

Farm Credit University
Ag Biz Planner – eLearning 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 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. As you complete the program you'll build a business plan for your own operation, which can be useful as you manage your business, plan in uncertain times and anticipate future opportunities.

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 highly recommend high speed access to view the interactive Flash content.

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. We recommend allowing an average of 2 weeks to complete all the components of each on-line module. The modules will involve interactive online content lecture/slides, reading, and online discussion forum. 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. Depending on the complexity of your business, compiling a business plan can take considerable time and effort, but it is time well spent invested in becoming a better business manager.

What will the mentors do?

Each participant may be assigned a mentor who is a Farm Credit lender. The Farm Credit lenders 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 has 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.