



Veterans in Agriculture

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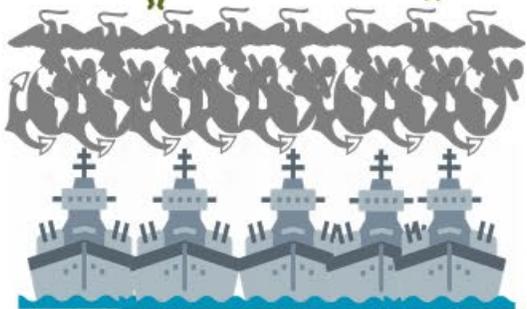
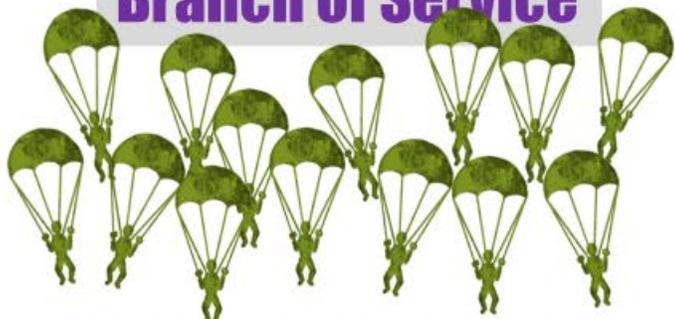


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FCA VETERAN INFOGRAPHIC

Branch of Service



Years of Service



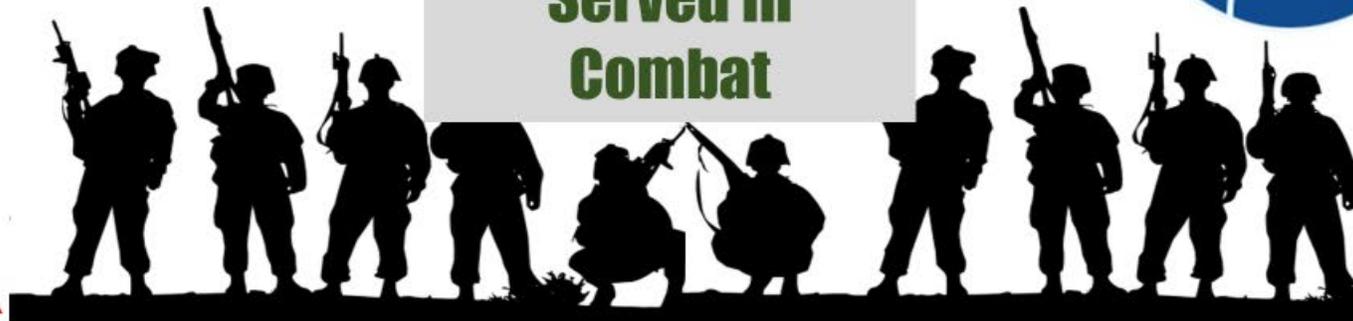
Afghanistan Belgium
Germany Iraq
Japan Korea
Kosovo Kuwait
Okinawa Poland
Qatar



1 Active Duty Spouse



Served in Combat





Overview

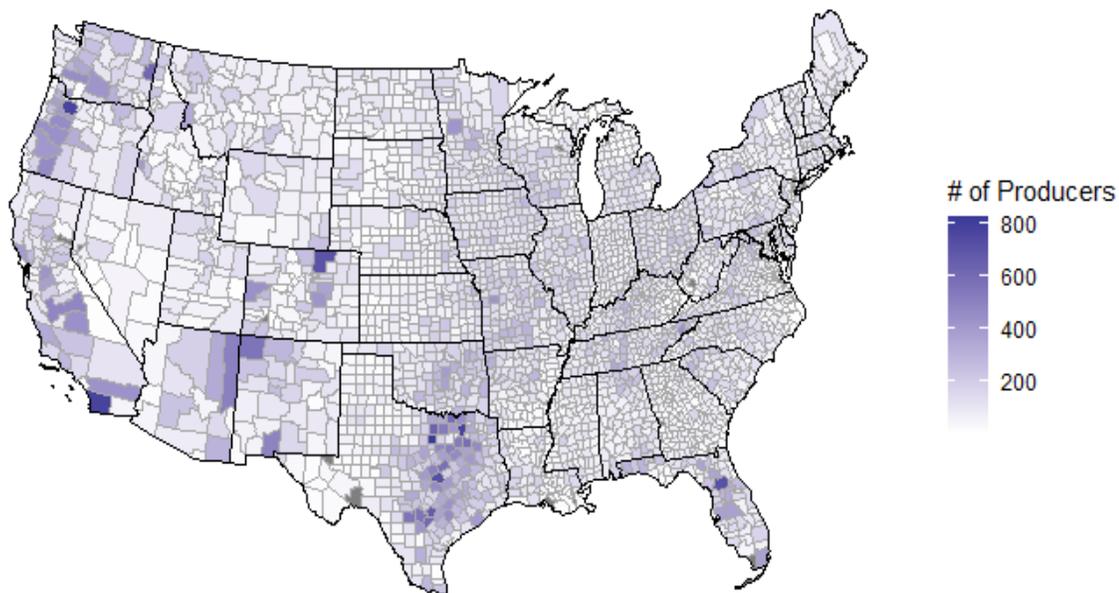
- ▶ There are approximately 17.6 million veterans in the United States.
 - Veterans accounted for approximately 7 percent of the population over 18.
 - Approximately 17 percent lived in rural (non-metropolitan) counties, vs. 14 percent of the overall U.S. adult population.
- ▶ As of 2022, there were:
 - 305,753 veteran producers
 - ✓ 9 percent of all producers
 - 289,372 operations with at least one veteran producer
 - ✓ 15 percent of all operations
 - Operations with at least one veteran producer accounted for 9 percent of U.S. agricultural sales.
- ▶ *Census of Agriculture definition: “producers with military service”*
 - *Proxy for veterans. Using the term “veteran” for conciseness.*



Variation in the geographic distribution of veteran producers is muted after adjusting for the total number of producers

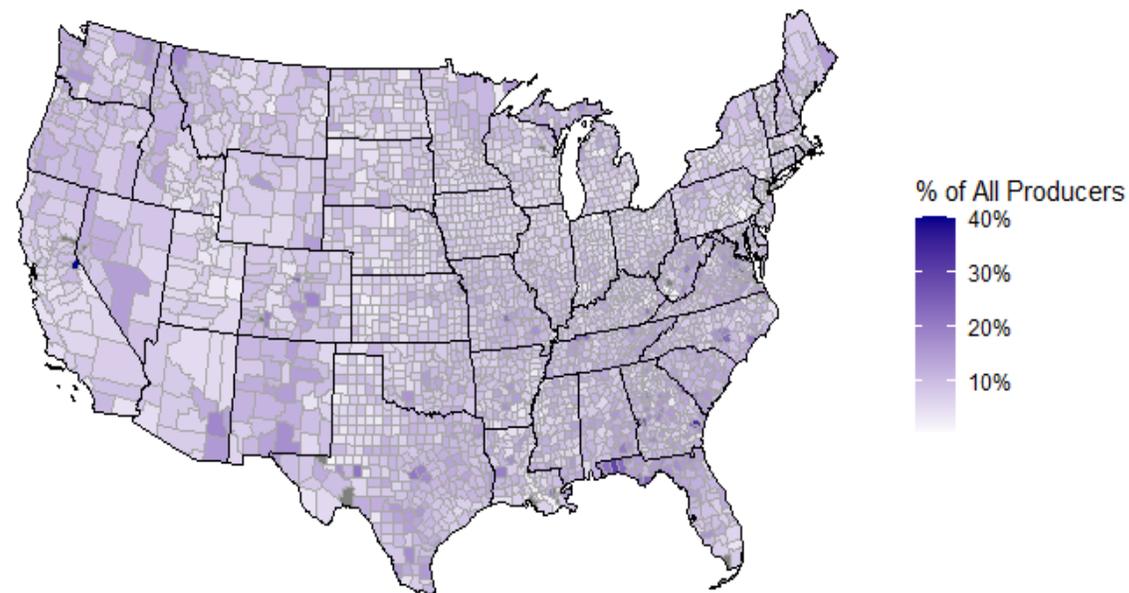
Number of Veteran Producers

2022 Census of Agriculture



Veteran Producers as Percent of All Producers

2022 Census of Agriculture



Source: 2022 Census of Agriculture, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service



Veteran producers: commodity distribution

- ▶ Over half of veteran producers are concentrated in cattle and other crops (tobacco, cotton, sugarcane, hay, and other crops).

Commodity	Veteran producers	Non-veteran producers
Beef Cattle Ranching and Farming	28.4%	27.1%
Other Crop Farming	27.1%	22.7%
Oilseed and Grain Farming	12.7%	17.2%
Aquaculture and Other Animal Production	10.8%	10.0%
Fruit and Tree Nut Farming	6.1%	5.5%
Sheep and Goat Farming	4.5%	4.1%
Poultry and Egg Production	4.2%	4.1%
Greenhouse, Nursery, and Floriculture Production	2.4%	3.1%
Vegetable and Melon Farming	2.1%	2.5%
Hog and Pig Farming	0.8%	1.3%
Dairy Cattle and Milk Production	0.4%	1.6%
Cattle Feedlots	0.4%	0.6%

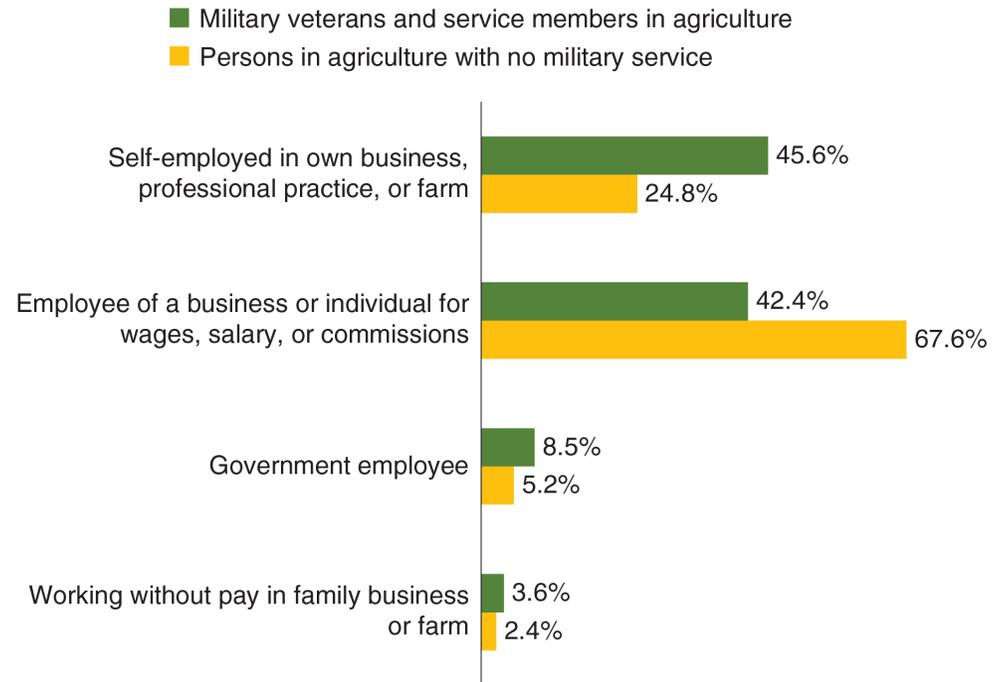
Source: 2022 Census of Agriculture, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service



Veterans and job function

- ▶ Veterans and military service members working in agriculture are more likely to be self-employed than those with no military service, and less likely to be an employee.

Persons in agriculture by military service status and class of worker, 2013-17 (5-year average)



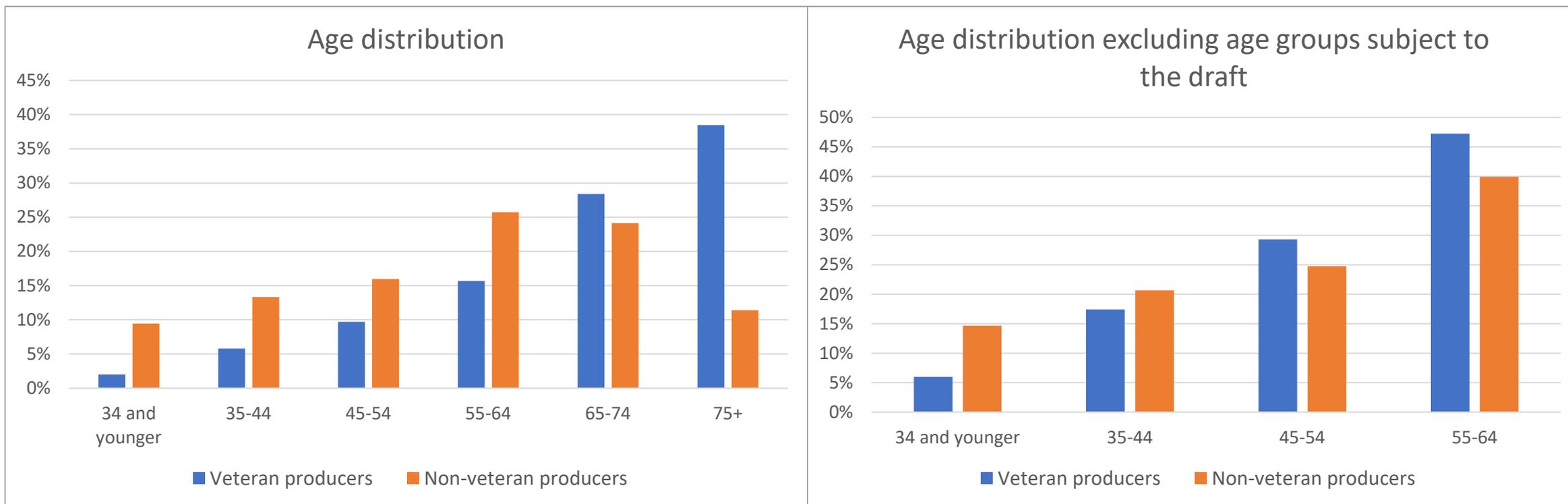
Note: Data includes only respondents age 18 or older who reported military service status and their class of work. Respondents also reported at least one of the following as being in agriculture (including fishing and forestry): their primary industry (based on the 2012 Standard Industrial Classification), occupation (based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification System), or field of study (for those with a Bachelor's degree or higher only). Non-respondents were not counted. Military service includes veterans, active duty, reservists, and National Guard.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using Public Use Microdata Sample 5-year data from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-17.



Age distribution of veteran producers

- ▶ Veterans are older on average than non-veteran producers, even after excluding the age cohorts that were subject to the draft.
 - The draft ended in January 1973, with the last draft call in December 1972.
 - In 2022, the youngest cohort to be eligible for the draft would have been 67-68 years old.
- ▶ In 2022, 67 percent of veteran producers were 65 or older and 38 percent were 75 or older.

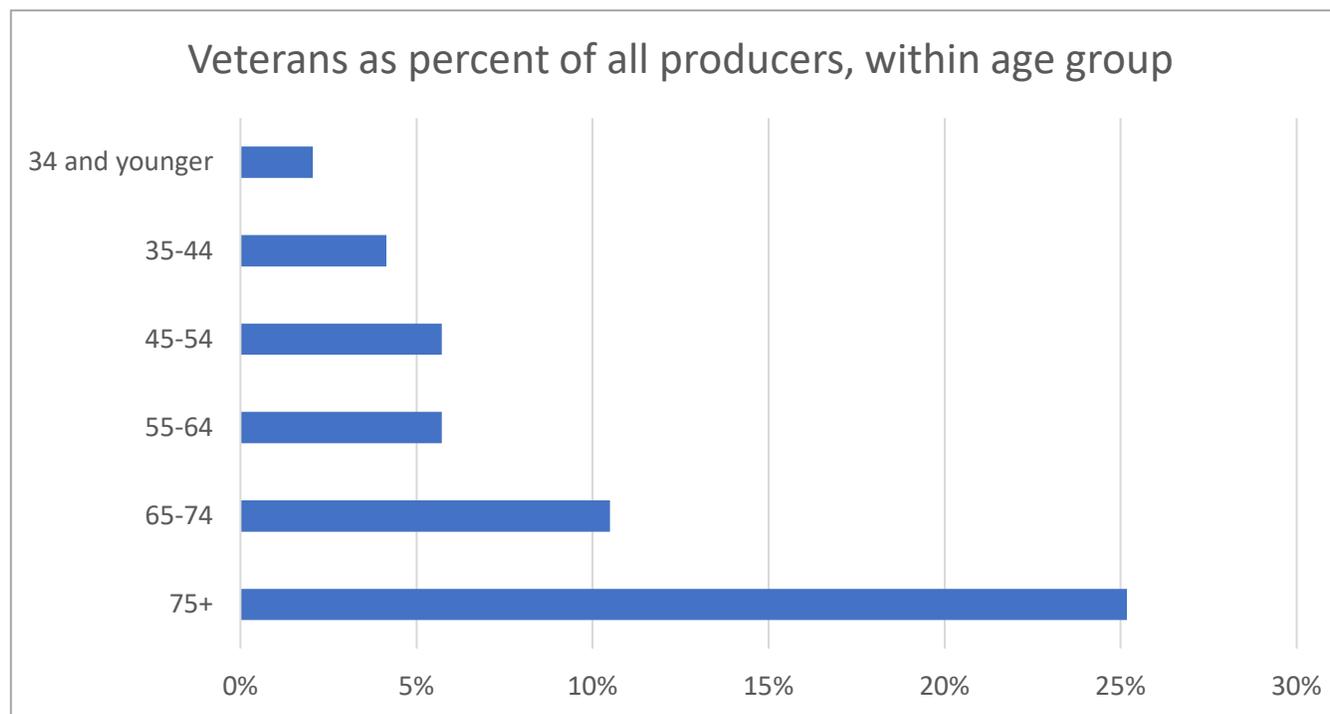


In the 2022 Census of Agriculture public data, the available age group is under 35 rather than FCA’s “young” definition of 35 and under.
Source: 2022 Census of Agriculture, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service



Veterans as percent of all producers

- ▶ Veteran producers account for approximately 9 percent of all producers, with wide variation across age groups.

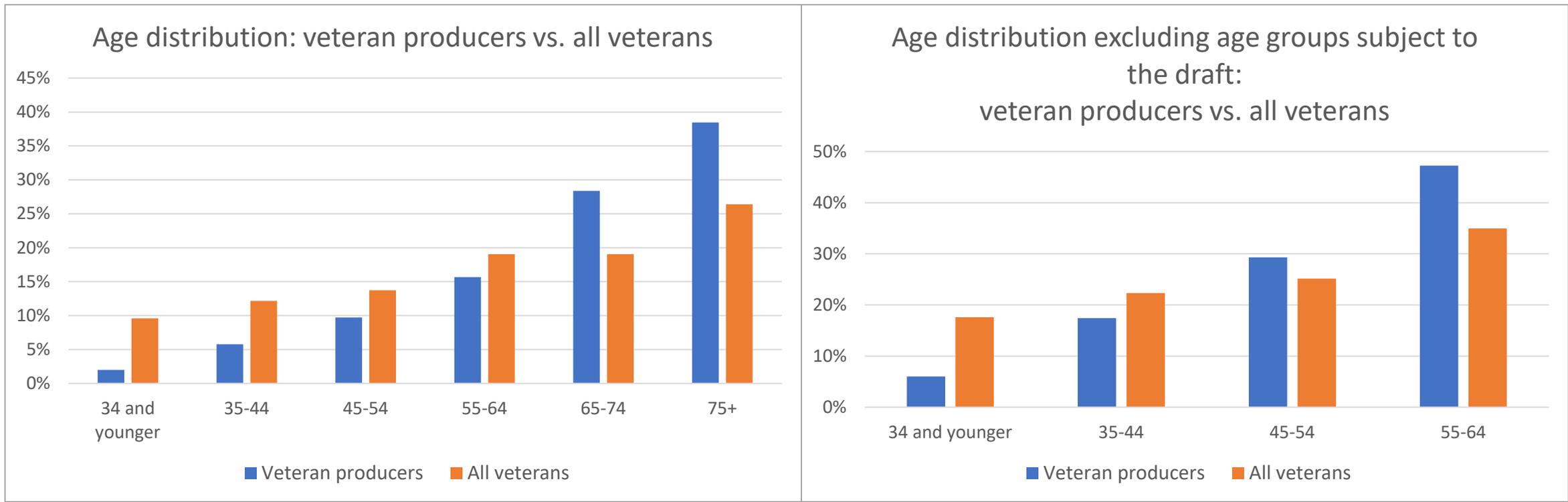


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Source: 2022 Census of Agriculture, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service



Age distribution of veterans: agriculture vs. overall

- ▶ Veterans in agriculture are older on average than the overall veteran population.
- ▶ One-third of veteran producers were younger than 65 years old vs. half of veterans overall.

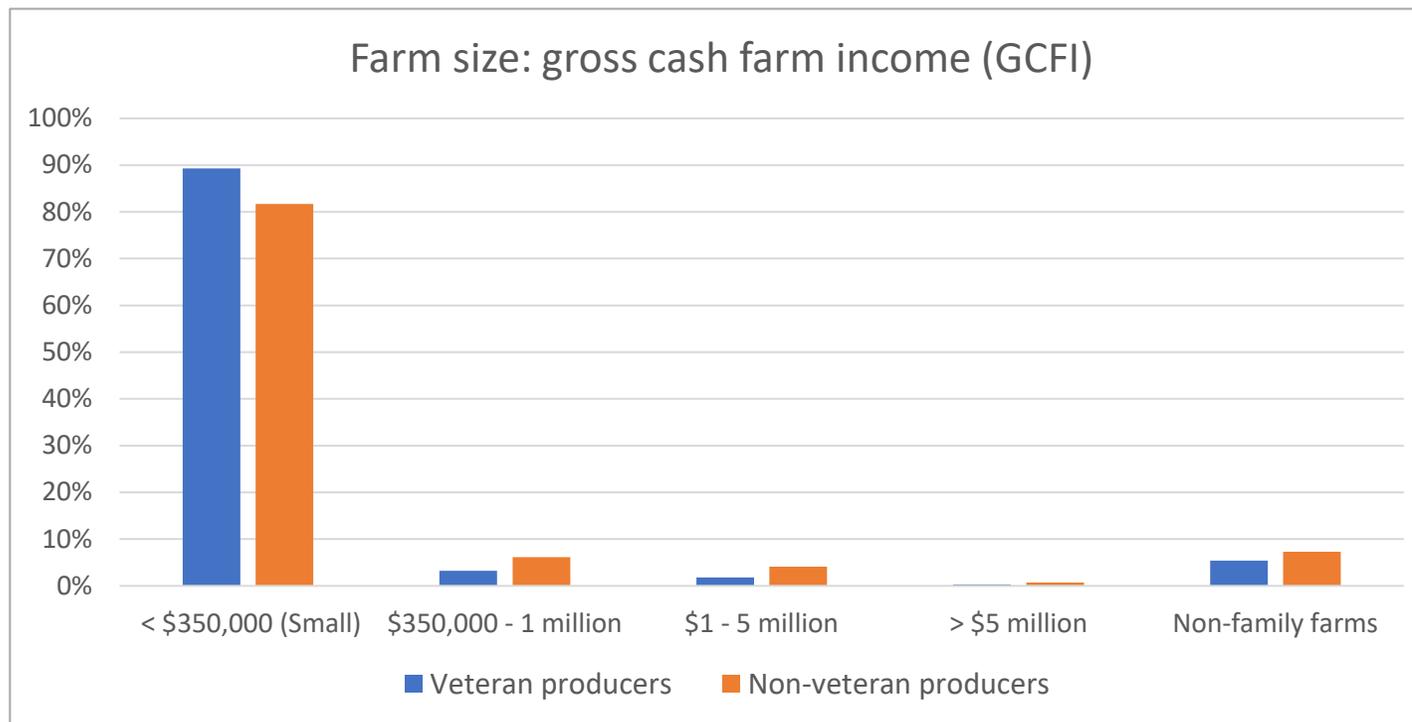


In the 2022 Census of Agriculture public data, the available age group is under 35 rather than FCA’s “young” definition of 35 and under. Source: 2022 Census of Agriculture, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service; National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Department of Veterans Affairs.



Beginning producers and small operations

- ▶ Beginning: 23 percent of veteran producers, 31 percent of non-veteran producers.
- ▶ Small: 89 percent of veteran producers are on small operations (< \$350,000 in GCFI) vs. 82 percent of non-veterans.
 - 85 percent of veteran producers are on operations with GCFI < \$150,000 vs. 75 percent of non-veterans.



Source: 2022 Census of Agriculture, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service



Veterans and agriculture: compatibility and challenges

- ▶ Military service can foster characteristics that may serve veterans well in a career in agriculture, such as:
 - Mission driven
 - Persistence
 - Adaptability
 - Discipline
 - Attention to detail and situational awareness

- ▶ Challenges, including:
 - Service-connected injuries and disabilities
 - Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
 - ✓ There may be therapeutic benefits from working in agriculture.
 - How to find and connect to resources, especially for those not from agricultural backgrounds.



Resources: government

▶ Federal government

- Transition Assistance Program

- ✓ 2015: Department of War announced the addition of agriculture to the Transition Assistance Program via partnership with USDA

- Other Federal resources

- ✓ USDA

- FSA loans
 - NRCS conservation programs (EQIP, CSP)
 - RD Value-Added Producer Grant

- ✓ Veterans Administration

- VA home loans for farm dwellings

▶ State governments and land-grant university extension



Resources: nonprofits

- ▶ Numerous nonprofits with mission to help veterans get started and grow in agriculture. A sample:
 - **Farmers Assisting Returning Military (F.A.R.M.):** Future Farmer Internship, and finding peace, purpose, and opportunity through therapeutic agriculture training.
 - **Semper Fi Fund:** Scholarships for equine therapy; educational programs, grants to work with farmers, internships.
 - **AgrAbility:** National and State programs to help farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers with disabilities remain in the workforce.
 - **Armed to Farm:** Sustainable agriculture training.
 - **Veteran Farmer Program at Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture:** training in agriculture and an incubator farm program open to program alumni.
 - **Farmer Veteran Coalition** (see next slide).
 - Others listed in [this article](#) on the Department of Veterans Affairs website.
 - And many others.



Resources: Farm Credit System

- ▶ Many Farm Credit System institutions have programs for veterans, sponsor organizations and events, or conduct outreach and marketing campaigns.
- ▶ Support for the Farmer Veteran Coalition
 - Homegrown by Heroes label
 - Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund for beginning farmers and ranchers
- ▶ Veteran Farmer Award of Excellence
 - American Farm Bureau Federation award, sponsored by the Farm Credit System



Veteran Farmer Award of Excellence

- ▶ Inaugural winner was Retired Army Colonel Joe Ricker of Indiana.
 - Served 20 years before retiring in 2022.
 - Started At Ease Orchard.
 - ✓ Nonprofit that introduces veterans, first responders, and their families to beekeeping and other farm activities.
 - Founded Veterans IN Farming.
 - ✓ Provides veterans in Indiana with training and support to succeed in farming.
 - Involved with Heroes to Hives
 - ✓ Uses beekeeping to help veterans achieve financial and personal wellness.
 - Served as a veteran outreach coordinator for AgrAbility.





Conclusion

- ▶ Military service can foster characteristics that may serve veterans well in agriculture but may also lead to challenges.
- ▶ Resources are available to facilitate the transition from the military to agriculture.
- ▶ Veterans account for 9 percent of all producers and 15 percent of all operations have at least one veteran producer.
- ▶ Veteran producers are on average older, more experienced, and more likely to be part of small operations as compared to non-veterans.