



## **Agritourism Intensive 2012-2013 - Merced**

Offered by UC Cooperative Extension and the UC ANR Small Farm Program in partnership with Merced Visitor Services and Merced Country Ventures

### **Course Syllabus**

#### **Course Overview**

This course will introduce the student to the range of opportunities for diversifying a working farm or ranch by providing enjoyment and education to visitors for profit. Local experts will guide participants as they assess their own farms or ranches for agritourism potential and start creating business, risk management and marketing plans for their own agritourism operations. Local experienced agritourism operators will share their own experiences and will be part of a supportive network of advisors as class participants plan and start new enterprises.

Students will participate in individual exercises and will share their work during small-group discussions in class, and will have homework assignments to complete between the class sessions. The homework will include completing several assessment worksheets in cooperation with family or business partners, as well as writing first drafts of parts of their own business plans. Class instructors will provide each participant with individual feedback on all assignments turned in.

The participants will be encouraged to (but not required to) participate in group online discussions about the classes, readings and individual planning work.

**Dates:** Mondays, December 3, 2012 and January 7, 2013 and Tuesday, February 12, 2013  
**Times:** 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. each session (lunches included)  
**Location:** UCCE Merced County, 2145 Wardrobe Avenue, Merced, CA 95341  
**Cost:** \$50 for 3-session course  
**Information:** Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program, [paleff@ucdavis.edu](mailto:paleff@ucdavis.edu), 530-752-7779

#### **Course Outline**

##### **Session 1: Consider the possibilities and challenges – Monday December 3, 2012**

- 8:30-9:00      **Registration/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00-9:15      **Welcome /Overview of the workshop series**  
*Maxwell Norton, UCCE and Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program*
- 9:15-10:15    **Successes in agritourism – Experienced operators tell their stories, discuss costs & benefits and start-up challenges, followed by Q&A**  
*Cindy Lashbrook, Riverdance Farm*  
*Tony Azevedo, The Double T Ranch*  
*Additional speaker(s) TBA*
- 10:15 -10:30   **Break**
- 10:30-11:00   **Assessing your farm or ranch for agritourism potential**  
Overview of assessment process

- 11:00 – 11:15 **Individual exercise** using worksheet to begin assessment
- 11:15-12:00 **Navigating the permitting and regulatory process**  
*Bill Nicholson, Merced County Planning Department*  
*Speaker TBA, Merced County Environmental Health Dept.*  
*Williamson Act contract considerations for agritourism*
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Lunch**
- 12:30 -1:30 **Legal liability and risk management strategies**  
*Rusty Rumley, National Agricultural Law Center*
- 1:30 – 2:00 **Liability Insurance for agritourism**  
*Local insurance agent (TBA) experienced in agritourism coverage*
- 2:00 -2:15 **Checklists for assessing risk management on your farm or ranch**  
*Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program*
- 2:15 -2:45 **Small group discussions to share preliminary ideas**
- 2:45 – 3:00 **Homework discussion and evaluation of today's class**

**Homework** – due at beginning of next class:

- ❖ reading in text and supplemental reading,
- ❖ Complete assessment worksheets of participant's own farm or ranch for agritourism potential, involving family members and partners in the process.
- ❖ Begin evaluation of the potential for several current or possible agritourism activities on participant's farm or ranch.
- ❖ Complete risk assessment checklists for farm, ranch or agritourism operation

## **Session 2: Business Planning and understanding Hospitality - Monday January 7, 2013**

- 8:30-9:00 **Sign in/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00-9:10 **Welcome /Overview of the day**  
*Maxwell Norton, UCCE Merced County*  
*Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program*
- 9:10-9:30 **Small Group exercise** – share assessment of farm or ranch for agritourism potential and analysis of possible agritourism enterprises  
*Facilitator: Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program*
- 9:30-10:30 **Introduction to business planning**  
*Kurt Clark, Alliance Small Business Development Center*  
 Overview of planning process steps & resources  
 Discussion of mission statement, business concept, goals, objectives  
 Introduction to "One page business plan" exercise
- 10:30-10:45 **Break**
- 10:45-11:15 **Individual exercise** – Begin drafting mission statement, business concept, goals
- 11:15 -11:45 **Budgeting & cash flow**

*Kurt Clark, Alliance Small Business Development Center*  
Discussion of budgeting and cash flow projection  
Presentation of budgeting/cash flow projection exercise

- 11:45 -12:15 **Individual exercise** – begin budgeting exercise, listing unknowns, startup costs
- 12:15 – 12:45 **Lunch**
- 12:45 -1:30 **The hospitality business – finding, understanding, and caring for your visitors**  
*Karen Baker, Merced Visitor Services*  
*Experienced agritourism speaker TBA*
- 1:30 – 2:00 **Fitting agritourism into your farm or ranch, but keeping it a separate business**
- 2:00 - 2:30 **Small group exercise** – discuss challenges encountered so far in the process
- 2:30 – 2:45 **Report back** on major challenges so far and strategies for overcoming challenges
- 2:45 – 3:00 **Discuss homework, complete class evaluation**

**Homework** – due at beginning of next class:

- ❖ Complete first draft of “one page business plan”: mission statement, business concept, goals and objectives; complete first draft of first year budget.
- ❖ Consult with insurance agent, county planning department, and/or experienced agritourism operator

### **Session 3 – Market analysis and effective marketing – Tuesday, February 12, 2013**

- 8:30-9:00 **Sign in/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00-9:10 **Welcome /Overview of the day**  
*Maxwell Norton and Penny Leff*
- 9:10-9:40 **Small Group exercise** – share and discuss any or all of the homework assignments  
*Facilitator: Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program*
- 9:40-10:10 **Conducting a market analysis**  
*Speaker TBA*
- 10:10-10:25 **Break**
- 10:25-11:00 **Effective websites and social media for agritourism**  
*Michael Loschke, IMC Consulting*
- 11:00 -11:30 **Creating a marketing strategy**  
*Michael Loschke, IMC Consulting*
- 11:30 -12:00 **Individual exercise:** draft outline of a marketing strategy
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Lunch**
- 12:30 -1:00 **Small Group Exercise:** Share individual marketing strategy drafts in small groups
- 1:00 – 1:30 **Organizing a regional agritourism association** - working together for mutual success  
*Speaker TBA*
- 1:30 – 1:45 **Creating an elevator speech**

*Speaker TBA*

- 1:45 – 2:00     **Individual exercise:** write an elevator speech
- 2:00 – 2:15     **Small group exercise:** share elevator speech with each other
- 2:15 -2:30     **Individual exercise:** Complete 6 month action plan
- 2:30 – 2:45     **Wrap-up and class evaluation**

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