

ARKANSAS
AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10/25/2016

Contact: Adriane Barnes, (501) 516-6255, adriane.barnes@arkansas.gov

Farmer-Veterans Honored at Homegrown by Heroes Farm to Fork Evening

Little Rock, Arkansas – Farmer- Veterans from across the state were recently invited to The Farm at Barefoot Bend, near Lonsdale, for a Farm to Fork Evening. The event offered farmer-veterans an opportunity to network with fellow farmers and veterans to discuss existing opportunities and available assistance, including the Homegrown by Heroes program. The evening concluded with a presentation of official signs to Arkansas Homegrown by Heroes members. Fresh food from the Helton farm and other Arkansas producers was prepared by Bistro Catering of Bryant and Artisan Chef Bonner Cameron.

The Farm at Barefoot Bend owned by Damon and Jana Helton was a specially chosen site as Damon Helton was the first member of the Arkansas Homegrown by Heroes program. Helton, whose military service has taken him to Iraq and Afghanistan, is passionate about farmer-veteran opportunities because he says “This place healed me,” - referring to his efforts to make The Farm at Barefoot Bend a successful farming operation.

When consumers see a Homegrown by Heroes sign they know the food they are purchasing was grown in Arkansas by an Arkansas veteran. The Arkansas Homegrown by Heroes program is proud to honor all of the following farmer-veterans as new members for 2016:

- Joe Laroche of Rogers
- Adrian Sopshire of Mulberry
- William Hanna of Bentonville
- Travis Appel of Springdale
- Mark Harris of Searcy
- Michael Vass of Rogers
- Thomas McCutchen of Wynne
- Patrick Thompson of Lonoke
- Keith McGill of West Fork
- Johnny Hall of Jonesboro

To participate in this free program, farmers must be a veteran or currently serving as an active duty, National Guard or Reserve member of the United States Armed Forces. Those that are a part of the program will receive a personalized metal sign. The Homegrown by Heroes programs was founded by the Kentucky

Department of Agriculture in 2013 and is administered by the Farmer Veteran Coalition. Learn more by contacting Arkansas Homegrown by Heroes Program Coordinator Rachael Tucker at 501-219-6376, or visit <http://www.farmvetco.org/homegrown-by-heroes/>.

The AAD is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation.

###

The Arkansas Agriculture Department offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.