



## Louisiana Small Business Development Center at University of Louisiana at Monroe 700 University Ave, Monroe, LA 71209

Serving Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland,  
Tensas, Union, and West Carroll Parishes

### Donald Farms

West Monroe, LA



#### Economic Impact

- 4 jobs created
- nearly doubled prices for product
- sales increased to \$1.5 million
- expansion of business

Jeff Donald began his alligator farm in 1987 by converting an old barn, designed for hog-farming into an insulated alligator barn. Jeff acquired the gators by robbing alligator nests in the swamps—he is licensed. The alligators are harvested three years later, and Jeff sells the gator hide and meat.

In 2001, Jeff and his wife attended a FastTrac™ New Venture class offered by Louisiana Small Business Development Center at ULM. He graduated from the class and began using the LSBDC as a sounding board for his ideas.

As his operations grew, Jeff continued to expand his facilities. But he wasn't happy with the quality of his hides. In 2002, Jeff came up with a "million dollar" idea to improve the gator hides by creating a single pen or "pod" for each gator. In 2005, Jeff was counseled by a registered patent agent, retained by the LSBDC, about his "pod" idea. He subsequently filed a patent for the "pod" and identified a contract manufacturer to make the pods from plastic.

After Jeff developed the "pod" into a useable tool for gator farming, the LSBDC at ULM assisted him with a business plan to implement the pods into his operation. That plan led to a \$500,000 loan.

Jeff's new gator farming technology nearly doubled the prices for his gator hides from \$6 per centimeter to \$10-\$12 per centimeter because of the improved quality. Fourteen thousand gators will be harvested this year. Gators will range in length from four to 6 feet. Fresh gator meat, approximately 20,000 pounds this year, will be harvested and sold. The meat is sold for \$5 per pound. Donald Farms anticipates total sales of \$1,500,000 with profits continuing to improve thanks to technical assistance from the LSBDC.

#### LSBDC at ULM Services Given to Client

- developed a business plan
- developed a financial plan
- 44 hours of individual counseling and preparation
- helped client obtain a \$500,000 loan
- helped with obtaining patent on new technology
- training on small business management



Funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Louisiana Economic Development Center, and participating universities

