

Strengthening California Food Networks



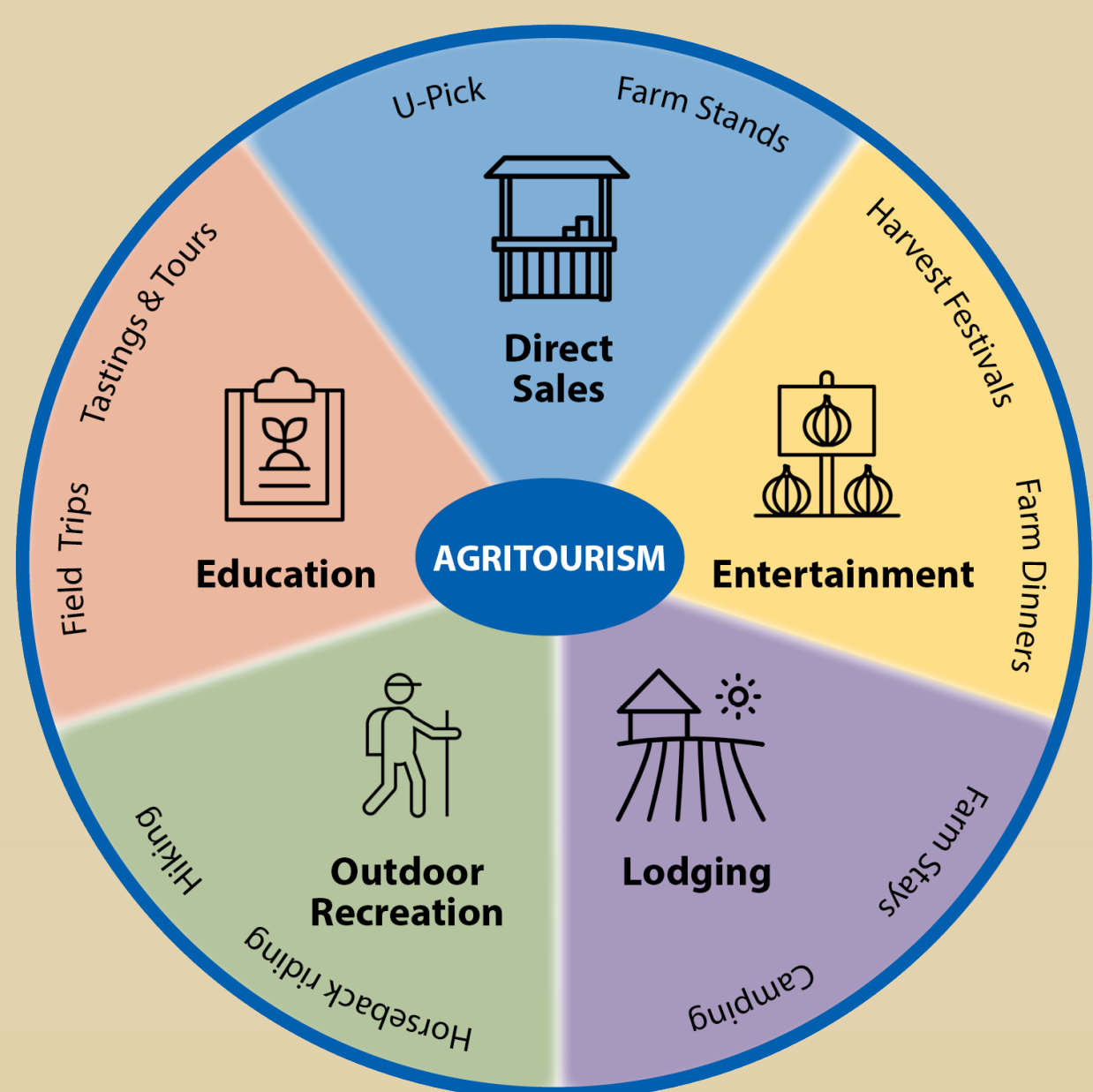
with Agritourism and Direct Sales



Farmers present at workshop, Soul Food Farm, Solano County, CA

Introduction

Agritourism is an increasingly popular strategy for small-scale farmers and ranchers to increase and diversify revenue and connect with the public. Many such farmers experienced significant disruptions and shifts in market outlets during COVID-19, marked by a loss in wholesale outlets and an increase in demand for direct-to-consumer sales. In response, the UC ANR Agritourism Program, in partnership with UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and agricultural service groups, launched a 3-year project (Oct. 2020 – Sep. 2023) providing resources and trainings for California farmers in adapting existing agritourism operations during COVID-19 and adopting new agritourism and direct sales revenue streams.



Rachael Callahan
Statewide Agritourism Coordinator, UC SAREP

Margaret Lloyd
Small Farms Advisor, UCCE Capital Corridor

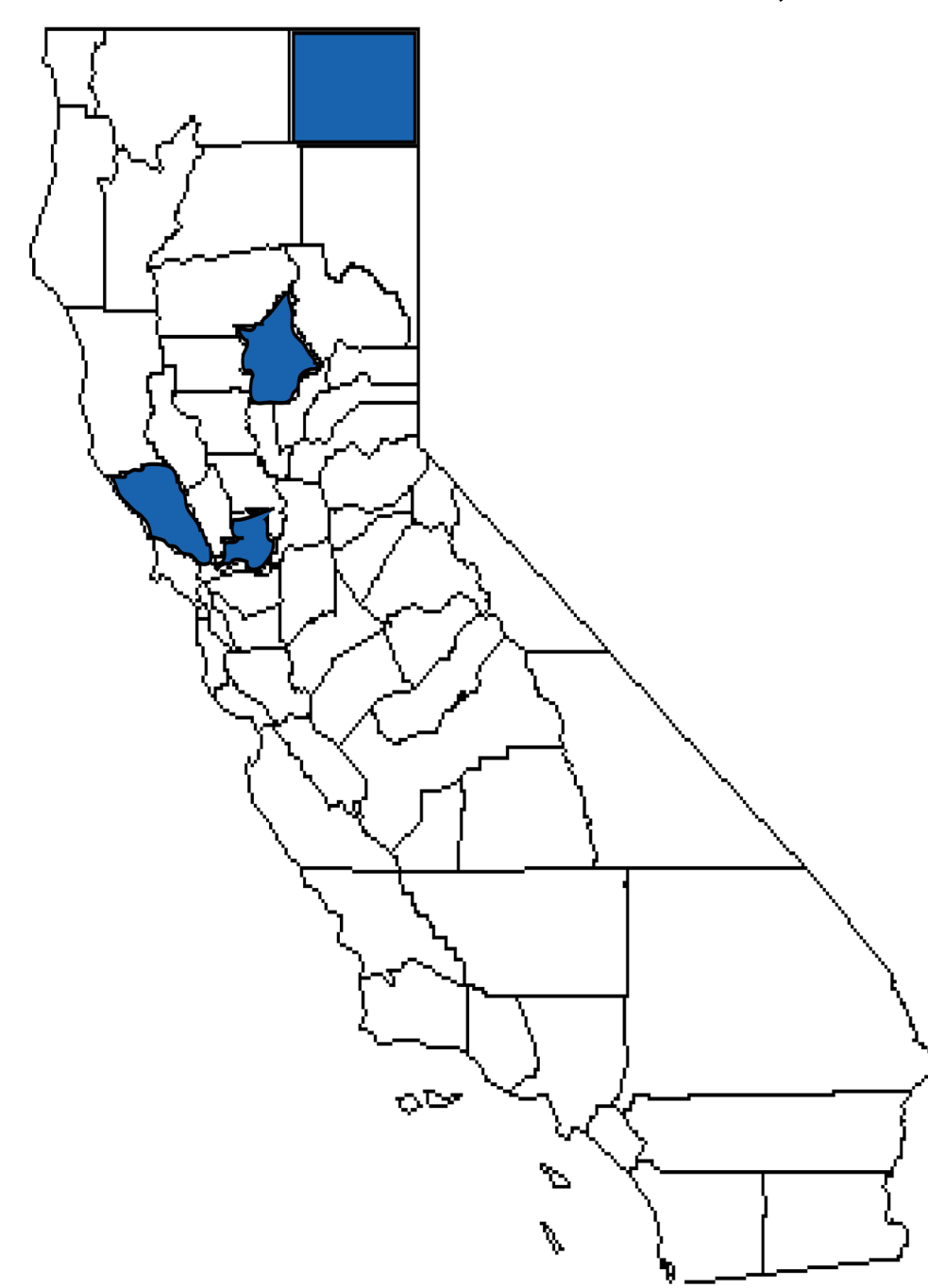
Laura Snell
County Director and Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor, UCCE Modoc County



Workshop participants tour Bees N Blooms Farm, Sonoma County, CA

Method

- Rapid response training and technical assistance: 8 webinars January 2021-April 2021 providing resources to safely operate during the pandemic for operators across the state.
- Regional training and marketing April 2021-April 2023 in 4 counties: Butte, Modoc, Solano, Sonoma.



- Planning teams in each county comprised of UC SAREP, UCCE, and area agricultural service group.
- Four in-person workshops conducted in each region on the topics of: online sales and e-commerce, farm stands and U-pick operations, on-farm events and education, and shared marketing.
- Marketing campaigns conducted by area agricultural service groups in each region promoting local farms and ranches.

Results

- Trainings were attended by a total of 447 farmers, ranchers, and agritourism partners (203 webinar participants; 244 in-person workshop participants).
 - 94% of webinar and workshop attendees reported an increase in knowledge as a result of participation.
- Partners organized 9 collaborative multi-farm regional agritourism events open to the public.
 - 24,450 members of the public visited farms during these events.
- Partners conducted regional marketing campaigns, providing information about agritourism offerings to 32,134 members of the public.
- Produced a fact sheet and guide for operating a farm stand in Modoc County.

Lessons Learned

- Regional capacity building resulted in new connections and policy discussions.
- Agricultural service group project partners greatly benefited from networking with each other, highlighting the need for more coordination across the state.
- Participant feedback underscored importance of peer-to-peer learning.



Laura Snell and Holly George facilitate a workshop. Modoc County, CA

Next Steps

- The project team will follow up with webinar and workshop attendees to measure change in behavior, sales, and customers.
- Continued funding has been secured for a hybrid virtual/in-person Agritourism Intensive training course.

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