

Agritourism Intensive 2019: Managing the Risks of Agritourism for California Farm and Ranch Diversification – Funded by Western Extension Risk Management Education Program

Project Description:

The project team will collaborate with UC Cooperative Extension and county staff, regional agricultural organizations, and marketing professionals to offer a series of three participatory workshops in two different regions of California, training small-scale agricultural producers to understand the possibilities and challenges of agritourism and to create individualized plans for managing the risks of diversifying their agricultural operation with their own agritourism enterprise. The project team will offer individual follow-up consultation to participants and connect participants with experienced agritourism operators in their regions for mentoring and networking. Resources from previous similar “Agritourism Intensive” classes [are online](#).

The workshops will be offered in Santa Cruz and Calaveras Counties, as collaborators in these regions report that their members and other regional small-scale producers request help with the liability, permitting and hospitality challenges of agritourism and with marketing new agritourism operations.

Each workshop will be six or seven hours long, including lunch. They will take place in winter, 2018 - 19. The first workshop will introduce participants to the range of agritourism enterprises possible as diversification strategies for managing production and financial risk. Producers will learn from experienced agritourism operators, county staff and expert advisors about managing legal risks, liability, regulatory challenges, and permitting for various types of operations. The project team will then engage participants in a hands-on process of assessing their own farm or ranch assets and evaluating the costs, benefits and risks of several potential or existing agritourism enterprises, including evaluation of family, staff and other human resources of the enterprises. Homework exercises involve consultation with family and support professionals.

The second and third workshops will involve local small business development and tourism professionals and agritourism operators in teaching participants to understand and manage the financial, human and price risks of operating agritourism enterprises. Participants will learn about the importance of risk assessments, record keeping and budgeting, emergency preparedness, business planning and marketing strategies, and will be introduced to modern marketing tools including social media, effective websites and other low-cost promotions. They will begin creating business plans, marketing strategies and risk assessments. Participants will be supported in their business planning, marketing strategy design, risk assessments and plan implementation by individual consultation with the project team and with successful agritourism operators in their regions. At least one site visit to a successful agritourism operation will be included in the curriculum. Small group discussions and in-class exercises will encourage network development.

The project team will follow up by telephone or email with all participants who complete the planning assignments, checking in on progress and offering consultation.

Contact: Penny Leff, UC SAREP Agritourism Coordinator
530-752-5208
paleff@ucdavis.edu
<http://asi.ucdavis.edu/programs/sarep/research-initiatives/fs>