

FARMERS ONE-OF-A-KIND MARKET

Homegrown by Heroes slated for Saturday in Southbury

BY STEVE BIGHAM

REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

SOUTHURY — A first-of-its kind farmers market put on by farmers who also happen to be U.S. military veterans will take place this Saturday at Guardians Farm, at 99 Bates Rocks Road.

The CT Homegrown by Heroes event runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will feature products from numerous Connecticut farms, all of which are run by veterans.

It is all part of a federally funded program to support the estimated 900 service members-turned-agriculturists across the state.

The farmers market was promoted Monday at the 10-acre Southbury farm, owned by David Buck and Tamra French, both of whom also happen to be police officers with Buck having also served for 22 years in the Coast Guard.

They were joined by several federal, state and local officials, including U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, who helped champion the \$550,000 grant to support

veteran farmers through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

“Veterans are ideal farmers,” Blumenthal said. “They know how to confront the enemy and how to overcome adversity.”

The farmers market is an initiative of the Connecticut *See MARKET*, Page 4A



David Buck of Guardian Farm in Southbury gives a tour of his 10-acre property, which will be the site of this Saturday’s farmers market put on by veteran farmers. Also pictured are, from left, Tamra French, also of Guardian Farm; State Sen. Eric Berthel; U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, and Catherine Marx of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

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MARKET: Run by veterans

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Resource Conservation and Development Area, which has implemented a three-year plan to provide support through direct professional technical and marketing assistance.

About a dozen farmers will be selling their products at Saturday’s market, including Jared McCool of Steadfast Farms of Bethlehem. He served in the Marine Corps from 2008-14, came home and tried the corporate life, before becoming a farmer.

“We volunteered to protect our nation overseas, and now we are doing the same thing here, domestically, by feeding America,” McCool said. “Farming gives us that same sense of ‘mission accomplished,’ and it’s a similar lifestyle to being in the military. We’re up early and go to bed late.”

to allow veteran members to add the “Homegrown by Heroes” logo to their farm products so that consumers can easily identify and support veteran farmers.

The Connecticut Chapter of Farmer Veteran Coalition is also an active partner in the CT Veteran Grown Initiative.

Other farms expected to be on hand at the market include Hives for Heroes, Lakeside Farm, Lathrop Farm, Quiet Corner Flowers, Tranquil Hive Honey Co., Union Bee Company and Wilkinson Farm.

For information visit ctveterangrown.org.

The CT Homegrown by Heroes program is overseen by the state Department of Agriculture. It is designed

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