



South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship Re-Opens Grants *Applications available online*

COLUMBIA – Are you an agribusiness entrepreneur who would benefit from business mentoring, funding and access to grant consultants? The Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship (ACRE), an initiative of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA), is looking for you.

Applications for the ACRE Entrepreneurship Program are now open to South Carolina residents who have an agribusiness product and/or company related to one or more of the following categories:

- Specialty crops (fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, nursery crops)
- Meat Products
- Other foods (honey, cheese, milk, eggs, etc.)
- Industrial Hemp
- Aquaculture
- Hydroponics or Aquaponics
- Timber
- Mechanical harvesting
- Agribusiness technology
- Agritourism
- Container, urban, or indoor farming

“We’re seeking the most innovative and forward thinkers in South Carolina agribusiness,” said Kyle Player, ACRE Executive Director. “The Entrepreneurship Program will help position companies and products in the marketplace through collaboration, networking and funding.”

The ACRE Entrepreneurship Program is for agribusiness entrepreneurs who, with the assistance of business mentors and targeted funding, are ready to take their products or processes to the market.

“Ultimately, the ACRE Entrepreneurship Center is about South Carolina’s economic prosperity and specifically, growing the economic impact of the state’s largest industry – agribusiness,” said SC Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. “ACRE will link farming, agribusiness, research and entrepreneurship and will help us achieve our 50 by 20 goal.”

South Carolina agribusiness has an annual economic impact of \$42 billion. SCDA hopes to increase that impact to \$50 billion by 2020.

The Entrepreneurship Program application requires a business plan and a prototype or sales history for the applicant's company or product. **Applications are due Wednesday, May 1st and are available at <http://acre-sc.com/entrepreneurship-employment-application/>.**

Applicants selected to participate in the Entrepreneurship Program could receive up to \$25,000 for their company or product and/or access to a network of business mentors and access to grant writing consultants.

ACRE will have a second Entrepreneurship Program track in late 2019 for beginning innovators who have a great agribusiness idea but don't have experience in business. This track will offer participants a curriculum in business plan and marketing plan development.

To sign up for the news and event distribution list, or to receive more information on the Entrepreneurship Center and other ACRE initiatives, contact **Kyle Player**, ACRE Executive Director, 803-734-2324 or kplayer@scda.sc.gov.

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