

## **Farmer Veteran Opportunity Act of 2018**

The Farmer Veteran Opportunity Act of 2018 expands support for veterans in agriculture. Introduced by leaders of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow and Chairman Pat Roberts, the legislation ensures all new veterans are eligible for support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The bill also makes risk management tools like crop insurance more affordable, expands access to land and capital, and prioritizes training and education opportunities for veterans.

Specifically, this legislation:

- **Streamlines eligibility requirements to allow all new veterans to benefit from support.**
  - Clarifies the term farmer veteran to expand support to all new veterans, including those who have existing experience in agriculture, in addition to those starting a new a new career on the farm.
- **Makes risk management tools more affordable and accessible for farmer veterans.**
  - Crop Insurance: Waives administrative fees for catastrophic risk protection, guarantees veterans receive a higher premium subsidy, and allows yield flexibility.
  - Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): Eliminates service fees and reduces premiums for additional coverage.
  - Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP): Covers 90% of losses due to disease or natural disaster for veterans who produce livestock, honeybees, or farm raised fish.
- **Improves access to loans and land for veterans starting and expanding their farms.**
  - Down Payment Loans: Allows veterans to be eligible for loans to cover down payments on land when purchasing real estate.
  - Interest Rate Reduction Program: Prioritizes veterans to receive reduced interest rates on guaranteed loans through the Farm Service Agency.
  - Conservation Reserve Program Transfer Incentive Program: Facilitates the transfer of Conservation Reserve Program land from retiring farmers and ranchers to veteran farmers.
- **Prioritizes veteran farmers in training and education programs to help them start and expand their businesses.**
  - Food Safety Outreach Program: Gives grant funding priority to projects designed to help veteran farmers meet food safety standards.
  - Federal Crop Insurance Education: Adds a special emphasis on veteran farmers to help them navigate their crop insurance options so they can best protect their assets.