Relevance
American farmer/ranchers are disappearing at an alarming rate. With the average age of the American producer at 57.5 years old, our nation’s food security could be challenged over the next 20 years. Many veterans are pursing self-employment and turning to agriculture-based enterprises to accomplish their goals. Many military members come from rural areas and when they transition out of the military, they wish to return to these areas; however, unemployment in rural farming areas is higher than urban areas. Many veterans also struggle to transition to civilian life after leaving the military. Farming and ranching has become a highly sought after career for many veterans providing opportunities for self-sustainability, therapeutic healing, meaningful and flexible self-employment, and continued service, among other benefits.

The most challenging barriers for veterans entering into production agriculture are access to capital and access to land. Veterans seeking funding for their farm enterprise have faced several lender challenges in qualifying for financing. Among those challenges are creating viable business plans, obtaining relevant education, and acquiring skills and experience.

Research has shown that this population is able to achieve higher levels of financial performance if they have a complete business plan and utilize standard financial management practices. Participants of BGBG Phase 1-3 graduate the program with these foundational skills that are integral to any successful agriculture operation.

BGBG Target Audience:

Military Veterans

Active Duty Military

Family Members of Veterans & Active Duty

All Beginning Farmer/Rancher non-veterans

BGBG is funded by the USDA National Institute of Food & Agriculture
The **BGBG** project is a 3-phase training program conducted over 12 months, providing veterans with hands-on training and financial planning.

### BGBG Participant Benefits:

1. Development of a business plan and have it professionally reviewed
2. Education in business planning including goal setting, risk management, business management, operations planning, financial planning, veteran resources, and more
3. Online and hands-on education in agriculture enterprise production
4. Hands-on skill building with mentors and/or through educational workshops
5. Individual Education Plans developed specifically for each participant, including referrals to additional programs
6. Disability specific technical assistance to improve overall quality of life and increase farm and ranch sustainability
7. Assistance in applying for additional programs including financial assistance (grants,loans)
8. One-on-one veteran transition services and coaching
9. Connection to a network of veteran farmers/ranchers and other veteran support organizations

### BGBG goals:

- Increase the number of veteran and other new and beginning farmer/ranchers through:
  - Face-to-face and online educational training in farm management and production-specific agriculture practices
  - Individualized educational planning and guidance to support diverse agriculture business interests
  - Hands-on learning opportunities connected to online course content
  - Peer-to-peer mentor support

- Enhance the sustainability of Texas’ new veteran beginning farmer/ranchers
- Offer an array of veteran transitional and disability support services to reduce self-employment barriers for veterans (particularly those with disabilities) to enter into production agriculture by providing veterans the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions to start, establish, and manage successful agriculture enterprises

### To accomplish these goals **BGBG** will:

- Enhance the sustainability of Texas’ new veteran beginning farmer/ranchers
- Offer an array of veteran transitional and disability support services to reduce self-employment barriers for veterans (particularly those with disabilities) to enter into production agriculture by providing veterans the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions to start, establish, and manage successful agriculture enterprises