



*Servicemember*

*Agricultural*

*Vocation*

*Education*

# Monthly Newsletter

Volume 01 | Issue 09 | Servicemember Agricultural Vocation Education

## *Announcement*

GI Bill Students: The VA will be reaching out to all schools and inquire them to submit enrollment certificates as soon as possible to ensure payments are issued in a timely fashion. To read more see page 4.

The USDA provides resources for New Beginning Farmers and Ranchers. See page 4 for more details.

Ag producers experience frequent exposure to high risk noise and have the highest prevalence rates of hearing loss among all categories of workers. Agri-Safe is hosting a **FREE WEBINAR** about Reducing Noise Exposure and Protecting Your Health. See page 7 for more information and how to register.

## *Inside This Issue*

**PG. 2**

Wow! Making improvements one after another on the farm.

**PG. 3**

Migration for Pollination. Moving to the West.

**PG. 5**

Grants: Yes, may we have another?

**PG. 7**

Safety, safety, safety! Reducing Noise Exposure & Protecting Your Health.

## Continuing to Improve

During the month of August, we saw some major improvements on the farm. The first thing you see is a transformed garden, and the improvements continue as you travel down the farm. You can't miss it!

With the new addition of poured concrete slabs inside of the barn to install a weigh scale underneath the head gate along with three processing shoots, helps make the care of livestock will be more efficient. Imagine working with a 400-pound animal while knee deep in the mud during the middle of December. Now, picture the same operation but on a concrete slab. The crew on the farm is always trying to maintain this most cost-effective methods without added any stress to the animals.

The improvements are not stopping here. We are continuing to look at the ways to help the environment and improve the quality of our farm. Preparing the garden for Fall Crops. Starting to install holding pens for cattle. These innovative improvements will pour over into the education of recent and future students.



## Great Visit!



Richard and Gale Plinsky and Doug Albin (Doug E. Hansen Foundation)



## *“Let There Be Light!”*

After months of planning and working to bring electricity to the farm, it's finally going to happen. The farm is now prepared to have electricity installed. This addition is a much-needed element to the success of training. “Our future is looking brighter!” Not dependent on the natural light provided by the sun, individuals will be able to safely operate inside and out of the building on the farm. Also, this allows students to use power tools on site without the use generators.



## ***“On the Road Again!”***

Every year, Golden Prairie Honey Farms send our honeybees on road trip to the west coast to make the California almond harvest possible. Our bees are just a small portion of the millions of honeybees required to take on this task.

Almond trees are not pollinated by the wind easily, so commercial orchards in California requires honeybee colonies to efficiently pollinate and produce nuts. Most of us will imagine this moment with a single honeybee hive in a picturous orchard of almond trees covered with flowering blossoms. Actually, over a million acres of almond trees collectively bloom over a three-week period during the winter. Each acre requires about two bee hives. For the next few months, while traveling on the highway, take a look around and see if you see a colony traveling west.



## ***Upcoming Events***

***Information Booth and Honey Sales 5 September at the Fort Riley PX from 10 am – 5 pm***

***Next Bee Bootcamp 14 November 9 am – 3 am, sign up at [www.GoldenPrairieHoney.com](http://www.GoldenPrairieHoney.com)***

***Currently preparing our bees for transportation to California. This does not effect of store hours.***

***Tuesday – Friday 10 am – 6 pm and Saturday 11 am – 4 pm***

## ***Fall Feedings, preparing your hives to for the cold.***

It is important that you prepare your honeybees before the first deadly frost hits and the cold weather is here to stay. If your colony does not have enough food stored, it will be necessary to feed them sugar water. This is when a plan is essential in the Fall.

Most people will ask the common question, “How much food do my bees need for Winter”. Unfortunately, there is no single answer to this question. The answer will be based on the location of your hives geographically. The size of your hive body will also be dependent on the size of your colony and food storage requirement. Plan on having a “food box” for the bees that is full before the cold weather sets in. Hopefully, most of your beekeeping jobs will be done prior to the arrival of cold weather.

Feeding the colony sugar water must be completed well before the arrival of cold weather. Once temperatures are in the 50’s F, the colony will not be able to make the best use of the liquid feed. The extra moisture during late fall and winter will cause more problems inside the hive.

During times usually late Summer or even Fall, flowers may be in full bloom but not producing nectar due to drought. Beekeepers should check the food reserves of their colonies. Hives that are not full of food stores in the food super should be fed 2:1 sugar water. It will be best to feed inside the hive because the bees are hungry this time of year.

If you must practice open feeding, ensure that your station is far away from your hive. Be prepared for issues. If a lot of fighting is present, you may need additional feeding stations. Also, you will not only feed your colonies, you will also feed every wasp and yellow jacket in the area. This will not be the most economical strategy, but it is better than having colonies starving.

## *Attention GI Bill Students*

VA sees an increase in education claims due to peak enrollments every Fall and Spring. VA will be working with schools to make sure the increase in work is aligned with the typical timeliness of this season. The VA is reaching out to the schools and asking them to submit enrollment certificates as soon as possible so the VA can ensure payments are issued in a timely fashion.

Claims will be worked in the date order they are received by the VA. Without a need for schools to either hold or resubmit previously enrollments, VA expects to continue working the majority of the original (first time) enrollment and applications within 28 days and the majority of supplemental (re-enrollments) within 14 days during the Fall 2020 term.

In addition, the VA is prepared for the many impacts COVID-19 can have on students, on-line schooling, and institutions of higher learning. VA is prepared for any increased in workload for applications and enrollments due to the financial and economic impacts of COVID-19 to VA beneficiaries.

New laws allow VA to continue to pay work-study allowances at the full-rate of 25 hours per week even if you are unable to work those hours due to COVID-19. This protection is only available to you, the beneficiary, if you were already participating in a work-study program on March 1, 2020. These laws only protect your benefits until December 21, 2020. If you are enrolled solely online on December 22, 2020, VA will have to reduce your housing to the online rate effective that date (this means you will not owe back the resident rate housing received prior to December 22, but you will receive a reduced housing payment starting in January 2021 and continuing until you resume resident training.)

For more information, go to:

- <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>
- <https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/COVID19EducationBenefits.asp>
- <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/covid19faqs.asp>

## **USDA Resources for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers**

The USDA provides beginning Farmers and Ranchers with resources that helps you get started or grow your farming operation through a variety of programs and services. These programs range from farm loans to crop insurance, and conservation programs to assistance in a disaster.

The USDA considers anyone who has operated a farm or ranch for less than ten years to be a beginning farmer or rancher. While many of the USDA programs that are available support all farmers, regardless of how long they have been farming, special provisions are offered just for beginning farmer and ranchers.

The 2018 Farm Bill directed the USDA to stand up a new team to focus on serving beginning farmers and ranchers. Composed of staff representing Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Risk Management Agency, and Rural Development.

Learn more at:

<https://www.farmers.gov/manage/newfarmers>

<https://www.farmers.gov/manage/newfarmers/coordinators>

### **Additional Resources:**

**USDA New Farmers webpage and Discovery Tool**  
<http://www.usda.gov/newfarmers>

**FSA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Loans webpage** <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-loans/index>

**RMA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers webpage**  
<https://www.rma.usda.gov/Topics/Beginning-Farmers>

## Servicemember Agricultural Vocation Education Corp receives a \$4,300 grant for Online Learning Solutions

*Grant provided by Frontier Farm Credit Working Here Fund  
for Agriculture Education*

MANHATTAN, KANSAS- Servicemember Agricultural Vocation Education Corp received a \$4,300 grant for online learning solutions for students. The grant is provided through Frontier Farm Credit's *Working Here Fund*.

The Working Here Fund grant will be used to provide a socially distanced learning space for students to have access to the internet, laptops with up-to-date software, and a screen for online class presentations. With the current COVID-19 pandemic many students have been required to turn to online learning, but many do not have access to these necessities for online learning.

"The long-term goals for this project are to provide veterans, transitioning service members and others with the training needed to obtain a sustainable and rewarding career in agriculture," said Craig Bowser, President and CEO, Lt. Colonel, US Army. "To increase the number of farmers needed to help sustain our nation's food supply and help reduce the high unemployment level brought about by COVID-19 by helping people obtain careers in agriculture."

Classes will resume in September 2020 with the new learning space available for distance learning.

"We understand that by educating tomorrow's farmers today, we are supporting the future of rural communities," said Karla Rosell, regional vice president of retail operations at Frontier's Manhattan office.

Service Member Agricultural Vocation Education Corp is one of 3 organizations to receive an expanded *Working Here Fund* grant in the second quarter of 2020. Frontier Farm Credit awarded each organization up to \$10,000 for a total of \$26,700 to support projects focused on agricultural education, hunger, and nutrition, young and beginning producers or essential services and rural disaster relief.

### About Frontier Farm Credit

Frontier Farm Credit is a customer-owned financial cooperative proud to finance the growth of rural America, including the special needs of young and beginning producers. With \$2.2 billion in assets and \$482 million in members' equity, Frontier Farm Credit provides credit and insurance services to farmers, ranchers, agribusiness, and rural residents in eastern Kansas. Learn more at [www.frontierfarmcredit.com](http://www.frontierfarmcredit.com).



We are thrilled to announce that we are receiving a grant from Evergy's Hometown Economic Recovery Program! This grant will go towards increasing our orchard size, an irrigation system, a solar pump, and other necessities for the farm.



**Kansas AgrAbility Project**

@KSAgrAbility

Check out our upcoming AgrAbility Virtual State Fair. Follow along the entire month of October to learn more about AgrAbility across the country. Kansas will be featured on October 22. [#nifaimpacts](#) [#agrability](#) [twitter.com/AgrabilityVSF/...](#)



**Dept. of Agriculture** 

@USDA

The Agriculture Innovation Agenda is an effort to align USDA resources, programs & research to provide farmers with the tools they need to help position American ag as a leader in the effort to meet future global demands. Learn more: [usda.gov/aia](#) [#USDAInnovation](#)



## Free Webinar! Veteran Farmers: Reducing Noise Exposure & Protecting Your Health

Thursday, September 10, 2020  
Noon-1:00 pm CT

**Summary:** Ag producers experience frequent exposure to high noise and have among the highest prevalence rates of hearing loss among all categories of workers. Additionally, noise exposure impacts multiple organ systems, contributing to cardiovascular disease, hypertension, obesity, and other highly prevalent diseases. Although the effects of noise can be mitigated through use of hearing protection and other strategies, these methods are highly underused in this worker group. In this Webinar designed for agricultural producers who are military veterans, learners will learn how to identify hazardous noise sources, strategies to reduce exposure to hazardous noise; and select and use of strategies to protect themselves from the negative effects of noise on their hearing and general health.

**Intended Audience:** Military Veterans engaged in agricultural production

**Objectives:** Upon completion of this training, participants will be able to-

1. Identify harmful noise sources which have the potential to cause hearing damage and other health effects;
2. Identify strategies to reduce exposure to hazardous noise;
3. Describe appropriate selection and use of personal protective equipment

[Register Here](#)

## Presenter



**Marjorie McCullagh, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, COHN-S, FAAOHN, FAAN**

Marjorie McCullagh is Professor in the School of Nursing. She holds a PhD in nursing from the University of Michigan and has 20 years of clinical, teaching, and research experience in hearing conservation. Dr. McCullagh's career has focused on occupational health and safety, particularly as it relates to use of personal protection devices among farm operators and their families. Since 1985 she has had an active program of research in mitigating hazardous occupational exposures. She has conducted several randomized clinical trials, comparing the effectiveness of several approaches to influencing use of personal protective equipment. Dr. McCullagh is an associate professor and Director of the Occupational Health Nursing program at the University of Michigan School of Nursing.

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