STATE OF NEW YORK

4210

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 13, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. TAGUE, MANKTELOW, GALLAHAN, HAWLEY, BRABENEC, DeSTEFANO, E. BROWN, MILLER, GUNTHER, LEMONDES, MIKULIN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Agriculture

AN ACT to amend the agriculture and markets law, in relation to establishing a veterans in agriculture assistance and outreach program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The agriculture and markets law is amended by adding a new section 29 to read as follows:

§ 29. Veterans in agriculture assistance and outreach program. 1. As used in this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Veteran" means a person who served on active duty in the uniformed services of the United States, or in the army national guard, air national guard, or service as a commissioned officer in the public health service, commissioned officer of the national oceanic and atmospheric administration or environmental sciences services administration, cadet at a United States armed forces service academy, and who has been released from such service under other than dishonorable conditions.

(b) "Qualified veteran business entity" means a business enterprise, including a sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company or corporation that is:

(i) at least fifty-one percent owned by one or more veterans;

(ii) an enterprise in which such veteran ownership is real, substantial, and continuing;

(iii) an enterprise in which such veteran ownership has and exercises the authority to control independently the day-to-day business decisions of the enterprise; and

(iv) an enterprise authorized to do business in this state and is independently-owned and operated.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD05806-01-3

2. The department, shall establish a program to help integrate veterans into the field of agriculture, and support veterans currently working in agriculture.

3. Such program shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) Recruiting and providing training for veterans to facilitate entry into the field of agriculture, in consultation with the department of veterans' services, the division of military and naval affairs and the United States department of agriculture.

(b) Identifying and making assistance available to formerly incarcerated veterans to facilitate entry into the field of agriculture, in consultation with the department of corrections and community supervision.

(c) Providing assistance to veterans in rural and urban communities by providing employment, mentorship, and outreach opportunities.

(d) Facilitating educational opportunities through Cornell University and the state university of New York.

(e) Connecting between veterans and applicable local, state and federal resources.

(f) Creating a website relating to provide veterans information on and easy access to program resources.

(g) Promoting participation by veterans and qualified business entities, including but not limited to the conduct of outreach and education efforts to encourage and facilitate participation.

(h) Coordinating with military, government, or private sector marketing efforts that already identify, emphasize, and encourage the production and marketing of New York produced agricultural commodities by veterans and qualified business entities.

(i) Partnering with the office of mental health, the department of health and NY FarmNet to develop a specialized mental health and suicide prevention program for veterans in agriculture.

(j) Training and support opportunities as well as resources to connect veterans and their products with local retailers.

(k) Establishing mentorships for veterans with farming endeavors.

(l) Providing assistance to veterans to apply for available grant funding.

(m) Within funding made available for such purposes, conducting an assessment of properties and making such property available for an affordable lease program for veterans.

(n) Working with veterans and property owners to ensure veterans who want to farm have a place to do so.

(o) Identifying current New York Grown and Certified program participants who qualify to use the logotype developed pursuant to the provisions of subdivision four of this section and encourage application for the use of such logotype.

(p) Establishing a special veterans' category in New York Grown and Certified database of products.

(q) Reporting on the feasibility of developing rehabilitation sites to assist wounded and disabled veterans to readjust and heal to address post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury issues through agriculture therapy programs.

(r) Creating and building a brand for farmer-veterans' products.

(s) Development of a veteran agriculture logotype pursuant to the provisions of subdivision four of this section.

4. (a) The department, in consultation with the empire state development corporation, shall design a logotype that clearly identifies a product as both meeting existing New York State Grown and Certified

standards pursuant to 1 NYCRR 161.3 and being produced by a veteran or qualified veteran business entity. The department shall incorporate the New York State Grown and Certified Seal, and may partner with organizations, including but not limited to, the Farmer Veteran Coalition Homegrown by Heroes program and similar programs intended to encourage veterans to farm or to otherwise benefit farmers who are veterans, if the department elects to adopt such organizations' separate and unique eligibility criteria.

(b) Such logotype shall be made available to veterans or qualified veteran business entities for descriptive labels, packaging or advertisement information at no cost.

(c) The department shall promulgate rules and regulations to provide for civil penalties and injunctive relief for improper use of the logotype designed pursuant to this subdivision.

5. The department shall make the program developed pursuant to this section available to:

(a) veterans;

(b) persons who served on active duty in the uniformed services of the United States, or in the army national guard, air national guard, or service as a commissioned officer in the public health service, commissioned officer of the national oceanic and atmospheric administration or environmental sciences services administration, cadet at a United States armed forces service academy, and who has been released from such service under other a condition other than honorable on a case-by-case basis following review and approval by the department;

(c) immediate family members of a veteran killed while serving on active duty, a prisoner of war, or died from a service-related injury or exposure, where such immediate family member is licensed under the New York State Grown and Certified standards pursuant to 1 NYCRR 161.3; and

(d) qualified veteran business entities.

§ 2. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before such effective date.