



Curriculum for Agritourism Intensive class – Mendocino 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 Mendocino region Agritourism Intensive classes is open to farmers, ranchers and others involved in or planning for agritourism in Mendocino, Lake and Sonoma Counties. The format of the class is a series of 6 participatory 2-hour zoom meetings, from March 3, 2021 through April 7, 2021, from 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Session #1, Wednesday March 3, 2021:

- 10:00 a.m. Overview of the class series and zoom logistics
- 10:10– 10:30 Short introductions by all participants
- 10:30- 11:15 **Successes in agritourism – Experienced local agritourism operators tell their stories, successes and start-up challenges, followed by Q&A**
 - *Sarah Bennett Cahn, Pennyroyal Farm, Boonville*
 - *Lorri Duckworth, Duckworth Family Farm, Sebastopol*
- 11:15– 11:35 **Assessing your farm or ranch and community for agritourism potential –**
 - *Penny Leff, UC SAREP*
 - Assessment worksheets shared for participants to download and complete with family or partners as homework.
- 11:35 – 11:55 **Breakout rooms for small group discussions** among participants to share preliminary ideas, assessments and challenges
- 11:55 Homework discussion, Online evaluation poll

Session #2, Wednesday March 10 :

- 10:00 – 10:10 Welcome, brief overview of class series, zoom format
- 10:10 – 11:00 **Navigating the permitting and regulatory process**
 - *Sam “Vandy” Vandewater, County of Mendocino Planning & Building Services*
 - *Additional speakers TBD*



- 11:00 – 11:50 **Introduction to business planning**
 - *Steve Lamb, West Business Development Center*
- 11:50 – 12:00 Wrap up, session evaluation poll, homework discussion

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, Wednesday March 17:

- 10:00 – 10:10 Welcome, brief overview, zoom format
- 10:10 – 10:40 **Breakout rooms by agritourism activity planned, with experienced lead for each group** – 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 Full group discussion about plans, challenges so far
- 11:00 – 11:50 **Legal liability and risk management strategies**
 - Introduction to land-owner liability, risk management strategies
 - *Penny Leff, UC SAREP*
 - Insurance for agritourism
 - *Colin Smith, George Petersen Insurance Agency*
 - Share handouts, checklists and web site for safety & risk management ([safe agritourism](#))
- 11:50 – 12:00 Wrap up, online evaluation poll, homework discussion

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, etc. 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 #4, Wednesday March 24

- 10:00 – 10:10 Welcome, brief overview, zoom format
- 10:10 – 10:30 **Breakout rooms w/small groups – Emergency preparedness planning exercise:**
- 10:30 – 11:00 Full group report back from small groups, with instructor sharing emergency preparedness planning resources ([Agritourismready](#))
- 11:00 – 11:50 **Budgeting, cash flow and financing options**
 - *Steve Lamb, West Business Development Center, Maria Testa, Testa Ranch*
- 11:50 – 12:00 Wrap up, online evaluation poll, homework discussion



Session #5, Wednesday March 31:

- 10:00 – 10:10 Welcome, brief overview of class series, (zoom format)
- 10:10 – 10:50 **Virtual field trip!**
Recorded video with narration from local agritourism operator about facilities, infrastructure needs, staffing, etc. followed by Q&A with that agritourism operator in real time – speaker TBD
- 10:50 – 11:35 **Effective websites, social media and marketing strategies for agritourism**
 - *Hannah Bird, Hopland REC*
- 11:35 – 11:55 Facilitated full group discussion on planning so far and challenges encountered.
- 11:50 – 12:00 Wrap up, online evaluation poll, homework discussion

Session #6, Wednesday April 7

- 10:00 – 10:30 **Introduction to the tourism community**
 - *Travis Scott, Visit Mendocino*
- 10:30 – 11:00 **Creating a marketing plan**
 - *Sarah Bodnar, Communications Strategist*
- 11:00 – 11:20 Individual exercise – create 6-month action plan
- 11:20 – 11:50 **Marketing the community/agritourism associations and other collaborations**
 - *Carmen Snyder, Sonoma County Farm Trails*
- 11:50 – 12:00 Wrap up, online evaluation poll

