

Agritourism Intensive 2013-2014 – Ventura County

Offered by UC Cooperative Extension and the UC Small Farm Program in partnership with Ventura County Farm Bureau, Oxnard Convention & Visitors Bureau, Totally Local Ventura County, and other partners

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 class discussions, 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. No educational credit will be given for this course.

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

- Dates:** Tuesdays, December 3, 2013, January 14, 2014 and February 11, 2014
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. each session (lunches included)
Location: Center for Non-Profit Leadership, 4001 Mission Oaks Blvd, Camarillo, CA 93012
Cost: \$50 for 3-session course
Information: Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program, paleff@ucdavis.edu, 530-752-7779

Course Outline

Session 1: Introduction to agritourism possibilities and challenges – Tuesday, Dec 3, 2013

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 8:30-9:00 | Registration/Continental Breakfast |
| 9:00-9:20 | Welcome /Overview of the workshop series, introductions |
| 9:20-9:30 | Why agritourism? <i>Ben Faber, UC Cooperative Extension</i> |
| 9:30-10:30 | Successes in agritourism – Experienced operators tell their stories, discuss costs & benefits and start-up challenges, followed by Q&A <i>Phil McGrath, McGrath Family Farms (tours, U-Pick, farm stand, etc)</i> <i>Dan Roatcap, Santa Paula Christmas Tree Farm</i> <i>Mary McGrath, McGrath Brothers Great Pacific Pumpkins</i> |
| 10:30 - 10:45 | Break |
| 10:45 -11:00 | Assessing your farm or ranch for agritourism potential <i>Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program</i> Overview of assessment process Introduce individual exercise using worksheet |

- 11:00-12:00 **Navigating the permitting and regulatory process**
Kim Prillhart, County of Ventura Planning Director
Bill Stratton, County of Ventura Environmental Health Division
 Distribution of relevant materials from surrounding counties
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Lunch**
- 12:30 -1:30 **Legal liability and risk management strategies**
 Introduction to risk management
 Landowner Liability Presentation based on National Ag Law Center information
 Insurance for Agritourism: *John Udy, Grimlin & Udy Insurance Agency*
- 1:30 -1:45 **Checklists for assessing risk management on your farm or ranch – Penny Leff**
- 1:45 -2:15 **Small group discussions to share preliminary ideas and/or talk with experts**
- 2:15 – 2:45 **Volunteers report to larger group on their plans/large group discusses & provides feedback**
- 2:45 – 3:00 **Homework discussion, wrap-up and evaluation of today’s class**
Closing Words: *Susan Smith, Oxnard Convention and Visitors Bureau*

Session 2: Business Planning and understanding Hospitality – Tuesday, January 14, 2014

- 8:30-9:00 **Sign in/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00-9:05 **Welcome /Overview of the day**
- 9:05-9:25 **Small Group exercise** – share assessment of farm or ranch for agritourism potential and analysis of possible agritourism enterprises
- 9:25-9:40 **Visioning exercise** – *Kat Merrick, Totally Local Ventura County and Susan Smith, Oxnard Convention and Visitors Bureau*
- 9:40-10:35 **Introduction to business planning**
Bill Bartel, Economic Development Collaborative Ventura County Small Business Development Center
 Overview of planning process steps & resources
 Introduction to “one-page business plan”
 Discussion of mission statement, business concept, goals, objectives
- 10:35-10:50 **Break**
- 10:50 -11:15 **Individual exercise** – Begin drafting mission statement, business concept, goals
- 11:15 -12:00 **Budgeting & cash flow**
Bill Bartel, Economic Development Collaborative Ventura County Small Business Development Center
 Discussion of cash flow, budgeting, “one-page financial plan”
 Presentation of budgeting or cash flow projection exercise
- 12:00 -12:15 **Individual exercise – begin budgeting exercise, listing unknowns, startup costs**
- 12:15 – 12:45 **Lunch**

12:45 -2:45 **Field trip to successful agritourism operation - McGrath Family Farm, Camarillo**
Hospitality, Taking care of visitors - Phil McGrath
Accessibility issues on the farm – *Susan Smith, Oxnard CVB*

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, listing unknowns.
- ❖ Consult with insurance agent, county planning department, and/or experienced agritourism operator

Lesson 3 – Market analysis and effective marketing – Tuesday, February 11, 2014

8:30-9:00 **Sign in/Continental Breakfast**

9:00-9:10 **Welcome /Overview of the day**

9:10-9:40 **Group discussion** - share and discuss homework assignments

9:40-10:00 **Who are your Natural Allies in the community?**

Kat Merrick, Totally Local Ventura County and Susan Smith, Oxnard Convention and Visitors Bureau

10:00-10:30 **Conducting a market analysis** – Who and where are your target customers?
Is there a market for your idea in your location? How do you find out?
Jay Ruskey, Good Land Organics

10:30-10:45 **Break**

10:45-11:30 **Effective websites and social media for agritourism**

Jennifer Fontaine, MommyHiker Blog

11:30 -12:00 **Creating a marketing strategy – developing your brand**

Kat Merrick, Totally Local Ventura County

12:00 -12:30 **Lunch**

12:30 – 1:00 **Individual exercise:** draft outline of a marketing strategy

1:00 -1:20 **Small Group Exercise:** Share individual marketing strategy drafts in small groups (with facilitation assistance from marketing professional)

1:20 – 1:30 **Report back** to full group on interesting/innovative marketing strategies

1:30 -1:50 **Individual exercise:** Complete 6 month action plan

1:50 – 2:20 **Working together for mutual success** – collaborative events, tours and working with the tourism industry - *Susan Smith, Oxnard CVB*

2:20 – 2:45 **concluding surprise, fun and upbeat** - TBD

2:45 – 3:00 **Wrap-up and class evaluation**

This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2012-49200-20030.



United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture