



Ag Biz Planner



Business Plan Development eLearning Course For Young, Beginning, Small, and Minority Farmers/Ranchers

Ag Biz Planner is an online course that guides participants through the process of developing a business plan. This college level course is available nationwide in an on-demand, online training format for farmers to use from their home or place of business. Farm Credit University is making this program widely available to serve Farm Credit's mission to help prepare young, beginning, small, and minority (YBSM) farmers and ranchers for a more successful and fulfilling business, family and personal life by improving their management and business planning skills.

AgFirst Farm Credit Bank and Dr. David Kohl, Professor Emeritus of Ag Finance and Small Business Management at Virginia Tech, partnered to develop eLearning content for the Ag Biz Planner curriculum. In his role as principal content creator, Dr. Kohl applies his experience facilitating Young Farmer Institutes nationwide. This program will take advantage of technology by providing an on-demand training product for farmers to use from their home or place of business that will improve their skills and help them become more responsible financial managers and stronger loan candidates. The program will provide real value to each participant through the development of a business plan with the optional mentoring of an association employee.

Mission/Purpose

To improve the financial and business management skills of young, beginning, small, and minority farmers and ranchers through education and thereby equip them to operate successful farm businesses and have a quality rural lifestyle.

Program Objectives

- Assist YBSM farmers in becoming more successful business people through knowledge of the marketplace, financial, and business management topics.
- Teach participants valuable skills that will enable them to develop a useful, meaningful strategic business plan for their own business.
- Facilitate a close mentoring relationship with a Farm Credit employee.
- Provide a value-added service to borrowers by helping them understand the lending process.

Administration of Training: How does it work?

- The training consists of ten eLearning modules, each including Flash content, interactive exercises, an objective test, and application exercises.
- Training offered through the FCU eLearning Center will be available on-demand anytime through any high speed internet connection – either at a farmer’s place of business, home, or Farm Credit office.
- Associations may sponsor or provide partial scholarships for their members or potential members to participate. Upon completion, individual associations may reward members with a one-time financial incentive.
- Selected association employees can act as mentors, guiding farmers through the training and providing feedback on completed application exercises.
- At the discretion of each association, face-to-face leadership institutes may be held locally, which would allow participants to network and apply what they have learned in a group setting, and present their business plan to a group of peers.

Content Reviewers

Each eLearning module has been reviewed from an academic, instructional design, and agricultural lending perspective by:

- Dr. Freddie Barnard, Purdue University (Agricultural Economics)
- Dr. Danny Klinefelter, Texas A&M University (Agricultural Economics)
- Dr. Alex White, Virginia Tech (Ag & Applied Economics; Financial Planning)
- Dr. Lex Bruce, Virginia Tech (Instructional Design)
- Farm Credit Professionals from AgFirst Affiliated Associations

Tuition

Tuition of \$700/farmer or couple includes access to 10 online Flash eLearning modules, module quizzes, business application exercises, discussion forum, business plan preparation resources, and mentoring resources.

Suggested Timeline

Each module is designed to be completed in about two to three weeks, for a total time commitment of about five to six months for the ten-module program. This is a self-paced course. Each module of online content should take about two hours to complete, and time required for forum discussion and business application exercises will vary from person to person.

For More Information

Visit www.FCUniversity.com

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