West Virginia Organizations Form
Vets to Ag Advisory Council

Fairlea, W.Va. – Last week during the State Fair of West Virginia, a Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Advisory Council was formed to establish a cooperative body to tackle veteran issues through agriculture in West Virginia. Members in attendance were the Farm Credit of the Virginians, the Herschel “Woody” Williams Huntington Veterans Medical Center, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA), WV Department of Veterans Affairs, WV National Guard, WV State Extension Service and WVU Center for Veteran, Military and Family Programs. Council members not in attendance included West Virginia Veteran producer Sky Edwards, Marshall University Office of Military and Veteran Affairs and Joshua Thaxton, Walmart.

"We found there is a lot of organizations focused on helping veterans through agriculture. To accomplish our individual goals and maximize resources to interested veterans, we need to be working together. This is too important to worry about who gets credit,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt.

Participants discussed current programs available, as well as services offered to veterans and service men and women. The council held a round-table discussion to examine ways members could work together to better serve their constituent groups. Feedback was also taken on the current activities of the WVDA Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture program.

“Our hope is to establish avenues of communications for veterans who want to pursue agriculture. That way no matter the organization they first contact, they
will obtain the proper information or aid they are seeking. We want to make this as easy as possible for the veteran community,” said WVDA Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Coordinator Dane Gaiser.

The group ended the meeting by establishing possible next steps for the council which include creating specific goals, as well as strategies for implementation.

For questions or more information, contact Dane Gaiser at vetstoag@wvda.us or 304-558-2210.

More information about the WVDA Veterans to Agriculture program can be found https://agriculture.wv.gov/divisions/executive/Pages/Veterans-and-Warriors-to-Agriculture.aspx

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

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