Shop Veteran-Owned: Meet Choose Iowa's Veteran-Owned Members

This Veterans Day, **Choose Iowa** proudly recognizes and celebrates the Iowa farmers, food producers, and entrepreneurs who have served our country in uniform — and who continue to serve their communities as Iowa farmers, processors and retailers of Iowa grown, raised and made products.

We're honored to feature these **veteran-owned Choose Iowa businesses** whose passion for agriculture and commitment to community reflect the very best:

2 Dog Ranch (Ottumwa, Iowa)

Owned by a retired veteran and educator, 2 Dog Ranch in southeast Iowa offers gluten free baked goods including cookies, deserts, and breads. They also offer jellies featuring the berries from farm as well as harvested black walnuts and hickory nuts.

Cedar Shake Farm (Winterset, Iowa)

Starting with a small back yard garden plot and growing to a multi-acre farm in Madison County, owners Kelli and Clint grow fruits, vegetables, microgreens and flowers they provide to their community through CSAs, and their local farmers market. They founded the Madison County Fall Crawl in 2021 encouraging people to explore other small businesses and shop local.

Chile Pepper Farm (Lovilia, Iowa)

In Lovilia, Iowa Chile Pepper Farm is growing New Mexico styler green and red chile peppers for their very popular salsas and pepper jams. Erica Martinez returned to the Lovilia farm her father purchased in the 1970s after serving in the military and living in New Mexico to continue her family legacy on the land. Since then, the business has grown from selling just Chile peppers to a full product line up of hot sauces, various flavors of cowboy candy, salsa, pepper jams and more.

Clear Creek Orchard Inc. (Collins, Iowa)

After 56 years of combined military service, Martin and Teresa made a life-changing decision one Thanksgiving — to take over Martin's uncle's family business, Clear Creek Orchard, and continue crafting their beloved "Too Good to Be Jam." The move from military life to farming gave them the freedom to focus on family and preserve a legacy of hard work and community. For them, being veteran farmers means more than running a business — it's about service, purpose, and creating something lasting, one jar of jam at a time.

Early Morning Harvest & That Iowa Girl (Panora, Iowa)

Facing the farm crisis of the 1980s, Jeff Hafner turned to the military as a path to education and opportunity, serving 35 years in the U.S. Army Reserve. Today, the veteran farmer leads Early Morning Harvest and That Iowa Girl, growing organic grains and hydroponic produce while connecting Iowans with locally made, responsibly grown foods — continuing his lifelong commitment to service.

Ebert Honey LLC (Lynnville, Iowa)

Phil Ebert began Ebert Honey in 1980 with only about ten colonies in the backyard of his Fairfield, IA home. At the time, one five-gallon bucket of honey seemed like a large amount. Today, they produce thousands of pounds of honey per year, as well as offering package bees and nucs (nucleus colonies) to people just getting started in their bee keeping journey.

Edge of the Woods Raspberry Farm (Indianola, Iowa)

Edge of the Woods started growing red raspberries in 2005 for their own use with 40 plants in a new space their hay field. Each year, more plants were added, including other varieties - black raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, gooseberries, cherries, currents, and more!

Their reason is simple. Edge of the Woods wants to provide flavorful, fresh fruit that customers know where it came from, how it was grown and how it was harvested.

Farmer Sarge's (Algona, Iowa)

Farmer Sarge's Orchard represents the culmination of Brad Thill's journey from combat veteran to agricultural entrepreneur. What began with a desire to heal from PTSD through farming, transformed his family's century old land into a thriving orchard and value-added operation. From peaches, apples, and cherries to kettle corn, freeze dried fruit, and blacksmithing, you'll find something to love at Farmer Sarge's.

Grate View Farms (Maquoketa, Iowa)

Grate View Farms is a family owned and operated business by second and fifth generation farmers. Ben and Amber Selman both knew from an early age that dairy would be in their future. After meeting at Iowa State University, their journey began in farming together. While they focus on dairy cattle, the Selman's know dairy cattle play a huge role in meat sales in the United States. They are focused on growing dairy and dairy cross animals for a high-quality meat for consumers.

Holeton's Mill & Market (Winterset, Iowa)

Holeton's Mill & Market (opening soon in Winterset, IA) is more than a bakery, it's a place where good food and community come together. Heather and Matt Holeton's hope for their bakery is bigger than selling fresh milled flour and baked goods made with simple, wholesome ingredients: they want it to be a place where people can reconnect with food. A place where you can see grain being milled into flour, buy flour that was milled fresh, enjoy baked goods made from whole grains, and maybe learn something along the way that helps you make healthier choices for your family. Here's to fresh stone milled flour, real ingredients, and community.

Iowa Pepper Company (West Des Moines, Iowa)

Iowa Pepper Company is a small batch hot sauce company with a passion for locally sourced ingredients and delicious hot sauce. Started in 2022, Iowa Pepper Company is co-owned and operated by Jeff Lynch and Caitlin Barnes. Iowa Pepper Company proudly grows its own super-hot peppers and uses unique pepper varietals.

Lillie Mae Chocolates (Marshalltown, Iowa)

If want to see candy made daily right in front of you, you can head to Lillie Mae Chocolates. Find their locations in Marshalltown and Clear Lake to pick from gourmet popcorn, caramels, chocolate and more! Crafted in small batches using real Iowa cream and butter, locally sourced ingredients, and European-style chocolates and old-fashioned recipes, these sweet treats are a celebration of place, tradition, and the people who make it home.

Milk & Honey Orchard and Apiary (Indianola, Iowa)

Owner, Katie Flinn of Milk & Honey Orchard and Apiary in Indianola, discovered her love for honey through a collection she gathered while serving in the U.S. Air Force. She enlisted after 9/11 and spent 18 years in the military, collecting a jar of honey from each place she went. After being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and enrolling in Heroes to Hives, a program to teach veterans about beekeeping, Flinn became a beekeeper herself. She then went on to study internationally, and through this academia gained the title of Honey Sommelier — being able to identify the botanicals the bees gather nectar from in creating their artisanal honey. She now loves to create artisanal honey products that she can share with fellow Iowans.

Our Family Homestead (Fort Dodge, Iowa)

Our Family Homestead is based out of Fort Dodge, Iowa, and offers farm fresh eggs, seasonal fruits and vegetables, home canned goods and more! They are an integral part of the Fort Dodge Farmers Market.

Prairie Produce (Grinnell, Iowa)

Prairie Produce is a local family-owned farm operation owned and operated by Roger and Teresa on the outskirts of Grinnell, Iowa. The business specializes in delivering fresh, sustainably grown seasonal fruits, vegetables, and artisan value-added products directly to the local community.

Rose Farm (Norwalk, Iowa)

Travel just 20 minutes outside the city center of Des Moines and be greeted by the beauty of Rose Farm, family-owned and lovingly managed by Flower Farmers Karri and Patrick Rose. With 25 acres of sprawling ground, you will find yourself immediately transplanted to a place of tranquility. The white farmhouse set

against the backdrop of deep rolling hills, and the charming, idyllic barn housing The Shoppe at Rose Farm, are neatly nestled on the property.

The Big Apple Orchard (Mount Vernon, Iowa)

The Big Apple Orchard, owned by the Marti family, is home to 2,200 apple trees of 20+ varieties. They welcome families each fall to celebrate Iowa's harvest with apples, cider, and agritourism fun. The orchard has become a community staple, combining family-friendly entertainment with agricultural education.

Tiefenthaler Quality Meats (Holstein, Iowa)

John and Shelly Tiefenthaler are the current owners of Tiefenthaler Quality Meats (formerly known as Food Locker Service) which is located north of Holstein, Iowa on Highway 59. Tiefenthaler is a Specialty Retail Meat store that processes and makes meat products for the store. Also custom butchering is available.

Tripple Berry Farm and Outlaw Bacon (Linden, Iowa)

Doug Tripple owns Tripple Berry Farm and Outlaw Bacon Smoked Meats just outside of Linden, IA. The farm offers seasonal u-pick offerings of fresh strawberries and red raspberries. They also craft their own raspberry jam, raspberry jalapeño jam, and raspberry syrups on the farm using the raspberries they grow and harvest. At Outlaw Bacon, their bacon is handcrafted and slow smoked in small batches over hardwood for rich, exceptional flavor along with other smoked meats, carefully prepared to perfection. You can find all their products year round in their on farm country store!

Van Wijk Winery (Sully, Iowa)

Van Wijk Winery is the perfect opportunity for curious travelers and wine lovers alike to take a scenic diversion from the busy and beaten path! It's an amazing restoration and renovation of an old, abandoned church building! They offer a variety of award-winning wines and meads crafted right here in Iowa. Be sure to stop at their gift shop before you go to take home your favorite bottle and shop the honeys, jams, jellies and vinegars they have available.

WF 1878 Beef (Turin, Iowa)

Premium Iowa beef from rancher, Cora Fox in Turin, Iowa. WF 1887 Beef is heritage-driven, stewarded with care, & raised for quality—148 years in the making. Their cattle are raised on diverse forages in the Loess Hills, including pasture & cover crops, then finished on non-GMO corn. Beef is available by the cut or by reservation of quarters, halves, or wholes.

YT Cattle Company (Carlisle, Iowa)

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps from 2001 to 2005, including a deployment to Afghanistan, Aaron White traded his machine gun for a tractor — but kept the same grit and sense of purpose. What began as a return to his roots after years of teaching has grown into a diversified family operation raising corn, soybeans, hay, and cattle. For him, being a veteran farmer means continuing to serve — this time by caring for the land, his animals, and his family. “The discipline and purpose I learned in the Marines now go into building something lasting for the next generation,” Aaron White says.

Continuing a Legacy of Service

Each of these veteran-owned businesses represents more than a livelihood — they're living legacies of service, community, and perseverance. This Veterans Day, we thank them not only for their military service but also for their ongoing contributions to Iowa's farms, food systems, and local economies.

From all of us at **Choose Iowa**, thank you to our veterans — past and present — for your dedication to our country and to Iowa agriculture.

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