

**News Release**  
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**Military vets, farmers invited to free ag business plan seminar**

Knowing how to grow things is only half the battle when it comes to making money from farming. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that the median farm income for 2014 will be *negative* \$1,626, and over 90 percent of all farm households will rely on multiple sources of income. So farmers also need to know how to “put the pencil” to their operations to ensure they are maximizing profits.

To help them do that, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) will sponsor a “Farm Business Planning Short Course” to help “West Virginia Veterans to Agriculture” participants and the rest of the farm community develop business plans that can steer them toward the black side of the ledger sheet.

The free seminar will be held at Milton Pumpkin Park Saturday, Sept. 20 from 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Participants will explore the components of a business plan and work with a three-page template they can customize. The focus of the course will be beekeeping and specialty crops, common products for West Virginia’s small farmers.

While there is no cost for the program, pre-registration is required. Contact Beth Ann Earl at [bethann.earl@gmail.com](mailto:bethann.earl@gmail.com) or WVDA’s Marketing & Development Division at 304-558-2210.

“Not every farmer is concerned with making money. Some just farm to have fresh meat and produce for their own families,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick. “However, there is a huge opportunity for West Virginia farmers to make money. We consume over \$7 billion in food each year, yet we produce less than \$1 billion. That’s a gap we need to close for the good our state’s economy.”

The instructor will be Doolarie Singh-Knights, Ph.D, WVU Extension Assistant Professor.

“Research has shown that the most useful and relevant business plans for profitable small businesses are those that clearly focus on three critical factors to success, namely production, marketing and finances. The three-page business plan will simplify the business planning process by helping ‘agripreneurs’ develop or refine practical action plans,” said Dr. Singh-Knights.

The Veterans to Agriculture project was started by WVDA to help veterans find meaningful and therapeutic occupations in agriculture by providing them with training, resources and materials to develop their own farm-related businesses.