

**Chairman Jerry Moran Opening Statement  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies**

**Hearing to Review Opportunities and Benefits for Military Veterans in Agriculture**

**April 5, 2016**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

This hearing will come to order. Good afternoon. The purpose of today's hearing is to review the opportunities and benefits for military veterans in agriculture.

We have before us today Mr. Lanon Baccam, Deputy Under Secretary and Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison at USDA; Mr. Gary LaGrange, President of Soldier Agricultural Vocation Education, from Manhattan, Kansas; Ms. Alison Perry, Executive Director of the Central Oregon Veterans Ranch; and Mr. Paul Kanning, owner of Tom Tilda Farm in Montana. I appreciate all of you for taking the time to be here today.

I am especially proud to have a fellow Kansan here today to tell you all about the great things happening in Manhattan with the Soldier Agricultural Vocation Education program, also known as the SAVE program. The SAVE program provides transition assistance, training, and therapy on a training farm so that veterans can be equipped to farm on their own, and I look forward to Mr. LaGrange telling you today about the impact that the program is making in veterans' lives. Also, I'd like to thank Chief Ulrick for joining Mr. LaGrange to share some of his experiences with SAVE.

As you all know, the President's budget requested a number of increases to enhance opportunities in the agricultural sector for military veterans, so I appreciate the insight you all bring on these efforts.

I think I speak for everyone in saying we are anxious to hear from today's witnesses about their experiences, so I will now turn to our Ranking Member, Senator Merkley, for his opening remarks.