



SOUTH CAROLINA NEW & BEGINNING FARMER PROGRAM

2019 PROGRAM OUTLINE

NOVEMBER 2018 – MAY 2019

THIS OUTLINE SHOULD BE REVIEWED COMPLETELY AND CAREFULLY BEFORE APPLYING FOR THE 2018-2019 PROGRAM OR BEFORE MAKING FURTHER INQUIRIES. CHANCES ARE THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ARE INCLUDED HERE.

The South Carolina New and Beginning Farmer Program (SCNBFP) is now accepting applications for the 2018-2019 program. The SCNBFP is focused on enabling new and beginning farmers to be successful, productive, and innovative members of their local agricultural community. The program provides new and emerging farmers with the tools, knowledge and skills necessary to be successful entrepreneurs; sound business managers; exemplary stewards of SWAPA (soil, water, air, plants, and animals); and successful marketers of the unique products they create. Most importantly, the SCNBFP seeks to develop individuals who have a sense of pride and enjoy a quality of life as a result of their investment and participation in the industry of South Carolina agriculture.

NOTE: ALTHOUGH PARTICIPANTS WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND VARIOUS PRODUCTION-RELATED WORKSHOPS THROUGHOUT THE STATE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE PROGRAM IS FUNDAMENTALLY ABOUT THE BUSINESS SIDE OF FARMING. OUR GOAL IS NOT TO TEACH FARMING PRACTICES, BUT TO EQUIP OUR PARTICIPANTS WITH THE TOOLS NECESSARY TO DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS.

Program Management

The SCNBF Program is administered by Clemson University Extension's Agribusiness division, with Dr. Dave Lamie serving as program director. Program collaborative partners include Clemson Cooperative Extension, Clemson University's Sustainable Agriculture Program, the SC Department of Agriculture, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA – Farm Services, SC Farm Bureau, AgSouth Farm Credit, ArborOne Farm Credit, the Coastal Conservation League, the Catawba Farm & Food Coalition, Richland County Soil & Water Conservation District, SC State University, and many others.

Who May Apply?

Any legal resident of South Carolina, 18+ years of age, who is just beginning farming or who has actively farmed for *less than 10 consecutive years* is eligible to apply for the SCNBFP. The class is limited to 50 participants who will be selected by senior program staff. Two individuals from the same farm enterprise may apply jointly, but will only count as one towards the program limit. (Joint applicants who are part of the same farm enterprise but who do not share the same street [residential/physical] address **MUST** submit two separate applications, listing the other as joint partner, as indicated on the application.)

Why Apply?

- Learn best agribusiness practices and develop a business plan
- Network with peer farmers in your own area as well as throughout the state
- Engage with state and federal government agencies in order to better leverage public resources and increase participation in their programs
- Learn more about yourself and your business goals

Program Objectives

- Teach fundamentals of farm business management, and provide exposure to more advanced topics.
- Increase participant awareness and familiarity with local, state and federal resources.
- Help beginning farmers to better understand their personal and professional goals, values, and motivations, to better “know thyself”.
- Encourage the development of thoughtful business plans, including selection of legal structure, development of land acquisition strategies, and multiple marketing strategies.
- Provide experiential learning through real-world application.
- Provide contact with willing and able mentors.
- Facilitate and encourage peer learning, networking, and support.
- Provide immersion experiences for some participants through on-farm internships.

Program Options & Schedule

The SC New & Beginning Farmer Program will offer two levels of instruction: **Level 1, *Exploring Farming as a Business*** for emerging farmers with less than three years of experience, and **Level 2, *Taking Your Farm Business to the Next Level*** for those who have been farming 3-9 years.

The Level 1 core agribusiness program will be offered from November 2018 through February 2019, and is appropriate for those with 0-2 years farming experience. The core program includes seven (7) farm business development workshops, centrally located in Columbia, SC. Level 1 participants will also be invited to the annual Resource Rodeo, all regional trainings, three farm tours, as well as program graduation.

The intermediate, Level 2 program runs from November 2018 through April 2019. The Level 2 core agribusiness program is well suited for those with 3-9 years of farming experience and includes eleven (11) farm business development workshops in Columbia, SC. Seven of the agribusiness workshops will be a shared opportunity with Level 1 participants; the remaining four will address advanced topics, for Level 2 participants only. Level 2 participants will also have opportunity to participate in the annual Resource Rodeo, all regional trainings, three farm tours, as well as program graduation.

Core agribusiness workshops will be held centrally in Columbia, SC at Clemson’s Sandhill REC facility and are *focused on farm business management*. Level appropriate topics include business concept/plan development; financial and risk management; legal & regulatory issues; marketing strategies; personal assessment; and an introduction to federal, state, and local agriculture resources.

All core agribusiness, Columbia-based workshops will be held on Thursdays and will be full-day events, scheduled from 9:30 am until 4:00 pm. At this time, workshop dates are scheduled as follows:

- November 1, 2018 (levels 1 & 2)
- November 15, 2018 (levels 1 & 2)
- November 29, 2018 (levels 1 & 2)
- December 13, 2018 (levels 1 & 2)
- January 10, 2019 (levels 1 & 2)
- January 24, 2019 (levels 1 & 2)
- February 7, 2019 (Resource Rodeo - levels 1 & 2)
- February 21, 2019 (levels 1 & 2)
- March 7, 2019 (level 2)
- March 21, 2019 (level 2)
- April 4, 2019 (level 2)
- April 25, 2019 (level 2)
- May 9, 2019 (Graduation – levels 1 & 2)

Because we are still confirming guest speakers and finalizing agendas, you will not receive a calendar listing the specific topics to be covered on these dates until shortly before the program begins. The dates above, however, are confirmed, and you should check your availability carefully before applying for the program.

Additional Program Activities

Core programming will be complemented by regional workshops to be held throughout five (5) regions of the state: Upstate, Catawba, Midlands, PeeDee, and Lowcountry. These workshops will offer critical opportunities for local peer and resource networking, as well as provide additional instruction on production and/or additional agribusiness topics tailored for each region and managed by regional partners. Many of these will be on-farm training opportunities.

Both Level 1 & Level 2 participants will have access to the same regional programs. Regional programs run from mid-November 2018 through May 31, 2019. Regional programming dates will vary, and an initial schedule of topics/dates for each region will be announced at the beginning of the program and updated throughout. There are no additional workshop fees for participants to attend these regional workshops, and SCNBFP participants may attend any regional workshop inside or outside their 'home' region; however, *any regional events that include a meal may impose a catering fee of no more than \$20.* Participants will need to follow registration instructions for individual regional workshops.

Three guided farm tours, planned for the late spring through summer of 2019, are also included in both programs. (Space may be limited on the guided tours.)

Select program participants will have an opportunity to engage in experiential learning opportunities through paid, on-farm internships, scheduled for June-August of 2019. Details will be announced at a later date.

Finally, all participants will have the opportunity to develop an ongoing peer network through the SCNBFP Alumni Association. All graduates will be eligible to participate in SCNBFP Alumni Association events and activities.

Attendance Policy

Core agribusiness workshop topics are selected and designed to provide learning opportunities to help participants become more successful in the development and operation of their farm business. Therefore, it is in the interest of each participant to make every attempt to attend all core sessions in Columbia. However, we realize that participants might face circumstances requiring them to be absent from a particular session. No makeup sessions will be offered. ***In order to earn a Certificate of Completion***, Level 1 participants are required to attend a minimum of five (5) of the eight Level 1 workshops, and Level 2 participants a minimum of eight (8) of the 12 Level 2 workshops. (For attendance purposes, the Resource Rodeo counts as a 'core' workshop.) In addition, Level 1 participants must participate in a minimum of two (2) regional workshops, and Level 2 participants, a minimum of four (4) regional workshops. *Any participant with perfect attendance will receive a Certificate of Completion with Honors.*

(Note that these certificates are recognized by certain resource providers and can have tangible value to your business for years to come. Every effort to earn a Certificate of Completion is highly encouraged.)

For those with a joint participant, it is only necessary for one partner to attend any given event for attendance to be counted.

Participant Costs

The SCNBFP Program receives some grant and/or partner funding to largely support the program, significantly helping to subsidize participant cost. (Actual program costs and value to you are \$2000-\$3000 per participant.)

SCNBFP program fees are \$300 per individual participant or \$500 per joint participants for the Level 1 program; \$400 per individual or \$650 per joint participants in the Level 2 program. Joint participants consist of two individuals engaged in the same farm business/enterprise. Fees include all core and regional workshops, materials, scheduled farm tours, lunch at all Columbia, "core" meetings, and graduation certificate. Additional costs for regional meals, optional lodging and travel that may be incurred by participant choice, are at participants' own expense. Joint participants will be expected to share all included program materials.

Online payment option will be available; debit and credit cards will be accepted.

Full payment is due by October 1, 2018.

Scholarships

A small amount of funding has been set aside for partial scholarships and may be available for those needing financial assistance. The program application will include several questions to determine eligibility of those applicants who meet the SC state definition of “economically disadvantaged.” Upon acceptance, proof of eligibility may be required. Note that full scholarships are not available. Any scholarships awarded will cover only part of the basic program fee; additional expenses, including travel and regional catering fees, will not be included.

Application Process

Because the South Carolina New and Beginning Farmer Program is limited to 50 participants per year, interested parties must participate in a competitive application process. The application collects important demographic and contact information, and also consists of a number of questions designed to assess your readiness and sincere interest in the program. *Submitting an application does not guarantee acceptance.* Applications are available online only, and can be found at the SCNBFP website:

WWW.SCNEWFARMER.ORG

Applications are due July 15, 2018

Please review the application carefully and follow all instructions for submission. Applications will be reviewed, and participants selected by the SCNBFP senior staff.

Applicants will be emailed an acceptance or deferment notice by mid-August 2018. *Those accepted will be asked to confirm their participation in the program.* **Anyone who does not confirm as instructed will not be considered an active participant.** At that time, anyone who wishes to rescind their application and decline acceptance before the program begins may do so without penalty. **No refunds will be issued after October 15, 2018.**

Selection Criteria

The SCNBFP staff will be primarily looking for individuals who express a passion for farming; a general vision for their enterprise; clear personal and business goals; *expectations that fit the scope of the program*; and the ability/commitment to complete the program. Questions that address these topics should be answered thoughtfully, honestly, and thoroughly.

SCNBFP staff will also look for applicants that have reliable transportation, as well as regular access to internet & email; these will be critical to your successful completion of the program. *Applicants without basic computer skills are encouraged to seek at least minimal training in word processing, internet, and email use.*

Incomplete applications will not be considered, so please do not leave any questions blank. If a question does not apply to you, please answer “non-applicable,” or even “not sure” so that we know you did not miss or ignore the question.

It is NOT necessary to be actively farming or to have access to land in order to participate in the program. We do suggest however, that you have already identified farming as a strong personal/career goal. The SCNBFP is probably not appropriate for individuals who simply wish to explore the *idea* of farming.

Program Level Selection

Applicants who are selected for the program will be given a tentative assignment of Level 1 or Level 2, based on the information provided in your application. When you confirm your participation, you will be given an opportunity to request participation at a different level and we will do our best to accommodate you, as availability may allow.

Questions?

For additional questions, please feel welcome to contact us!

PROGRAM QUESTIONS:

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TECHNICAL ISSUES WITH ONLINE APPLICATION:

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Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.

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