

Curriculum for online/in-person “Agritourism Intensive” class – San Luis Obispo Co. & region

Course Overview

This course will introduce the student to a 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 online group discussions about the classes, readings and individual planning work.

The SLO region Agritourism Intensive classes will be open to farmers, ranchers and others involved in or planning for agritourism in San Luis Obispo, Monterey and Santa Barbara Counties. The format of the class is a series of 6 participatory 2-hour zoom meetings, every Tuesday beginning January 12, 2021 and ending February 16, 2021. Each session will be 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Shared zoom participation will be available at the SLO Farm Bureau office for those with poor internet access.

Session #1, Tuesday January 12, 2021:

- 9:00 a.m. Overview of the class series and zoom logistics
- 9:10– 9:20 Short introductions by all participants
- 9:20- 10:10 Successes in agritourism – Three experienced local agritourism operators tell their stories, successes and start-up challenges, followed by Q&A
- 10:10 – 10:50 Navigating the permitting and regulatory process – local county planner, environmental health dept., and other staff present about permits and regulations for common agritourism activities, followed by Q&A
- 10:50 – 11:00 Homework discussion, Online evaluation poll, offer to review and return with feedback any completed assignments that participants want to email to class organizer.

Session #2, Tuesday January 19, 2021 :

- 9:00 – 9:10 Welcome, brief overview of class series, zoom format, offer to review homework
- 9:10– 9:35 Assessing your farm or ranch and community for agritourism potential –
 - presentation giving overview of the individual farm/ranch assessment process by Penny Leff. Assessment worksheets shared for participants to download and complete with family or partners as homework.
- 9:35 – 9:55 Breakout rooms for small group discussions among participants to share preliminary ideas, assessments and challenges

- 10:00 – 10:30 Introduction to business planning – concentration on defining mission, objectives, target customers, business concept – led by local Small Business Development Center trainer or counselor.
- 10:30 – 10:50 Facilitated full group interactive discussion – participants share goals and objectives, ideas for activities – what do you want to achieve with agritourism?
- 10:50 – 11:00 Wrap up, online evaluation poll, homework discussion, offer to review and return with feedback any completed assignments that participants want to email to class organizer.

Homework – to be completed by 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, including who would be partners/collaborators.

Session #3, Tuesday January 26 (If allowed by county health department authorities, this session may be conducted following safety standards, with social distancing, on a San Luis Obispo farm):

- 9:00 – 9:10 Welcome, brief overview of class series, zoom format, offer to review homework
- 9:10 – 9:50 Virtual (or in-person, if possible) Field trip! Show recorded video with narration from agritourism operator talk about facilities, infrastructure needs, staffing, etc. followed by live Q&A with that agritourism operator and other experienced participants
- 9:50 – 10: 40 Five 10-minute presentations, or breakout groups led by experienced operators of different agritourism activities. - examples:
 - *U-Pick, farm stand, farm shop*
 - *Winery activities, tasting rooms*
 - *Farm tours, education programs*
 - *Farm stay, guest ranch, camping*
 - *Events, festivals, dinners*
 - *Ranch and rangeland activities, outdoor recreation, hunting, etc.*
- 10:40 – 11:00 Wrap up, group discussion, online evaluation poll, homework discussion, offer to review and return with feedback any completed assignments that participants want to email to class organizer.

Homework – can be turned in to instructor by email for review and feedback:

- ❖ Complete first draft of “one page business plan”: mission statement, business concept, goals and objectives.

Session #4, Tuesday February 2, 2021

- 9:00 – 9:10 Welcome, brief overview of class series, zoom format, offer to review homework
- 9:10 – 9:30 Breakout rooms w/small groups – Emergency preparedness planning exercise:
- 9:30 – 10:00 Full group report back from small groups, with instructor sharing emergency preparedness planning resources ([Agritourismready](#))

- 10:00 – 10:50 Legal liability and risk management strategies
 - Introduction to land-owner liability, risk management strategies – *Penny Leff*
 - Insurance for agritourism – *Local insurance agent experienced with agritourism*
 - Share handouts, checklists and web site for safety & risk management ([safe agritourism](#))
- 10:50 – 11:00 Wrap up, online evaluation poll, homework discussion, offer to review and return with feedback any completed assignments that participants want to email to class organizer.

Homework – can be turned in to instructor by email for review and feedback:

- ❖ Complete risk assessment checklists for farm, ranch or agritourism operation
- ❖ Consult with insurance agent, county planning department, and/or experienced agritourism operator about business concept

Session #5, Tuesday February 9, 2021:

- 9:00 – 9:10 Welcome, brief overview of class series, zoom format, offer to review homework
- 9:10 – 9:40 Budgeting & cash flow – discussion and exercise led by local SBDC trainer – handouts/worksheets to be downloaded before class.
- 9:40 - 9:55 Overview of financing options – SBDC or SBA or FSA representative, other?
- 9:55 – 10:30 Effective websites, social media and marketing strategies for agritourism – presentation by local marketing professional
- 10:30-10:55 Facilitated full group discussion, Q&A on planning so far and challenges encountered, potential for advocacy
- 10:55 – 11:00 Wrap up, online evaluation poll, homework discussion, offer to review and return with feedback any completed assignments that participants want to email to class organizer.

Session #6, Tuesday February 16, 2021:

- 9:00 – 9:10 Welcome, brief overview of class series, zoom format, offer to review homework
- 9:10 – 9:40 Introduction to the tourism community, Q&A – presentation & discussion led by local Visitors’ Bureau leader or staff
- 9:40 – 10:00 Creating a marketing plan – local marketing professional discussing process of marketing planning
 - Share exercise/downloadable handout for creating a marketing plan
- 10:00 – 10:20 Individual exercise – create 6-month action plan
- 10:20 – 10:50 Marketing the community/agritourism associations and other collaborations – local agritourism or winery association leader sharing about how association works & benefits members.
- 11:50 – 12:00 Wrap up, live evaluation form or online evaluation poll, thanks to team, funder