

## **YBSM – Ag Biz Planner – E-learning Curriculum Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **Who is this course designed for?**

The program is designed for individuals and families with self-initiative and a passion for learning to enhance their business, family, and personal lives. This educational experience brings a body of knowledge together that can be learned and applied at your own pace, offering flexibility to meet today's time-compressed lifestyles. The Ag Biz Planner is one of five eLearning programs offered by Farm Credit University, but the only one designed for producers. It was commissioned by the Farm Credit Board and management visionaries who wanted to make an educational investment in future agriculturalists to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to be successful in a globally competitive environment. The program is built upon the experience and expertise of Dr. Dave Kohl, an agricultural finance and management expert, and other academic and industry authorities, and includes proven methods that have been utilized by leading practitioners in the field.

### **How much will the program cost me?**

The grant funds will cover course tuition of \$500 for the on-line class and up to \$600 of the costs incurred as a result of the class. Upon acceptance into the program each participant will be asked to pay a deposit of \$100.00. This deposit will be returned with the successful completion of all 10 online modules and a business plan. If the course is not completed within 9 months, the deposit will be forfeited. The class will conclude with an overnight Leadership workshop in Raleigh, NC. The grant will fund hotel, meals and speaker fees for that workshop as well. This reimbursement will be made with proper documentation of expenditures following the successful completion of the course. Any expenses over \$600 will be the responsibility of each participant.

### **When will the class start?**

We expect to select and announce the participants after Sept. 15, 2010. The course is online and will be available for each participant in early October 2010. Sometime during October the group will meet, either via conference call or face to face, to view the online system, review course expectations and instructions and become familiar with fellow participants to facilitate online collaboration.

### **How is this class structured?**

Farm Credit University training is considered "blended training." It is a combination of online and face-to-face training that offers the best of both worlds. The blended training experience is flexible. That is, it is not confined by geography, time of day, background or experience of participants.

### **What will this course do for me and my operation?**

This educational experience is self paced and multifaceted, designed to be approximately six months in duration. The agricultural industry is dynamic in the production of food, fiber, fuel, products for the life sciences, and life experiences with many opportunities and challenges. This program will position you to capitalize on these aspects for a more successful and fulfilling business, family, and personal life.

**Do I have to have a computer to take the course?**

The entire class is presented in an online format. Yes, a computer and internet access are necessary to participate in this opportunity. We recommend high speed access because much of the course is involves video.

**How much time will I have to invest in this program?**

The class is set up in a series of 10 on-line modules or short-courses, each taking one to two hours to complete. Each participant will work at their own pace and be given 2 weeks to complete each on-line module. The modules will involve lector/slides online, reading, online discussion groups, problems or case studies. Periodic quizzes and module exams will allow you to personally assess your comprehension and understanding of the materials presented. Application exercises will allow you to link module concepts and ideas to challenges and opportunities in your own business. The program will take you through the process of building a strategic business plan for your business

**What will the mentors do?**

Each participant will be assigned a mentor who is a Farm Credit loan officer. The Farm Credit Loan officers are very well versed in financial management of ag operations. Each are considered experts in farm finance for the commodities in their area. The mentor will serve as a teacher, coach and facilitator to you as you work through the course and create your business plan.

**This sounds like a big time commitment.**

Yes, this program will take time and commitment as well as self-motivation, which are all attributes necessary for a successful agricultural professional. The degree of success you achieve in this educational experience will be in your hands as Farm Credit and other sponsors have made an investment in you.

**Can my spouse or another business partner get involved with the course?**

We encourage each participant to engage others that are actively involved in the management of the farm. This person could be a spouse or business partner. Your operation will be stronger by pulling them into the coursework. This will give you as a participant a chance to explore many beneficial ideas with the others involved in your operation.

**What is the purpose of the meeting in Raleigh at the conclusion of the on-line course?**

Following the completion of all 10 modules each participant, spouse or business partner who completed the course and mentors will attend a workshop in Raleigh. Dr. David Kohl, the developer of the online curriculum and a retired Ag Economic Professor from Va Tech will be the featured speaker on the first day. The group will discuss their business plans and other topics of interest. The day will end with a group dinner and speakers. The second day will include several educational presentations. The grant will cover the cost of a hotel room and the group meals.