sales platform called MarketMaker. Looking to the future, FVC aims to expand the Homegrown By Heroes label into the retail space and assist with sales to food banks which serve food insecure active-duty personnel.



FVC staff at the 2023 Farmer Veteran Coalition Stakeholders Conference

FVC will continue to advocate for veterans by assisting in the development of virtual co-ops by regions that will open market access by negotiating marketing agreements and discounts for members on input costs.

FVC is also committed to enhancing capital access program development by developing a mentoring program (internships/apprenticeships) that will assist members with achieving the required experience to be eligible to apply for USDA FSA lending. Additionally, they will be conducting outreach and education on carbon farming, and aiding members with securing funds for the installation of conservation practices on their farms and ranches.

FVC's more than 26 state chapters are designed to help farmer veterans succeed by fostering local relationships that complement the national support system. Jeanette emphasizes that all services offered to veterans are FREE, underscoring FVC's commitment to accessible support. On October 27-29, 2024, FVC is set to host its Annual Stakeholders Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, which is an incredible time of learning and camaraderie.

Brian Brett, a poet and journalist, says, in a quote that encapsulates the spirit of FVC: "Farming is a profession of hope." Under Jeanette Lombardo's leadership, the Farmer Veteran Coalition is more than an organization; it is a lifeline for veterans transitioning to civilian life, offering them a new purpose and a new mission: strengthening rural communities and creating sustainable food systems.