July 2014

Supporting Our Veteran Farmers

Overview

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Services receive preference for NRCS conservation programs offered in the 2014 Farm Bill. These voluntary conservation programs benefit both agricultural producers and the environment, and include financial and technical assistance as well as easements.

Vonita Murray served in the United States Navy from 1994 to 1996. She was injured in the line of duty and was honorably discharged.

Helping People Help the Land

Benefits

Preference will be given to eligible Veteran Farmers or Ranchers applying for several types of conservation financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits. These include improved water and air quality, conserved surface and ground water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, and improved or created wildlife habitat.

CSP helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance — the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

Eligibility

An eligible Veteran Farmer or Rancher:

- meets the definition of a Beginning Farmer or Rancher
- has not operated a farm or ranch; or hasn't operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 consecutive years
- was discharged or released, under conditions other than dishonorable, from the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, its reserve components and the National Guard

For a legal entity or joint operation to be considered a Veteran Farmer or Rancher entity, all members must meet the above definition. Veteran Farmers or Ranchers may also qualify as a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher by meeting additional criteria.

How to Apply

Visit your local USDA Service Center to apply or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted.

More Information

For more information visit your local USDA Service Center or www.nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill.

To learn more about assistance for veterans provided by other USDA agencies, visit: www.usda.gov, or www.outreach.usda.gov/Veterans.htm

Find Your Local USDA Service Center

http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/

NRCS Agriculture Engineer Ha Truong (right) discusses soil quality with veteran farmer Vonita Murray to design a conservation plan that fits her farming needs.

www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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