



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences

2026 AGRIBUSINESS PLANNING APPLICATION

The curriculum program is a partnership between ACRE and Clemson Cooperative Extension. This certificate program is for beginning innovators who have a great idea or prototype for a new product or process and would benefit from a business curriculum program. Participants will learn key principles of developing business and marketing plans, as well as understanding market trends and prospective customers. The curriculum program culminates in an opportunity for each participant to pitch an idea to an agribusiness panel for the chance to win substantial cash rewards. This is a free but competitive program (spots are limited). Upon completion of the curriculum program, participants may choose to apply for the Advanced Program in winter/spring 2027.

PROGRAM DETAILS

The curriculum program will give an overview of the business planning process and how to best manage an agricultural business. Topics covered include pre-planning, marketing, pricing, cost of production, profitability, financial statements, and management. All courses will be taught by Clemson's Agribusiness Team.

PROGRAM DATES

August 24	Applications are due
August 31	Applicants will be notified of their application status
September 8	1 st course (2 hours) <i>*First class is on Tuesday due to Labor Day</i>
September 14	2 nd course (2 hours)
September 21	3 rd course (2 hours)
September 28	4 th course (2 hours)
October 5	5 th course (2 hours)
November 9	Pitch Day (time TBD) (Length will be determined by number of participants and will take place during normal work hours—please plan accordingly)

Courses are 5:30 – 7:30 pm

All courses and pitch day will be virtual. More details will be provided upon acceptance into the program.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Please read these Terms and Conditions carefully before completing and submitting your application. By submitting your application for the Entrepreneurship Center, you accept and agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. Applicant is a current South Carolina resident.
2. The business idea or prototype for which the Applicant is applying must be agribusiness related, value-added, and specifically related to one or more of the following categories:
 - a. Specialty crops:
 - i. Fruits and vegetables
 - ii. Tree nuts
 - iii. Dried fruits
 - iv. Horticulture
 - v. Nursery crops
 - f. Meat Products
 - g. Other foods (i.e. honey, cheese, milk, eggs, etc.)
 - h. Row crop value-added product/process
 - i. Hydroponics or Aquaponics
 - j. Timber
 - k. Agritourism
 - l. Mechanical Harvesting
 - m. Agribusiness Technology
 - n. Container, urban, or indoor farming
 - o. Aquaculture
3. If Applicant is accepted to participate in the Program:
 - a. Applicant must attend five mandatory virtual agribusiness sessions on the following dates: **September 8, September 14, September 21, September 28, and October 5.**
 - b. At the conclusion of the sessions, Applicant must attend a mandatory virtual pitch day on **November 9** for the Applicant to present his or her idea, prototype, or business to a panel for scoring; and
 - c. **Applicant must attend all virtual courses, or they will not be given the opportunity to pitch or receive the cash award.**
4. The top five presenters, as scored by a panel, will each be awarded \$5,000.
 - a. If Applicant misses a session without a valid excuse, as determined by ACRE, the Applicant will NOT be eligible to receive the cash award.
5. Priority will be given to applicants from rural counties and applicants with products or companies that would have a high impact in rural counties, as defined by the USDA [here](#).
6. Applications are due on or before **August 4** and will be reviewed. All Applicants will be notified of their application status by **August 31**.
7. **If you have participated in the program in the past, you cannot apply again.**
8. **Cash awards are not guaranteed, and ACRE reserves the right to base all cash awards on participation. ACRE encourages full participation in the program and wants all participants to get the most out of the program.**

Please direct any questions you may have to:

Kyle Player | 803-734-2324 | kplayer@scda.sc.gov

AGRIBUSINESS CURRICULUM APPLICATION

Download and save the application before you fill it out. Your work will not be saved if you do not download it first.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

County _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Occupation _____

Are you a South Carolina Department of Agriculture employee or do you have any related family working as a current South Carolina Department of Agriculture employee?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you a Clemson Cooperative Extension employee or do you have any related family working as a current Clemson Cooperative Extension employee?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have access to a computer, internet, Microsoft Word (or equivalent), and Microsoft Excel (or equivalent) in order to complete the virtual course and pitch?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What is your experience in agriculture, including years and type of experience?

What is your experience in business, including years and type of experience?

Why are you interested in taking this curriculum? What do you hope to learn?

Provide a brief description of your agribusiness idea or existing agribusiness.

How will you use the prize money? Do you plan to invest any of your own money into your venture?

How do you foresee your potential business or product benefiting South Carolina Agribusiness?

How did you find out about the curriculum program?

By signing this application, I indicate that I have read and agree to the Terms and Conditions.

Signature

Date

RETURN APPLICATION TO

South Carolina Department of Agriculture, Attn: Kyle Player
P.O. Box 11280, Columbia, SC 29211
kplayer@scda.sc.gov

You will receive email confirmation that your application has been received within three business days.