



In the heart of the Rocky Mountains, in Yampa, Colorado, lies a flourishing market farm, Forever West Farms, co-founded in 2018 by an inspiring veteran, Taylor Drew. Taylor's journey to becoming a successful farmer and a beacon in the veteran community began with his participation in the Veterans to Farmers (VTF) course in 2017.

The impact of Veterans to Farmers (VTF) extends significantly beyond individual veterans to their families, communities, and the broader agricultural landscape. Veterans participating in this program have collectively help grow thousands of pounds of food each year. This achievement reflects not just a commitment to sustainable agriculture but also the successful reintegration of veterans into civilian life through meaningful and productive work. Additionally, with over 220 program graduates by 2023, VTF has made a substantial contribution to empowering veterans, helping them assimilate effectively into private citizenry while fostering a strong sense of community and camaraderie through agricultural education. For more detailed information, please visit their website:

<https://www.veteranstofarmers.org/>



Taylor's commitment to the veteran community didn't stop at farming. In 2019, he joined the VTF board to give back, embodying the mission of VTF – training veterans in agricultural systems, technologies, and business operations for a fulfilling and sustainable lifestyle. VTF offers a pathway for veterans to recover, learn, and contribute to addressing the nation's food insecurity.

The ethos of VTF resonates with the challenges faced by veterans in civilian life. Transitioning back to civilian life can be daunting, often exacerbated by physical injuries and mental health issues. VTF's curriculum and community provide a nurturing environment for veterans to channel their military skills – hard work, attention to detail, and service – into farming. It also offers therapeutic benefits for those dealing with trauma, including PTSD and TBI. VTF's approach extends beyond farming education. It connects veterans with resources for further training, grant opportunities, business development classes, and a supportive community. Veterans are encouraged to pursue their "Second Service" – to teach, support, and assist their fellow veterans, reinforcing the spirit of service and community.

