



2020
Volume 29 No. 1

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AgrAbility of Wisconsin
is a partnership
between the
UW Extension and
Easter Seals Wisconsin.



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Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

WISCONSIN FORMING A FARMER VETERAN COALITION

JAMES PAQUETTE;

FVC WISCONSIN COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

A new chapter is beginning this year for farmer veterans in Wisconsin. Local veterans under the leadership of Joe Koch from Woodville, WI are forming the Wisconsin chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition.

The Farmer Veteran Coalition, or FVC, is a national nonprofit whose mission is to cultivate a new generation of farmers and food leaders, and develop viable employment and meaningful careers through the collaboration of the farming and military communities. FVC believes that veterans possess the unique skills and character needed to strengthen rural communities and create sustainable food systems. For veterans especially, FVC believes that agriculture offers purpose, opportunity, and physical and psychological benefits.

For years now, veterans have been gathering in small side groups at events hosted by others such as the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES) and the Wisconsin Farmers Union. There they would discuss the ongoing needs of the farmer veteran community, and aligning with many years of service to

their country, how they could better serve their local food communities.

In February of 2020, back before masks and COVID-19 became a part of everyday life, a small group of veterans met at the MOSES conference in La Crosse, WI and Joe Koch took charge. They discussed how veterans needed help now more than ever, and how now was the time to form our own local chapter of the FVC.

The FVC at the national level is able to support veteran farmers through its Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund, a grant designed to assist beginning farmers with the completion of dedicated projects. Some of the most common requested assistance go towards All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), beekeeping equipment, breeding livestock, bulk feed, fencing, scholarships, storage freezers, tractor implements, and walk-behind tractors. All applicants are also entered for a chance to be given a free tractor from Kubota. The FVC is also able to help with marketing via its Homegrown By Heroes brand, a mark to showcase that the farmer's products are veteran owned and produced.

Continued on next page...

The goal of the Wisconsin Chapter of the FVC is to bring that same energy and compassion to a more local level. We want to find mentors, teachers, fellow servicemen and women, who can bring the camaraderie developed overseas back to their local communities. Now more than ever, we need to come together as a community to support one another. As Admiral Hopwood once wrote in "The Laws of the Navy,"

On the strength of one link in the cable,

Dependeth the might of the chain,

Who knows when thou mayest be tested?

So live that thou bearest the strain!

You can find more information on the FVC at farmvetco.org and you can contact the local Wisconsin chapter on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/FVCofWisconsin/.

And finally, we want to give a special thank you to support from Compeer Finance, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, MOSES, and AgrAbility for their support with starting this Chapter and welcoming a veteran friendly farm organization to Wisconsin.

AgrAbility Virtual State Fair

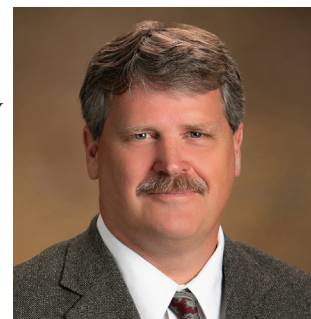
October 1-31, 2020
Join us daily as selected states
highlight what they offer!

AgrAbility of Wisconsin
featured on October 15th!

Facebook: @AgrAbility Virtual State Fair
Twitter: @AgrAbilityVSF

Staff Spotlight: Paul Leverenz

After 28 years of service and leadership with the AgrAbility program, the time has come for me to step away and accept a new challenge as President/CEO of Easterseals Wisconsin.



Over the years, I worked with many farm families in transition periods. Some families were transferring the farm from one generation to the next while others were transitioning to learning to live and farm with a disability. During those times I've seen the stress and frustration as well as the joy of triumphs when people made the transitional journey and realized that the result of the transition was a positive and successful one.

I feel that I can relate now too many of those same things that I heard consumers say over the years: concern of what lies ahead and fear of letting go of what I know. I'm encouraged by those experiences and know that all will be alright in my time of transition, as I have learned by watching when our consumers have taken the steps on faith that all has worked out and will be as it should.

It has been my privilege and true honor to have shared the kitchen table or spent some time leaning on the bulk tank with so many AAW farmers over the years. To all of you, I say thank you.

With this personal change, the Easterseals side of the AgrAbility partnership will transition leadership to Jeff Kratochwill, a farm kid and true leader well-known in the community and ready to lead the program into the future. I will still be around and hope to see some of you at events in the future. For now, make sure the gate's closed, the tractor's full of fuel, and you're headed in the right direction.

Responding to the Emotional Toll of Farm Stress

Lori Zierl, Professor, UW-Madison Division of Extension;
Human Development & Relationship Educator, Pierce County

During a recent webinar with AgrAbility of Wisconsin, Lori was able to provide some additional resources and places to ask for help if you are dealing with the effects or emotional toll of farm stress. You can find and watch the recording of the webinar on our website.

Resources:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255

WI Department of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection
Farm Center
1-800-942-2474

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration
1-800-662-4357

Harvest of Hope
1-608-836-1455

Greater Good In Action from UC Berkeley
<https://ggia.berkeley.edu/>

Dimensions of Health Video (SAMHSA)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDzQdRvLAfM&feature=youtu.be>

American Institute of Stress
<https://www.stress.org/how-stress-affects-your-body>

Resilient Farms, Families, Businesses & Communities:
Responding to Stress
<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/farmstress/>

Find COVID-19
Resources on our
website here:

[https://bit.ly/
AAWCOVID19](https://bit.ly/AAWCOVID19)

REMINDER: Don't forget to safely share the roads with farmers

Cheryl Skjolaas, Extension Agricultural Safety Specialist; Department of Biological Systems Engineering

Passing slower moving farm implements needs to be done with caution. Motorists are reminded that it is illegal to pass a farm implement or an agricultural commercial motor vehicle in a no passing zone; when passing in a passing zone, be sure there's a safe passing distance; and look ahead for other vehicles and for driveways into farms or fields, intersections and road structures that may cause the farm implement operator to change road position.

Find more information and listen to an
interview here:
<http://bit.ly/AAWroadsafety>





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Search AgrAbility of Wisconsin and like our page to get news, updates, and the latest from the AgrAbility office.



Search "AgrAbilityWI" and follow us for fun facts, resources, and updates!

This material is based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under special project number 2018-4150-28721. UW-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming including Title IX and ADA. If you need this material in another format, please contact AgrAbility of Wisconsin at (608) 262-9336 or AgrAbility@wisc.edu.

Farm Service Agency Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers direct and guaranteed loans to farmers and ranchers to promote, build and sustain family farms for a thriving agricultural economy.

Farm ownership, operating, and emergency loans are available under the Direct Loan Program. Farm ownership, operating, and conservation loans are available under the Guaranteed Loan Program. FSA offers two types of guarantees under the Land Contract Guarantee Program.

The goal of FSA's farm loan programs is to help farmers and ranchers obtain commercial credit.

To learn more about FSA and their programs reach out to one of our team. We can help!



2020 AgrAbility
National Training
Workshop;
Canceled!