Many military veterans call Josephine County their home, and for those looking for a second career, agriculture may be an excellent option. Designed specifically for veterans, the Growing Veteran Agripreneurs program has trained future farmers in the Rogue Valley for the past two years.

This beginning farmer training program is led by Maud Powell, an Associate Professor of Practice with OSU Extension Service who specializes in small farms. Maud enjoys building relationships within the program and believes that veterans often make great farmers, in part because of their discipline and reliability. Each year, Maud works in close coordination with the Josephine County Veteran Service Office to recruit interested veterans and guide them through a four-part training centered on small-scale, commercial agriculture. Over a 30 week immersive experience, veterans learn practical farming knowledge about the entire process, from planting their first seeds to harvesting a crop. Each part of the training focuses on a different aspect of farming, including operational considerations, managing a business, site-visits to the student's property, 15 local farm tours, and monthly Zoom check-ins for one-on-one advice.

Although a significant time investment, the Growing Veteran Agripreneurs program builds on an individual’s own small farm dream - realizing a personal goal is a motivation that keeps veterans engaged throughout the learning season. Thanks to a grant from the USDA, veterans can attend the program for $50.00. There is still time to participate in this year’s training. Registration is due by March 5, 2021, and the course runs from March 10 through October 10, 2021.

For more information, please contact Maud at 541-776-7371 (maud.powell@oregonstate.edu) or visit our website events page to register: https://extension.oregonstate.edu/county/josephine/events.

By Cheryl Leitch for OSU Extension