



A Guide to Agritourism: A class for Fresno region farmers and ranchers

Offered by UC Cooperative Extension Fresno County and the UC Small Farm Program in partnership with the Fresno Farm Bureau and the Fresno-Clovis Convention & Visitors Bureau

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: Thursday, December 8, Wednesdays, January 25 and March 14

Times: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. each session

Location: Fresno County Farm Bureau, 1274 West Hedges Avenue, Fresno CA 93728

Cost: \$25 for 3-session course (\$30 after December 1)

Information: Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program, paleff@ucdavis.edu, 530-752-7779

Course Outline

❖ Lesson 1: Consider the possibilities – Thursday, December 8, 2011

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 8:00-8:30 | Registration/Continental Breakfast |
| 8:30-8:45 | Welcome /Overview of the workshop series
<i>Stephen Vasquez, UCCE Fresno Co. and Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program</i> |
| 8:45-9:30 | Successes in agritourism – Experienced operators tell their stories, discuss costs & benefits and start-up challenges
<i>Bret Engelmann, Engelmann Cellars</i>
<i>Stacy Grote, Simonian Farms</i>
<i>John Olivas, Rancho Notso Grande</i> |
| 9:30-10:00 | Assessing your farm or ranch for agritourism potential
<i>Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program</i>
Overview of assessment process
Guided individual exercise using worksheet to begin assessment |

- 10:00-10:15 **Break**
- 10:15-11:00 **Navigating the permitting and regulatory process**
Sophia Pagoulatos, City of Fresno Planning Department
Kim Hultquist, Fresno County Environmental Health Department
- 11:00 -11:30 **Risk management and liability insurance**
John Valentine, CPCU, Nationwide Agribusiness
- 11:30 -11:50 **Fitting it all together for your unique enterprise**
Bob McKellar, Seven Sycamores Ranch and McKellar Farms
- 11:50 -12:00 **Homework discussion and wrap-up**
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Networking social with local experienced agritourism operators**

- ❖ Homework – due at beginning of next class: reading in text and supplemental reading, Complete assessment 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.

❖ **Lesson 2: Business Planning and Risk Assessment - Wednesday, January 25, 2012**

- 8:00-8:30 **Sign in/Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30-8:40 **Welcome /Overview of the day**
Stephen Vasquez, UCCE Fresno County
Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program
- 8:40-9:10 **Small Group exercise** – share assessment of farm or ranch for agritourism potential and analysis of possible agritourism enterprises
Facilitator: Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program
- 9:10-9:40 **Introduction to business planning**
Rich Mostert, Central Valley Business Incubator
 Overview of planning process steps & resources
 Discussion of mission statement, business concept, goals, objectives
- 9:40-10:00 **Individual exercise** – Begin drafting mission statement & business concept
- 10:00-10:15 **Break**
- 10:15-11:00 **Understanding visitors, connecting and collaborating**
Gay Fortana, Fresno Clovis Convention and Visitors Bureau
Steve Murray, Murray Family Farms
- 11:00 -11:30 **Cash Flow projection, start up costs**
Rich Mostert, Central Valley Business Incubator
 Introduction to cash flow projection
 Presentation of homework exercise
- 11:30 -11:45 **Conducting a risk management assessment of your farm or ranch**
Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program
 Presentation of homework exercise
- 11:45 -12:00 **Mentoring and homework discussion and wrap-up**
- 12:00 -12:30 **Networking social**

- ❖ Homework – due at beginning of next class: Complete first draft of mission statement, business concept, goals and objectives. Complete first draft of first year cash flow projection. Conduct risk management assessment of farm or ranch using worksheets provided in class

❖ **Lesson 3 – Market analysis and effective marketing – Wednesday March 14, 2012**

- 8:00-8:20 **Sign in/Continental Breakfast**
- 8:20-8:30 **Welcome /Overview of the day**
Richard Molinar and Penny Leff
- 8:30-9:00 **Small Group exercise** – share and discuss individual cash-flow projections and risk management assessments
Facilitator: Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program
- 9:00-9:30 **Conducting a market analysis**
Conrad Braganza, Fresno-Clovis Convention & Visitors Bureau
- 9:30-9:50 **Effective websites and social media for agritourism**
- 9:50-10:00 **Break**
- 10:00 -10:30 **Creating a marketing strategy**
Melanie Coventry, Fresno-Clovis Convention & Visitors Bureau
- 10:30 -11:00 **Individual exercise:** begin drafting a marketing strategy
- 11:00 -11:30 **Small Group Exercise:** Share individual marketing strategy drafts in small groups (*with facilitation assistance from marketing presenters*)
- 11:30 -11:45 **Individual exercise:** Complete 6 month action plan
- 11:45 -12:00 **Wrap-up and evaluation**
- 12:00 -12:30 **Networking social**

Required Text (provided to all students at no charge):

Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, by Holly George and Ellie Rilla, Published by UC ANR Publications

This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2010-49200-06203.

