

## **Ag Biz Planner 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?**

Upon acceptance into the program, participants will pay \$250 which is half of the online course tuition. Cape Fear Farm Credit will cover the remaining half of the tuition as well as all costs (hotel, meals, and speaker fees) associated with the overnight conference at the conclusion of the course. Participants will be responsible for transportation to and from the conference.

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

We expect to select and announce the participants after Sept. 15, 2011. The course is online and will be available for each participant in early October 2011. On November 21, 2011, a meeting at the administrative headquarters of Cape Fear Farm Credit in Fayetteville, NC will be held to review the online system, course expectations 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 essential to participate in this program. We recommend high speed access because much of the course involves video.

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

The class is set up in a series of 10 online modules or short courses, each taking one to two hours to complete. Each participant will work at his or her own pace to complete each online 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 operation.

**What will the mentors do?**

Each participant will be assigned a mentor who is a Cape Fear 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 program 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 Cape Fear 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, giving you, as a participant, the 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 online course?**

On March 19-20, 2012, following the completion of all 10 modules, each participant, spouse, or business partner who completed the course as well as mentors will attend a conference in Raleigh, NC. Dr. David Kohl, the developer of the online curriculum and a retired Ag Economic Professor from Virginia 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. Cape Fear Farm Credit will cover the cost of a hotel room and the group meals.

**If you have additional questions, please call Skipper Jones 800.368.5819 x3238 or email [ssjones@capefearfarmcredit.com](mailto:ssjones@capefearfarmcredit.com).**