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Register Now For Iowa's First Farmer Veteran Conference

New group will hold first annual conference Dec. 14; ag-oriented military vets urged to attend.

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A new organization that was formed earlier this year, the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Iowa, will hold its first annual conference Dec. 14, 2013 in Des Moines. Military veterans interested in agriculture are urged to attend. A comprehensive agenda filled with interesting speakers and topics has been set for this day-long event. It's free and open to the public but space is limited and registration is required. To register in advance, visit the [coalition's website](#).

The conference will begin at 8 a.m. and run until 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14, with a reception from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. It will be held at the Easter Seals Iowa conference center (Camp Sunnyside) at 401 NE 66th Ave., Des Moines, IA 50313.

FARMER VETERAN COALITION: A new organization, the coalition will hold Iowa's first ever conference for farmers and others who are military veterans and interested in agriculture. Registration is now open for the conference. The Farmer Veteran Coalition of Iowa will host the event Dec. 14 from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Easter Seals Iowa, 401 NE 66th Avenue in Des Moines.

There will be ample social and business networking opportunities for farming veterans and those seeking jobs and careers in ag related businesses. The event will feature educational workshops on topics including business development, talking with lenders and landowners, tax issues, utilizing veterans and farming assistance programs, and how to find jobs and succeed in agricultural business careers.

Farmers who are military veterans and professionals working with veterans are urged to attend

The conference features expert agriculture attorneys, accountants, agribusiness professionals, educators, USDA personnel and other veteran service providers as well as a keynote address from Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey. Veteran farmers and professionals working with veteran farmers are encouraged to attend. Registration is free but seating is limited; learn more at the [Iowa Farmer Veteran Coalition website](#).

Ed Cox is staff attorney at Drake Agricultural Law Center and chair of the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Iowa. He says, "This conference is a first for Iowa and a real resource for our veterans exploring and returning to farming and other agricultural careers after service. More than 40% of veterans are from rural areas and the unemployment rate for young veterans returning from service is more than 20%. Our goal is to connect veterans with farming and meaningful agricultural employment."

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Presentations and workshops at the conference include: maximizing veteran and ag programs for farming; legal and tax issues; education for careers in Iowa agriculture; translating military skills to ag jobs;

alternative land access and talking to landowners; business development and talking to lenders; hot ag careers in the next decade; marketing opportunities; and a session featuring a current farmer veteran. There will also be opportunities to meet and network with other veterans. A meal provided will include products raised by veteran farmers.

Tracy Keninger, director of the Rural Solutions and Assistive Technology Center at Easter Seals Iowa, says, "Easter Seals Iowa is pleased to host this conference as we have a long history of supporting veterans and farmers in Iowa communities."

Coalition seeks to help military veterans grow and succeed as Iowa's next generation of farmers and ag business professionals

Funds for this project have been provided by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Partners supporting the event include Drake Agricultural Law Center, Easter Seals Iowa, Iowa Agricultural Development Division, Beginning Farmer Center, First State Bank, Iowa Farm Bureau, USDA, Farm Service Agency and Risk Management Agency.

[The Farmer Veteran Coalition of Iowa](#) empowers veterans to thrive in Iowa agriculture. It assists military veterans to develop, grow and succeed as Iowa's next generation of farmers and agribusiness leaders; connects military veterans with resources and networks of information, programs, and organizations to help them transition to agricultural careers; identifies collaborations and resources between agribusiness, farming, education and military communities and promotes opportunities for all military veterans in all sectors of Iowa's agricultural economy.