

Agritourism Intensive 2015-2016 – Stanislaus County

Offered by UC Cooperative Extension and the UC Small Farm Program in partnership with Stanislaus Grown, Valley Land Alliance, Ag Link and other local 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:** Thursdays, December 10, 2015, January 21 and February 11, 2016
Times: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. each session (lunches included)
Location: Harvest Hall, Stanislaus Co. Ag Center, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto, CA
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 & challenges – Thurs Dec 10, 2015

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| 8:30-9:00 | Registration/Continental Breakfast |
| 9:00-9:20 | Welcome /Overview of the workshop series, introductions |
| 9:20-9:40 | Why agritourism?
<i>Maxwell Norton, UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor, emeritus</i> |
| 9:40-10:40 | Successes in agritourism – Experienced operators tell their stories, discuss costs & benefits and start-up challenges, followed by Q&A
<i>John Bos, Dutch Hollow Farms, Modesto</i>
<i>Cindy Lashbook, Riverdance Farms, Livingston</i> |
| 10:40 - 10:55 | Break |
| 10:55 -11:45 | Assessing your farm or ranch and community for agritourism potential
<i>Overview of individual farm/ranch assessment process – Penny Leff</i>
<i>Discussion about community & market assessment, potential partners & target audience identification, Hand out assessment worksheets</i> |
| 11:45-12:00 | Individual exercise – start on assessment worksheet or list of questions |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | Lunch |
| 12:30 -1:30 | Legal liability and risk management strategies |

Introduction to basic risk management strategies – Penny Leff
Introduction to landowner liability issues
Insurance coverage for agritourism - Blane Adams, Winton, Strom &
Green Insurance Company

- 1:30 - 1:40 **Hand out Checklists** for assessing risk management – show Safe Agritourism website
- 1:40 – 2:00 **Small group discussions to share preliminary ideas**
Share initial thoughts about directions for exploration
- 2:00 - 2:15 **Break**
- 2:15 – 2:45 **Introduction to the tourism community, Q&A**
Keith Boggs, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Stanislaus County
- 2:45 – 3:30 **Introduction to business planning** – Kurt Clark, Alliance Small Business Development Center
Overview of planning process reasons, steps & resources
Discussion of mission statement, business concept, goals, objectives
- 3:30 – 3:45 **Full Group discussion** – share goals – what do you want to achieve with agritourism?
- 3:45 – 4:00 **Homework discussion, preview of next session, workshop evaluation**

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, including who would be partners/collaborators.

Session 2: Permitting, regulations, emergencies & hospitality – Thurs. January 21, 2016

- 8:30-9:00 **Sign in/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00-9:10 **Welcome /Overview of the day**
- 9:10-9:30 **Small Group exercise** – share assessment of farm or ranch for agritourism potential and analysis of possible agritourism enterprises
- 9:30-10:30 **Navigating the permitting and regulatory process**
Stanislaus County Planner Angela Freitas
County Environmental Health Dept. rep
Distribution of relevant materials from surrounding counties
- 10:30 – 10:45 **Q & A, Full group discussion about permitting & regulatory process**
- 10:45-11:00 **Break**
- 11:00 -11:30 **Emergency planning for agritourism operations** – Penny Leff. based on Julie Fox's (*Extension Specialist*) presentation
- 11:30 -12:00 **Full group discussion** – volunteer participants share business concepts and challenges with full group; group gives feedback, asks questions, etc.
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Lunch**
- 12:30 -3:30 **Field trip** to Pageo Lavender Farm, including discussion with owners George and Patty Kapor about being in the hospitality business - meeting visitors' needs and expectations, & creating a positive visitor experience

3:30 – 4:00 **Discuss homework, review intro to business planning, 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 risk assessment checklists for farm, ranch or agritourism operation
- ❖ Consult with insurance agent, county planning department, and/or experienced agritourism operator

Lesson 3 – budgeting, event planning & marketing strategy – Thursday, February 11, 2016

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

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

9:10-9:30 **Group discussion** - share and discuss homework assignments

9:30 – 10:15 **Budgeting & cash flow** –*Kurt Clark, Alliance SBDC*
Discussion of cash flow, budgeting, “one-page financial plan”
Presentation of budgeting or cash flow projection exercise

10:15-10:30 **Start Individual budgeting or cash flow projection exercise**

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

10:45 – 11:00 **Overview of potential financing options**

11:00 -12:00 **Effective websites and social media for agritourism**
Sarah Potter, RAM Farm, Designer & Developer

12:00 – 12:30 **Lunch**

12:30 – 1:00 **Creating a marketing strategy**
Marketing professional - TBD

1:00 – 1:15 **Individual exercise:** *draft outline of a marketing strategy*

1:15 – 1:35 **Small Group Exercise:** *Share individual marketing strategy drafts in small groups*

1:35 – 1:45 **Report back to full group on interesting/innovative marketing strategies**

1:45 -2:00 **Individual exercise:** *Complete 6 month action plan*

2:00 – 2:15 **Break**

2:15 – 3:00 **Public events on the farm** – planning and management
Maureen Macedo, Macedo’s Mini Acre & Courtney Smith, Bloomingcamp Ranch

3:00 – 3:20 **Marketing the community/agritourism associations and other collaborations** - working together for mutual success – *Trina Walley, Stanslaus Grown*

3:20 – 3:45 **Full group discussion** – Each individual shares plans, challenges and progress so far

3:45 – 4:00 **Wrap-up and class evaluation**



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