

What is the Dual Start Option?

The Dual Start Option for the 2022-2023 Cohort will allow participants to begin the modules in late May and completed by mid-November with business plans being due at the beginning of December. The other option would be to begin modules in late August and completed by early January with business plans due in late January. Each start date will have a kick-off meeting and midpoint check-in to be held in a central location, and individual farm visits. All participants will attend the Final Conference in January that will be held in Raleigh, NC.

Whom 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 together a body of knowledge 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 six eLearning programs offered by Farm Credit University and only one of two 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 course tuition is \$500 for the online class.

What will this course do for me and my operation?

This educational experience is self-paced and multifaceted, designed to be approximately five to 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 module portion of the class is presented in an online format. Yes, a computer and high-speed internet access are necessary to participate in this opportunity. We recommend high-speed access because much of the course does involve video. If this is a concern please note it on your application.

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 approximately one to two hours to complete. Each participant will work at their own pace. The modules will involve lector/slides online, reading, 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 two mentors from Farm Credit. The Farm Credit mentors are very well versed in a variety of agricultural enterprises and have a solid knowledge of the financial management of ag operations. The mentors 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.

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.

Additional Opportunities for Participants

There are additional opportunities to participate in special events that Farm Credit of the Virginias coordinates throughout or after the program. Opportunities may include travel to Washington, D.C., or your state Capitol to engage with legislators, advocacy action workshops, and other needs-based in-person events offered exclusively or with priority to AgBiz alumni.